

# THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

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Official Organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist International



## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

The Seem of Prostitutes, Pigs  
and Blackguards                      Editorial

The Second International and  
the Colonies

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## WORLD CONGRESS ARTICLES

The Comintern Programme  
and the Racial Problem

The Land Nationalisation  
Question in the Comintern

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## C O N T E N T S

THE SEYM OF PROSTITUTES, PIGS AND BLACKGUARDS Editorial - - - - -	390	THE PROBLEM OF THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE D. M. Bukhartsev - - - - -	404
THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL AND THE COLONIES G. Valetsky - - - - -	393	THE COMINTERN PROGRAMME AND THE RACIAL PROBLEM A. Shiek - - - - -	407
THE COURSE OF DISCUSSION ON THE DRAFT PROGRAMME M. - - - - -	400	HOW THE AMERICAN COMMUNISTS ARE CONDUCTING THEIR ELECTIONS Jay Lovestone	412
THE LAND NATIONALISATION QUESTION IN THE COMINTERN A. Martinov - - - - -	402	ON A CERTAIN ELECTION DOCUMENT - - -	416

## “The Seym of Prostitutes, Pigs and Blackguards”

**P**OLAND—the democratic Polish Republic, the standard-bearer of European civilisation and democracy, to whom the greater and more ancient “democracies” of the west have assigned a particularly honoured position in the crusade against the Soviet Union—has now, thanks to the frankness of its “resurrector” and governor, Marshal Pilsudsky, suddenly been revealed to the eyes of all the world as a country in which the process of the corruption and disintegration of bourgeois democracy has of recent years achieved the most remarkable successes.

It is not so long since the social-democrat, Paul Boncour, the representative of the French Government at the League of Nations, paid a visit to Warsaw and solemnly greeted the Polish soldier as the guard of democratic Europe on the Asiatic-Bolshevik frontier. The “democracy” of republican Poland, which had grouped around itself a complete wreath of other “democratic” countries, from Finland to exiled “democratic” Georgia, with a view to the preparation of a holy war on the land of proletarian dictatorship, has been administered a final and shattering blow. The legend which was to have formed a large part of the ideology and the ideal for interventionist armies has been dispelled.

**P**ILSUDSKY’S thunderous words anent the “Seym of prostitutes, pigs and blackguards,” published in the Polish official press on June 1st, as his first political pronouncement on the return to affairs of the arbiter of Poland’s destinies after a prolonged illness, involuntarily recalls another interview given by him, towards the end of last year, at the moment when the Polish-Lithuanian conflict was at its most intense stage.

At that time Pilsudsky characterised the head of the Fascist Lithuanian Government in the following words: “The Lithuanian Premier, M. Valdemaras, arouses my anxiety for his psychological condition; in my opinion he is irresponsible . . . His utterances give the impression that they are the deliberations of clients of a psychiatric clinic. We have to do with what is almost a clinical phenomenon . . . When I think that

in this condition of nervous excitement they may take irrevocable steps, I . . .” Anyone who has happened to visit a lunatic asylum has met with the following phenomenon: one of the inmates approaches the visitor and in a whisper warns him against another, who, he implies, “is not quite . . .”

**U**NDoubtedly, the interview in which Marshal Pilsudsky unfolded the reasons for his renunciation of the post of Premier and for retaining “only” that of War Minister and director of the Polish republic’s foreign policy (after making sure of “the loyal co-operation” of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Zalesky), undoubtedly this interview, remarkable both in form and in content, also presents enormous interest from (shall we say?) the psychological aspect. We do not know the exact diagnosis made by his physicians during Pilsudsky’s serious two months’ illness. But according to his own declaration, those physicians stated that “in view of the many functions laid upon him, the sole hope of his salvation is a renunciation of the struggle with himself,” a total removal of the obstacles to his temper. In order to be in a position to apply his doctors’ recommendations, the Marshal has for the future decided not to come into any contact whatever with the Seym. “If I were not to struggle with myself I shall do nothing else than be ceaselessly fighting and trampling on the deputies. . . .”

And thus the value, no longer psychological, but political, of Pilsudsky’s latest public utterance consists in his expounding aloud the principles of the policy by which he has been governed while occupying the most responsible directing positions in the Government of the Polish republic, and also the intentions and plans which he has for the immediate future. And this he has done “without struggling with himself,” not restraining, or exerting any pressure on himself. The political value of Pilsudsky’s oral testament is further added to by the circumstance that despite the original, superficially thoroughly personal style of his utterance, it is in reality a proclamation of the general and frankly official plat-

## The Sejm of Prostitutes—contd.

form of the whole of the present Polish Government from the monarchist Maistowitch to the Polish Socialist Party member, Morachewsky. The objective political value of Pilsudsky's interview is guaranteed beyond all else by the fact that in content and form it is the exposition of the classic doctrine of modern Fascism in its application to Poland. More than that, even the scandalous touches with which Pilsudsky's monologue is filled, the magnificent selection of unparliamentary expressions, even the egocentric manner bordering on a morbid yet comic megalomania, are all almost inseparable specific features of all the Fascist "duces" from Mussolini, by way of Primo de Riviera, to—Valdemaras.

With sweeps of his Marshal's baton Pilsudsky speaks for the Sejm's benefit not so much with manacles as with bedroom chambers.

**A**CCORDING to Pilsudsky almost the entire decade of the history of parliamentarism in the Poland restored by him is pure nonsense and infamy, is the justification and motivation for the necessity of the sole reasonable, "business-like" regime of Fascist dictatorship, the basis and preparation for the forthcoming new and resolute step which shall at last liquidate parliamentary "methods," the new coup d'état which is to complement the May, 1926, coup.

"The present Polish constitution," says Pilsudsky, "is nonsensical"; it was made by "demoralised and monstrously idiotic" people, governed by one sole motive, that of depriving the future president of the republic of even the shadow of authority; and they did this because "not for one second did they doubt that to this post would be elected no other than the man who is extraordinarily popular among the entire Polish nation, who has never disgraced himself by avidity for money (!), the man who by his triumphantly conducted war and by his force of character had brought Poland out of chaos and had given her much more extended frontiers than those that everybody everywhere had assigned for her." But this man "threw the trick back at them, calmly refusing this post," and thus brought all their "shameful intentions to naught." By depriving the president of any authority ("even of the right to engage any lackey or maidservant he pleased"), these people "acted more ignominiously and without conscience than anyone in the world would act even with his kept mistress." When he, Pilsudsky, saw through these plans, before him rose the question: "Is it advisable for this Sejm, this so-called sovereign Sejm, a Sejm of prostitutes, (not to employ another, vulgar and expressive word which excellently and exactly characterises the sovereign Sejm), is it advisable to disperse it and to trample it under the foot of the conqueror, as it deserves, or leave it to Poland herself?" For the time being he chose the second course, which afterwards rendered inevitable the so-called "May events" of 1926, or in other words the armed seizure of power. "As the dictator of Poland, after a victoriously concluded war, and having the opportunity of shattering the Sejm of prostitutes like a worm," yet Pilsudsky did not do so, and so "no one can accuse him of lacking in democratic ideas."

**H**AVING deprived the president of all authority, the "prostitutes" drew up the Polish constitution and in it made the "Premier" all powerful, with a view to the latter being "swinish and filthy" in regard to the president. And, also according to the constitution, in consequence of "a ludicrous and foolish passion for centralisation," the Premier was to busy himself with "everything," which meant "nothing," and in particular was to "co-operate with the Sejm." At this stage Pilsudsky, who hitherto had been chiefly describing the first, constituent Sejm (1919-1922) turned to the characterisation of the following Sejms; the second which died a natural death at the beginning of this year, and the third elected in March. Of these he said that if he did not exercise restraint on himself he would "ceaselessly thrash them and trample underfoot the deputies." "I am not in a state either to listen or to look on at this. The very process of labour, consisting in the labour of talk, belongs among the most monstrous inventions that anyone ever conceived." "The deputies conduct themselves in the hall of the Sejm as though they were in a public house. Whilst one is speaking fifteen are walking up and down the hall carrying on their own personal petty transactions, forty are talking noisily, and a hundred are telling one another dirty stories—only the ministers must conduct themselves decently. Every deputy has the right to bawl, to shout . . . to write slanderous interpellations . . . possesses the right and the privilege to behave himself like a pig and blackguard, while the ministers, who for their feverish work receive a few miserable pence, are forced to maintain an outward semblance of extraordinary respect for this hall." "In the last Sejm, which I always called the Sejm of corruption, I intended to make a speech for which I had prepared the following characterisation of its 'work': 'Even the flies perish in the atmosphere envenomed by this garrulity, not one of them even jumps on another, or if one lazily does so, the other does not even stir a wing, being half dead with boredom.'"

In conclusion Pilsudsky expressed all his feeling of nausea and fastidiousness, all the aversion, contempt and revulsion aroused in him by the Polish constitution and the Polish Sejm, and then passed to more topical themes. After the election of the third, the present Sejm, the question again arose before him: "Whether to abandon all co-operation with the Sejm and to place himself at the disposition of the president of the republic, in order to present Poland with new laws, or to resign his position as a Premier forced to co-operate with the Sejm." Pilsudsky chose the second course, and advised the president to seek for men who could "for a little longer" maintain co-operation with the Sejm, but he at once added, "In every more serious crisis I place myself at the disposal of the president in the capacity of a Premier who will boldly take decisions and will draw as bold conclusions from these decisions."

**T**HIS last declaration was taken throughout Poland to indicate that in the immediate future, approximately in the autumn, there would be a "conferred" repeal of the constitution, the dissolution of the Sejm in its present form, and the accomplishment of a nakedly Fascist dictatorial regime.

There is no doubt that this quite openly prepared

**The Sejm of Prostitutes** -contd.

coup d'état will not meet with any resistance from the bourgeois and compromising parties, even those of the "opposition," for the very reason that it will be only the consummation and formulation of the Fascist regime already existing in Poland, despite all the clauses of the written constitution. On the contrary, it will be openly supported by a large proportion of those parties. During the two years which have passed since the May coup and the establishment of the Pilsudsky government, all the great bourgeoisie, whether industrial, agrarian, commercial or financial have rallied around the dictatorship, while a large part of the petty town and village bourgeoisie have been drawn after it. The economic and financial position of the country, which after a protracted generally satisfactory period has recently taken a turn for the worse, is driving the bourgeoisie on to a consolidation of the "political" stabilisation, and to a greater strengthening of a "strong" government.

The manifest growth of a revolutionary mood among the proletarian masses, and the Communist Party's increase of influence are both working in the same direction. Pilsudsky's last long illness, which faced the Fascist camp and the bourgeoisie with the question of what would happen in the event of his complete disappearance from the scene, aroused on the one hand timid attempts at a strengthening of the "opposition" on the left and the right, and on the other conscious and strong tendencies towards the consolidation and the "objectivisation" of the Fascist regime, and the replacement at need of the "leader" and "hero" by a more compact organisation, system and regime.

**P**ILSUDSKY'S interview, which had as one of its chief aims the besieging and terrifying of the reviving "oppositions" of the left and right Sejm wings with the "roar of the awakening lion," had its effect. While the Fascist and pro-Fascist press welcomed Pilsudsky's statement with servile enthusiasm, the right national-democrat organs in the best case express doubt whether Pilsudsky has the courage to realise his plans, which are by no means without their sympathy in principle.

"Why," asks the "Warsaw News," the official organ of the National-Democrats, "is Marshal Pilsudsky, who took power with arms in hand in May, 1926, resigning (!) without carrying through either the changes in the constitution, or the repeal of the suffrage law, or the restoration of political morals, of which the official press has talked so much?" Whilst the Lvov "Polish Word" ("Slovo Polskoe") a National-Democrat organ which became Pilsudsky's, writes: "The serious crisis which Marshal Pilsudsky foretells will undoubtedly arrive very quickly, like 'Amen' at the end of 'Our Father.' On this account we wish to state that for several months our paper has continually and consequentially expressed the conviction that the reform of the State is impossible with a parliamentary system, and with the existing system at that." The newspaper calls for "a consolidation of the national State camp, desiring a real change in the State system and ready for any sacrifice in order to ensure that change a complete victory."

And the Polish Socialist Party?\* It is true that its parliamentary fraction adopted a resolution stating that Pilsudsky's interview contained "a threat of a coup d'état against the constitution to which Pilsudsky has pledged his solemn oath," and declaring that the P.S.P. "will defend democracy and popular representation with all its energy." The resolution adds that "it would be beneath the party's dignity to answer polemically to the insults to the deputies"; there are no formal bases for challenging Pilsudsky to a duel.

**T**HERE is not the least doubt that except for a few verbal protests in the Sejm (if only the Sejm is summoned) there can be no thought of any kind of active struggle "in defence of democracy" being made by the P.S.P., if only because a large proportion of its leaders are wholly on Pilsudsky's side, and because this same party has fused with the State and in particular with the military and political (?) apparatus of Fascism. "Glos Prawdy" (The Voice of Truth), Pilsudsky's organ, emphasises that "at the meeting of the fraction which adopted the previously mentioned resolution the president of the Sejm, Dashzynsky, the minister Morachevsky, Holovko and a number of other socialists by faith and feeling but not by profession were absent." The Crakow organ of the P.S.P., "Naprzhood" (Forward) in a leading article devoted to the interview regrets that Pilsudsky did not have regard to the "acoustics of foreign countries," and concludes with the lamentable question: "Was this really the way the parting should have occurred? Was it really impossible to seek a bridge of compromise?" While the Lvov "Dzennik Ludovi" (People's Journal) also a P.S.P. organ, states that "popular representation is now defenceless even against a captain in command of a squad of soldiers; parliamentary meetings can be closed, opened, postponed," and concludes: "It is painful to see how statesmen and politicians in high places, captivated by the hazard of experimentation, are shattering the foundation on which is established order and law."

**T**HE P.S.P. is not thinking of any active support of "democracy" and the Sejm outside its walls, because its entire front is directed against the Communists; because it is afraid of nothing more than an attack of the masses; because it knows that the masses would not advance at its summons to the defence of the compromised, despised "democracy," the unmasked and spat-upon Sejm; because a large proportion of the

\* It is worth while recalling the campaign which the P.S.P. carried on with the aid of the Second International to defend Pilsudsky and his dictatorship from the accusation of Fascism. At the session of the Second International Executive Committee held in February, 1927 in Paris, "the first draft of the resolution against Fascism and in defence of democracy mentioned Poland together with Italy, Hungary, and Lithuania as a country with a Fascist regime. Thanks to the energetic protest of comrades Diamond and Nedzialkovsky in the name of the Polish delegation, and supported by comrades Wels (of Germany) and de Brouckere (Belgium) this passage was unanimously expunged from the resolution." (We quote the Crakow organ "Naprzhood.") The report of the Paris bourgeois radical "Quotidien" on the same session states that "in the words of comrades Diamond and Nedzialkovsky a personal regime (!) exists in Poland, which, however, has no Fascist character whatever. Marshal Pilsudsky represents political romanticism of his own distinct kind. . . ."

## The Seym of Prostitutes—contd.

workers which followed it has either passed over to the revolutionary banner of the C.P. or has gone directly to the camp of Fascism. The party which beats Communist deputies in the Seym, shoots down Communist demonstrations, kills Communist agitators in hole-and-corner fashion, binding itself to the secret police and Fascism for the most contemptible services in the struggle with the revolutionary workers and peasants, is incapable of any active protest against Fascism, even if the latter sends it flying with a hearty kick into the dung-heap.

The only power capable of resisting the advance of naked Fascism is that of the revolutionary workers and peasants, whether Polish, Ukrainian, White Russian, Jewish or German; the only leadership called to the

organisation of this struggle is the C.P. and the revolutionary peasant organisations associated with it in a militant alliance.

The forthcoming fresh advance of Fascism, while pursuing infernal political objects—the stabilisation, consolidation and consummation of the dictatorship, is also preparing military adventures. When speaking veiledly of the “serious crises” in Poland, Pilsudsky insisted on the necessity of a government being in existence at that moment which would “boldly take decisions and also make bold conclusions from its decisions.”

The revolutionary proletariat and revolutionary peasantry in Poland need a Communist Party with still more initiative and resolution. The consolidation of all the forces of the Party to this end is the most urgent task of the day.

# The Second International and the Colonies

G. Valetsky

“We are bound to ask the question, how the stability of these tendencies in Europe is to be explained, and why it is that this opportunism is stronger in Western Europe than it is with us? It is because the foremost countries have created, and are creating, their culture through the possibility of living at the cost of a thousand million oppressed people. Because the capitalists of those countries receive much more than they could receive in profits from the spoliation of the workers of their own countries. . . . These milliards of super-profits form the economic basis on which the opportunism in the workers’ movement is maintained.”—Lenin: “Report on the International Situation” at the Second Congress of the Comintern (1920). Works Vol. XVII., p. 266.

“This is the policy of the agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers’ movement (labour lieutenants of the capitalist class). This (British, French, Dutch, Belgian) party, which in words is hostile to imperialism, but in actuality is not carrying on a revolutionary struggle within the colonies for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, is not systematically and everywhere assisting in the revolutionary work which has already begun in the colonies, is not introducing arms and literature into them for the revolutionary parties in the colonies, is a party of blackguards and traitors.”—Lenin: “On the Tasks of the Third International (1919). Works, Vol. XVI., pp. 277-8.

SOME months before the Marseilles Congress of the Second International decided, on the proposal of the Belgian Pierar, to put down the colonial question for discussion at the following Congress, the “left-wing” Dutch social-democrat Kramer declared: “We all occupy ourselves with colonial questions far too little. A genuine interest in these questions is manifested only by the great bourgeoisie and the Communists.” (Het Volk, 9th May, 1925.) No matter how flattering this attestation may be to us Communists, we think that in the given instance Kramer was not altogether fair to his own party friends. Indeed, the social-democrats have “occupied themselves” very actively with all kinds of “colonial questions,” especially since the imperialist war, and have not in the least been indifferent to them, have by no means left them outside the realm of their genuine

interest. And how could it be otherwise? During this period have not the social-democrats been members of a number of governments directly governing colonies, have they not given support to a number of governments in all their activities even when they did not directly participate in these governments? Have they not built up all their practice and their whole consequential theory on what the “left-wing” Otto Bauer has with refinement of criticism called “closeness to the State, or, if you prefer it, closeness to the government”? Did not the former minister, Henderson, in his speech at the opening of the Marseilles Congress declare: “On a national and on the international scale all the agitation and propaganda of the parties attached to the International should be carried on with particular regard to the possibility, and even the probability, that the leaders of each party will be placed in the position of responsible ministers”?\*

It is true that, acting on the wise rule of all hypocrites and opportunists, according to which “there are things which are done but which are not talked about,” in order to avoid the necessity of reporting to the worker masses on their actions in the sphere of colonial policy, the social-democrats have preferred to speak of them as little as possible, especially on an international scale. None the less, during the past year a number of circumstances have forced them openly to place the colonial question on the agenda of their international “conversations,” in doing so pursuing a triple object: to concoct an ideological phraseology for their practical policy, in other words, to set up a democratic smoke-screen behind which it will be safer to carry on their work; to smooth out the contradictions between the colonial policy of various national sections which have developed together with their imperialist fatherlands; and to strengthen or to establish a work of compromise, directed by Amsterdam and demanded by the governors of various colonies in the colonies themselves,

\* Protocols of the Marseilles Congress, 1925.

**The Second International and Colonies—contd.**

as a counter-balance to the revolutionary proletarian activity.

**The Pre-War Revisionists**

Thus the Dutch social-democrat Kramer slanders his brothers of the Second International when he accuses them of being indifferent to the "colonial question." But in placing these questions now (at a favourable moment) on the agenda of their international talking-shop and proposing to decide them by a "detailed" "harmonious" resolution (the draft of which has already been published), the present-day social-imperialists had really no essentially new principle to create. In order to be convinced of this one has but to refer to the treasury of pre-war revisionism, and in the given instance to the theory expounded at the 1907 Stuttgart Congress by a fellow-countryman of Kramer's, Van Koll, which at that time was supported by Bernstein and David and defeated with Kautsky's participation. Dealing with this theory in an article entitled the "Session of the International Socialist Bureau" (October, 1908), Lenin wrote as follows: "Van Koll, who has covered himself with glory by his opportunistic resolution on the colonial question at Stuttgart . . . endeavoured to drag social-democracy into his favourite little idea of a "positive" colonial programme. Completely ignoring social-democracy's struggle against colonial policy, the agitation in the masses against colonial pillage, the arousing of a spirit of resistance and opposition among the oppressed masses in the colonies, Van Koll concentrated all his attention on outlining possible "reforms" of colonial existence in the given circumstances. Like a well-intentioned official, he specified the most varied questions, beginning with ownership of land and ending with schools, the stimulation of industry, with prisons and so on, simultaneously emphasising the necessity to be more practical; for example, to take into consideration the fact that universal suffrage is not always applicable to savages, that occasionally it is impossible not to agree with the necessity of establishing compulsory labour in the colonies in place of prisons and so on. The whole report was distinguished not by a spirit of proletarian class struggle, but by a spirit of the most petty bourgeois, and even worse, of officialistic reformism."—Works, Vol. XI., part 1, pp. 136-7.)

In this article (and also in Lenin's article on the "International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart," works, Vol. XVIII., pp. 498-500) are to be found all the essential elements for criticism of the resolution on the colonial question which is proposed for adoption at the Congress of the Second International now being held. Not only that, but in these articles Lenin by his own exposition of the question unmasked the pseudo-revolutionary position of the left-wingers of that day with Kautsky at their head, who ignored the franker passages of Van Koll's resolution. In his brochure, "Socialism and Colonial Policy," published also in 1907 in development of the speech he had made at the Congress, Kautsky wrote: "So long as the hegemony of capital continues the idea of a voluntary renunciation of the colonies can be for us only as a compass indicating the direction in which our policy in regard to the colonies should be guided, and

cannot have the importance of a practical proposal (!) for the immediate realisation of which we have to work. For us its practical importance consists first and foremost in the fact that it forbids us in advance any agreement to the increase of colonial possessions, and instructs us to strive with the utmost ardour for the extension of native autonomy. Their risings in order to overthrow the foreign dominance can always count on the sympathy of the struggling proletariat. But the forces and resources which are at the disposal of the capitalistic nations are so enormous that it is impossible to expect that any of these risings could achieve their end at the present time. They can only worsen the lot of the natives. No matter how much we understand (!) these revolts and sympathise with the insurgents, social-democracy cannot promote them, just as it cannot promote a hopeless "putsch" in Europe itself." (p. 76.)

Thus we see that even at the time of the Stuttgart Congress, twenty years ago, a radical difference existed between a genuinely revolutionary position in the colonial question, demanding the "arousing of a spirit of resistance and opposition among the oppressed masses in the colonies," and the centrist position proclaimed after general phrases anent the "voluntary renunciation of colonies," and to the effect that colonial insurrections "can only worsen the lot of the natives," and that in no way are they to be "encouraged." We will be quite fair: the Stuttgart "victors," Kautsky and Bauer, did not have to violate their own traditions overmuch in order in 1928 to pass openly and finally to the position of Van Koll, the man they had "defeated" in 1907.

## II.

**The Rising in Indonesia**

At the end of 1926 a national rising broke out against the Dutch imperialists in Indonesia and on the islands of Java and Sumatra.

One can judge of the nature of this rising from an article published in the May, 1926, number of the Viennese "Kampfe," the organ of a social-democratic party which is not directly interested in the colonial question. In this article, "The Native Movement in the Dutch East Indies," published six months before the rising, the author, Otto Mänchen-Helfen, wrote: "The Dutch Government is watching the development of the national movement with growing anxiety. It is opposing it with all possible police repression, is restricting the freedom of meeting, is proclaiming martial law in whole districts of the country, is exiling the leaders of the movement to New Guinea, is suppressing undesirable newspapers, and so on. Despite all this the movement is growing from year to year. The trade unions are drawing larger and larger masses of workers into their ranks. The Dutch East Indies is at the present time a colony with an admittedly very strong Communist Party. This is the sole Party of the native workers: social-democrats exist almost exclusively among the white workers. It has a daily newspaper, several weeklies and quite a large number of monthly journals. Through the Sarekat Raj it directs large sections of the peasantry, which, however, are attached to at least as great an extent to the organisation "Sarekat Islam," which still has great influence on account of its religious ideology. But undoubtedly the future belongs to the union of workers and peasants. . . . Thus the native

**The Second International and Colonies—contd.**

movement in the Dutch East Indies is acquiring a great importance. The anti-imperialist struggle must inevitably pass under the hegemony of the proletariat. A new link is being forged between India and China in the front against British, Japanese and American imperialism; the revolutionary proletarian directed Insulinde."

The rising in Java and Sumatra, which is only the beginning of the great Indonesian revolution, and which the Indonesian comrades justly regard as their 1905, was bloodily suppressed.

What position did the Second International adopt in regard to this event during its working out of "detailed" and "harmonious" theses on the colonial question? To the session of its Executive Committee, which was held in February, 1928, its secretary, Friedrich Adler, presented a written report, which specified in detail the movements and achievements of its various sections; concerning the revolt in Indonesia this report only says the following: "In connection with its struggle against the executions in the Dutch East Indies, the Dutch Party has carried on an energetic campaign for the prohibition of death sentences in the colonies."

This declaration is an impudent and miserable lie.

**Conduct of the Dutch Social-Democrats**

The true position, the actual conduct of the Dutch social-democrats in regard to the victims of counter-revolutionary justice in Indonesia, was that of direct accomplices of the executioners. Stokvis, the social-democratic deputy in the Javan "Volksraade," who was appointed to this advisory "parliament" by the kindness of the governor, shortly after the event wrote as follows in an article entitled "Social-democracy and the Disturbances in Java," published in the central organ of the Dutch social-democracy, "Het Volk": "That which has happened has no extraordinary significance whatever as a fact. Every colonial country inhabited by subject peoples is from time to time (!) subject to revolts. . . . What can be said of all these young folk is that they know their Communist catechism by heart. . . . But undoubtedly they have had great influence in many parts—even on small, quite uneducated people. It has been established that the number of inhabitants of regions and villages who were passively sympathetic to the occurrences or supported it was very great. . . . As for the causes of this, the new Resident bears no responsibility whatever. . . . The mass internment in a kind of penal colony in New Guinea is only a temporary solution. But if a distinction be further made between genuine insurgents and the simple adherents of Communism (and they have promised to make such a distinction), the government, which possesses sufficient instinct of self-preservation, will not undertake very ruthless measures. But justice has also to make its pronouncement, and thus it will be impossible to avoid death sentences. . . . The Resident will be faced with a very serious decision, when it becomes necessary to confirm the sentences. Let him at least find sufficient strength to pardon those who are not murderers."\*

\* These passages are taken from the translation published in "La Nouvelle Revue Socialiste," Nos. 14-15, 15th February to 15th April, 1927, pp. 793 et seq.

That is the true picture of the Dutch social-democracy's "struggle" "against the executions in the Dutch East Indies" which Adler advertised. In inviting the governor to restrict the death sentence only to those "insurgents" who have "really" deserved it ("only" ten persons were hanged in September!) Stokvis has in view the establishment of a favourable basis for an extensive work of compromise, to be carried on jointly by the governor and social-democracy. At the end of his article he writes: "The new head of the government is a man of goodwill. Despite his heavy cares and the nervousness of the reactionary press, which is demanding forcible measures, M. de Graeff will not let out of his sight the ultimate aim of recovering the goodwill of groups of politically conscious and educated Indonesians, normal [!] nationalists."

One does not need to say much about the colonial crimes of the leaders of the British "Labour Party." In view of the notorious principle of "continuity," especially in application to foreign policy, proclaimed by MacDonald during his occupation of the Premier's residence, the crimes of the "Labour Party" are identical with those of all "His Majesty's" governments without exception.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Birkenhead's Admiration for MacDonald**

In regard to Egypt and India the testimony of Lord Birkenhead, Secretary of State for India in the Baldwin ministry, is instructive. In a speech made on May 1st this year at a banquet at the Imperial Ladies' Club, the noble lord spoke of the recent conflict with Egypt in connection with the dangers arising from formally "sovereign" Egypt's desire to extend its legislation concerning the freedom of meeting, and said, among much else: "Never, never can a country with imperial responsibilities, with obligations to other European nations, with the vital necessity of maintaining its own imperial communications, never can such a country agree to legislation such as that, and never will this country, under any government, agree. I am encouraged in this view by the fact that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, when Prime Minister, in a spirit of admirable correctitude, replied to the Egyptians in language not differing very greatly from language I have used to-night. I am bound to add this, that Mr. MacDonald has looked upon my Indian problems with the eye of a statesman, and that he and his colleagues have given me every assistance in my responsible task. I think Mr. MacDonald has deserved well of his fellow-countrymen by the courage which he showed on the Egyptian question when Primé Minister, and for the loyalty and far-sightedness he has shown in his handling of matters in regard to the Indian situation since I became Secretary of State for India. (Cheers.)"—("Times," 2nd May, 1928.)

We all know the role which the Labour Party has played in the Simon Commission, which went to India in order to fasten a "reform of the constitution" on the Indian people, and also the welcome which the Bombay workers gave the two Labour members of the Commission. In addition to the certificates of trustworthiness given MacDonald by Baldwin's official, in connection with the Simon Commission's visit

**The Second International and Colonies—contd.**

to India it is worth while citing the view of the Menshevik "Socialist Courier." Dan and Abramovitch's organ writes: "If one recalls the whole Indian policy of the MacDonald Government it becomes clear that the conflict between the Indian and British workers' movement is not a fortuitous one." (!) None the less, the Mensheviks would not be Mensheviks if they did not add: "Of course, in the Indian Labour movement there are strong nationalistic tendencies which drive it greatly to exaggerate the sins of the British Labour Party."—"Socialist Courier," No. 4, 1928.)

The Labour Party attitude to China, manifested at the critical moments in complete support of the Chamberlain intervention, has been splendidly formulated by Charles Roden Buxton, one of its almost "left" leaders: \* "It would be no solution merely to abrogate the treaties purely and simply. I do not pretend that the situation is so simple. . . . It is necessary to consider the past. There is a foreign population established with privileges along the rivers and on the coasts of China, and I can quite understand—although I think they are greatly deceiving themselves—the sentiment of those persons who demand "a whiff of grape-shot" in order to sweep away all the difficulties which they find. . . . Then there are complicated commercial interests on which even the lives [!] of thousands of persons are dependent. . . . We must show that there is here in Europe a section of opinion which sympathises with China, which understands, or at least desires to understand, the aspirations of the Chinese people, which is resolved to express that sympathy and whenever it can to put the relations between Europe and China on the basis of prudence, humanity and justice."

**Labour Imperialism and Africa**

There remains but to summarise the "Labour Party" position in regard to the British colonies of tropical Africa. We can do this on the basis of the official programme brochure ("The Labour Party and the Empire: Africa"), published in 1926, and furnished with an introduction by the notorious J. H. Thomas, Secretary of State for the Colonies in the MacDonald ministry. The brochure points to the difference in the administration of the colonies of Central West Africa on the one hand, and other African colonies on the other. And it goes on to say: "It may be here stated that while in Kenya, Nyasaland and Rhodesia the exploitation of the land, its resources, and the labour of the native peoples for the benefit of the white immigrants and capitalists has been the rule, it has been the exception in British West Central Africa. . . . It is necessary to emphasise the relative excellence which has marked British policy in West Central Africa for two main reasons: First, because it furnishes conclusive evidence that an economic relationship between these African peoples to the outer world is not incompatible with just and humane governments; secondly, because there is at

present a grave danger that the Colonial Office, at the dictation of capitalist interests, will modify in a reactionary direction the policy hitherto pursued, a tendency which Labour must strenuously resist."

In a word, according to the testimony of the "Labour Party," in large sections of the colonies of tropical Africa the administration is a model one, and the entire task consists only in preserving it and extending it to other colonies. In the chapter on "Administration and Self-government" the brochure talks at large of a number of desirable measures which would afford the possibility of gradually allowing the black natives to participate in self-government, and here it is indicated that the fundamental task of educational classes for adults is that of affording the adults "an opportunity of acquiring knowledge which will enable them to deal with the new conditions, social, economic and political, which British rule has introduced."

\* \* \* \* \*

**A French Socialist Governor-General**

The French section of the Second International will also appear at the "Socialist" Congress in Brussels, with a certain active balance in the sphere of colonial affairs to its credit. Its parliamentary fraction has unanimously voted for all and every kind of war credits for the suppression of risings in Morocco and Syria. Its disciplined member, Paul Boncour (the same who in Warsaw greeted Pilsudsky as the guardian of Europe against an attack of the Bolsheviks, who insisted on the continuation of the occupation of the Rhine and gave imperialist France a new organisation for its army, which brings her military power to the extreme conceivable limits) as the representative of Poincaré's Government in the League of Nations, this same Paul Boncour participates most actively in all, including the colonial enterprises of this co-society of the imperialist spoliators. The French Socialist Party supplied the Governor-General for the largest of the French colonies, Indo-China, in the person of Alexander Varennes. Although, out of regard to a superficial decency, they deemed it necessary to grant him honourable "release" while he fulfilled this function, on the mention of his name by one of the speakers, the Party Congress at Clermont-Ferrant in May, 1926, gave him a vigorous ovation in his absence, while at the last parliamentary elections the party allotted him his old place in the Chamber. Varennes did not betray the trust set in him: "I have put the frontier (the frontier separating Indo-China from revolutionary China) in a state of defence. . . . Before my departure for Indo-China I sent munitions there, and these were followed by a transport of military supplies and finally by men. Immediately after my arrival the work of arming the Chinese frontier was put in hand vigorously. To-day, behind a solid screen, we can methodically prepare our military defensive organisation." After that let no one say that French social-democracy has done nothing for the Chinese revolution. A second link personally connecting French social-democracy with colonial affairs is the not altogether unknown renegade Frossard, who of recent years has succeeded in becoming the socialist deputy from Guadeloup, a millionaire grown rich on colonial speculation, and the chief supply of funds for

\* Article, "La Chine et l'Europe," dated London, November, 1926, and published in "La Nouvelle Revue Socialiste," Nos. 11 and 12, 1926, pp. 386-8.



**The Second International and Colonies—contd.**

the central organ of the party, of which he has become the real master.

**Naked Imperialism**

There is a "theory" to correspond with this practice. The draft of the programme resolution on the colonial question drawn up by a special commission, composed not only of the centrist Ziromsky but of the extreme right, such as Renaudel and Spinasse, opens with the following statement, which stinks of the most naked imperialism a mile off. "Socialism is directly interested in the development of all the productive forces in the world. It demands an intensive exploitation of all economic wealth, and thus it is naturally faced with the problem of relations, connections and contacts with economics less developed." And farther on: "Nothing would be more contrary to socialism itself than the semblance of accepting in its name certain formulas inspired by a narrow, petty, egotistical individualism. Socialism owes it to itself to break down all the 'Chinese walls.' It cannot favour or admit a nationalism wrapped up in itself; that is why an intervention on the part of economic systems already arrived at a certain stage of development constitutes the corollary of its ultimate principles. A systematic isolation, leading to economic retrogression cannot be advocated by socialism." It is clear that these prosaic, clumsy phrases have quite a definite political tendency: they are aimed especially to catch the eye of China struggling against imperialism, and of all colonies striving towards emancipation from the yoke of their metropolises. The resolution ends with the benevolent expressions of desire to see a gradual "internationalisation" of colonies in the sense of an extension of the League of Nations mandate system, which safeguards "the right of self-determination of nations, on which [principle] the last war has conferred an enormous prestige." "Self-determination" in the spirit of the Versailles Treaty and the "League of Nations," a struggle with the "narrow, petty, egotistical nationalism" of the peoples of the enslaved colonies—here we have the essence of the colonial programme put forward by the French "socialists."

\* \* \* \* \*

**Vandervelde, de Brouckere and Co.**

Belgium is the youngest in the family of colonising countries; her single colony, the Congo, remained the private property of Leopold II. until a few years before the world war, being bought from him by the Belgian State for a large sum of money. But Belgian social-democracy is an old lover of colonies; seduced by Vandervelde, after a certain amount of opposition, it came out energetically in favour of the acquisition of colonies. Thanks to its widely extolled "practical outlook," Belgian social-democracy preceded her sisters in coming into direct proximity to colonial affairs; together with capitalist banks her co-operatives participate in large colonial enterprises as shareholders; her leaders are members of the administrations of these colonial limited companies. Among such is the social-democratic deputy Jules Mattier, who, as it happened, was

the chief *rappporteur* on the colonial question in the General Council of the party during the discussions preliminary to the Second International Congress: together with Ansell, he is at the head of the "Riuzizi" company for cotton production, which is founded on areas received in concession in the territory of former German Congo, which after Versailles became a mandated area of Belgium.

Both Vandervelde, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and de Brouckere, as Belgium's representative in the League of Nations, of course took very active part in all the imperialistic and colonial combinations. At the very moment when the Executive Committee of the Second International was taking into account the possibility of the immediate victory of the Chinese revolution at the beginning of 1927, and was considering it politic and necessary to write in a solemn manifesto: "No matter how great may be the differences of opinion inside the proletarian ranks as to the way to achieve emancipation, there is complete unity in sympathy and solidarity with the national liberation movement in China." (1st of May Manifesto, 1928.) In Geneva the metallic voice of de Brouckere was rattling in defence of the rights of Belgium and "Europe," which had been swept away by the Chinese revolution. He protested against the "one-sided" annulment of the 1865 treaty by China, against "this clamant violation of international law." "We are strong in the realisation of our rights; not only Belgium, but all Europe and its future in the Far East is put to hazard."

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Loot of the German Colonies**

Deprived of colonies by the Versailles Treaty, German social-democracy holds a peculiar position on the colonial question. Before the signing of that treaty, before German social-democracy had made the policy of "fulfilment" the basis of their foreign policy generally, at the Berne Conference of the Second International parties in February, 1919, the German social-democrats protested against the young German colonies being snatched away from their mother's milk and the breast of their metropolis, which, they said, violated the right of national self-determination. Since then the official leaders of German social-democracy have avoided openly speaking on this theme, but at the same time they have all the more readily raised other issues in defence of the colonial interests of their fatherland. In the German trade union press the reformists carry on a systematic campaign for the return of the colonies, even though it be under the guise of "mandates" from the League of Nations. At the Second International's Marseilles Congress the Belgian Pierard, one of the fathers of social-imperialism, declared: "Is it not ludicrous, unjust, unheard-of, that from such a people as the Germans all colonies should have been simply taken away?" And at the same Congress Hilferding emphasised with particular satisfaction the remark dropped in passing by the Englishman Buxton that "Germany must be granted some colonial mandates."

III.

**Agents of Capitalism**

During the present period of colonial revolutions, to the general functions of social-democratic parties as

**The Second International and Colonies—contd.**

the agents of capitalism among the working class, has to be added that of agents of their own metropolises among the population of the colonies themselves, in order to carry out those compromising and counter-revolutionary tasks which they already carry out at home. This indeed is the determining factor which has decided the Second International to put the colonial question with exceptional solemnity on the agenda of its Congress. The necessity to surround this practical work with declarations of principle formulated in just as resounding, slippery and hypocritical phrases was argued best of all by Otto Bauer, while the necessity of the practical work itself was testified to by Blum.

"The stabilisation of capitalism," writes Bauer in an article, "After the Party-day," in "Kampf" for December, 1927, "brings the socialist parties into the danger of intellectual subjection to the capitalistic environment, and in consequence of losing the ability to adopt a revolutionary position in regard to the two eventualities, which alone can open up a new phase of revolutionary possibilities; namely, in regard to war and to the emancipation struggle of the colonial peoples. It is clear that such a development of the socialist parties would make any agreement, any co-action with the worker masses following the Communist International absolutely impossible. . . . We must realise quite clearly that only after the schism has been overcome can the workers' movement in Poland and in all South-eastern Europe be strengthened, and that only thus will the European workers' movement be bound closer with the awakening worker masses of Asia."

"Suppose," writes Blum in "Le Populaire" for 7th June, 1927, "that a Communist agitator appears, that he reveals to these unfortunates their existence, their servitude, their miserable wages. Suppose that he unfolds before their eyes a comparison between their few pence or their daily handful of rice and the fabulous profits made by the companies which employ them, and of which certain firms annually distribute dividends greater than their capital. Suppose that he makes them realise that these profits proceed from, or at the least depend on, their hardships, that people are growing rich on their labour, and not only the colonist, not only the director of the enterprise, but the distant shareholder and unknown idler who has never risked more than his miserable gold. Do you not think that this propaganda would find a soil well prepared where the seed would swiftly spring up? . . . We risk having turned against us both those elements of barbarism which still subsist in the natives, and that human nobility which is growing in them. . . . There is a very real danger."

Both Bauer and Blum exclaim against the danger threatening "us," i.e., "Europe," or, in other words, capitalism, from Communism. Bauer flatters himself

with the hope that a conventional "revolutionism"\* will enable the social-democrats to find a common language with "the worker masses following the Communist International," will enable them to have closer bonds "with the awakening worker masses of Asia." Blum hastens to do something practical in order that the colonial workers should get the impression that still others are troubling about them besides the imagined Communist agitator (who to Blum's regret is already only too real).

**Facing Both Ways**

The draft resolution on the colonial question prepared for the Brussels Congress of the Second International is drawn up in correspondence with this double purpose as formulated by Bauer and Blum. The introductory section dealing with "principles," and composed by Bauer himself (the professional supplier of "theoretical bases" for all the filth of the notorious opportunists and imperialists), stands with both feet on the earth of capitalism and imperialism, but none the less contains a necessary quantity of exalted, pathetic, "moral" sounding phrases. Of course, these phrases will not arouse any opposition; they are equally indispensable to all. The London correspondent of the Berlin "Vorwaerts," in the issue for June 27th, 1928, quotes the chief of these phrases: "Socialism fundamentally rejects political hegemony over colonial peoples; it considers a repeal of colonial relationships the prerequisite of the international federation of peoples," and then remarks, perhaps not without involuntary irony: "This declaration of principle constitutes the *alpha* and *omega* of all socialist colonial policy; it will arouse no opposition anywhere in the ranks of the socialist parties."

Nor will any serious differences be aroused by the more practical sections of the resolution, dealing with "support to the emancipation struggle of the enslaved peoples" (China, India and Egypt), "the colonies with developed culture" (colonies with European or eastern culture, and British Crown colonies—with the exception of the African, French, Italian and Spanish colonies in North Africa, Java, Madagascar, etc.), and the "colonies with undeveloped culture" (in tropical and subtropical Africa and in the Pacific Ocean). These sections are simply a systematised codification of the policy which the social-democratic parties of the various "mother countries" are actually carrying out in regard to their "own" colonies, while, of course, it is a codification adorned with an adequate number of reformist hypocritical phrases. The differences arising from the hostility of imperialist interests between the various groups of "mother lands" will be "pacifically" and conventionally smoothed over at the Congress, as they are smoothed over in the resolution itself, on account

\* That Bauer is not thinking of "occupying a revolutionary position" with the arrival of a "new phase of revolutionary possibilities," but, on the contrary, by arming the social-democracy with "revolutionary" phraseology is striving to make it capable of negating those possibilities, and again and again to delude the workers, is evident from the following passage of the same article, where he says: "The Marxist centre stands in the middle between reformism and Bolshevism. . . . In revolutionary years the Marxist centre must first and foremost protect the worker masses from the danger on the left, from the great temptation of Bolshevism."

**The Second International and Colonies—contd.**

of the fundamental task: the formation of a united front against the common enemy, Bolshevism and colonial revolutions.

This is not the place in which to unmask the hypocrisy of the various points of this "practical" programme, by their comparison with the actual practice of the social-democratic parties. Of what worth, for instance, is the phrase anent the "support of the Indian people's struggle for self-government [!] and the Egyptians' demand for complete independence" in face of MacDonald's practice? Or the phrase anent the "immediate granting to Java of that measure [!] of self-government which the native population of that country themselves demand," coming from the lips of the direct accomplices of the executioners of the Indonesian insurgents? The passage dealing with colonies "of undeveloped culture" are transcribed directly from the Labour Party brochure already cited by us. "Public instruction," says this passage, "shall have for aim to put the natives in a position to understand the political, economic and social relations of the modern world." (The more frank expression, "conditions introduced by the British regime," contained in the British original, is here replaced by "the modern world.")

**The Natives "Homeland"**

It is worth while considering for a moment one of the clauses of the last section dealing with "general theses" relating to the exploitation of native human material for war purposes. "In all colonies the exploitation of natives for other purposes than the defence of the homeland is to be prohibited, so long as the population of these territories do not possess complete self-government." This "thesis," which appears to establish a peculiar principle of "defence of the homeland" for the "self-governing colonies" (the resolution all through plays very artistically with the terms "independence" and "self-government"), and talking of some kind of "prohibition" (by whom? By the League of Nations? Surely not by the homelands possessing colonies "not enjoying complete self-government) in reality opens the door to such an exploitation

of cannon-fodder as was seen in the last imperialist war. Did not the coloured soldiers defend the French colonies of "their homeland" in the European theatre of war against the encroachments of German imperialism, which would have engulfed that homeland on the spot if it had conquered in Europe?

The resolution ends with a summons to the "development of the political and trade union workers' movement" in the colonies and their "encouragement in the spirit of democracy and socialism." This summons has a very real practical significance. In order to avoid and defeat the Communist and revolutionary danger in the colonies, Amsterdam and the Second International are intending, in the spirit of the motives given by Bauer and Blum, and with the active support of the homelands, the governors and the embassies, to plant compromise and reconciliation in the colonies.\*

"The Declaration of the Rights of Man is not goods for export," said one of the active social democratic publicists recently, paraphrasing Gambetta, and protesting against the arousing of too freedom-loving tendencies among the uncultured natives. "Compromise is to become one of the chief objects of export from the homeland to the colonial and semi-colonial countries": such is one of the chief slogans being raised by the Second International at the present moment.

\* Very characteristic of the hopes which the bourgeoisie of the homelands set in the work of their compromisers in the colonies is an article in the "Times" for June 14th, 1928, dealing with the "labour agitations in India," and in particular with the three great and protracted strikes in the textile industry of Bombay, on the East Indian Railway in Lillooah, and at the steel foundries in Jamshedpur. After complaining of the increased activity of the Communists in the Indian trade unions, and especially in the very strong railway workers' union, "attached to Geneva" (evidently to Amsterdam, a highly piquant confusion of these two "centres"—G. V.), the "Times" concludes: "The interest which the British Trade Union Congress has lately taken in Indian labour conditions may be very beneficial if it leads to the better organisation of Indian labour unions, to the expulsion of the Communist elements, and to the discouragement of the extortion and usury which are the curse of many Indian manufacturing towns. But such interest will be valuable only if it is assisted by the knowledge that is not easily obtained in the course of the brief propagandist tours of occasional delegates."



# The Course of the Discussion on the Draft Programme

By M.

**I**N our various sections the discussion on the Draft Programme is now assuming a more and more animated character. Of course, we are here referring to our Parties in capitalist countries, in which the new Draft has only recently been printed and where owing to many reasons the conditions for carrying on an extensive discussion are very restricted. Despite this, from the materials available down to the present the interest in the questions raised by the programme is beginning to take hold of the most extensive Party circles, and is arousing an active consideration of its contents. We can judge of the nature of this consideration from the recent numbers of the "Inprecorr" (Nos. 58 to 61) which serves the international Communist Party active workers, and especially the theoretic journal of the German C.P., "Die Internationale," which has set aside a special section for the discussion of programme questions. Materials from other parties are not yet to hand, but it is to be expected that they also will provide extremely valuable indications of the direction in which the theoretic thought of the various sections is working over the programme questions.

## Actual Problems

One may assume that the discussion must first and foremost concentrate on the general and simultaneously actual problems which now hold the centre of attention of the revolutionary proletariat of capitalist countries; in other words, on problems of imperialism, the war danger, reformism and Fascism. And so we find that the theoretic thought of the proletariat of sections in capitalist countries is now working in this very direction; a direction which can be summarised as seeking a road to the seizure of power. In this regard it is indicative, as we shall see later, that the majority of articles and comments on the programme touch on the very problems of post-war imperialism and its development, on reformism and Fascism, on war, and so on, while theoretic attention to the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship and the construction of socialism themselves plays only a secondary part. But in order not to accuse anyone of a limited approach or an inadequately international outlook, it has to be especially emphasised that together with the consideration of what may be termed their own "personal" problems, we find a very serious handling of the problems of the Chinese revolution, and those of the defence of the U.S.S.R., also in the pages of the above-mentioned journals, while the problem of the war danger is indissolubly associated with this latter problem.

Thus one can declare that down to the present the chief attention in the programme discussion in capitalist countries has been turned down more in the direction of their own "elemental needs," arising out of the class struggle, while this in turn calls insistently for the discussion in the future to be extended also to questions connected with the dictatorship of the proletariat and

with the economic tasks of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. Otherwise it risks becoming one-sided, and will inadequately repulse the attacks of the ultra-lefts and other renegades, and also of the social-democratic traitors, made on the first proletarian State of the world, the existence of which characterises the entire essence and the whole complex of the problems of the transition period from capitalism to socialism.

We turn to the concrete contents of the articles and comments on the programme which have appeared in the journals above-mentioned. In regard to the external structure and formulation of the Draft, we find most frequently the demand to popularise the general text and the exposition of the basic ideas of the programme and to give them the most compressed and clear expression possible, in order to make them accessible to the widest masses. The author of one comment on this matter, the well-known German propagandist, comrade Dunker, even proposed to turn down the present form of the Draft, as not answering to the type of a programme exposition and as being more like a commentary and suggests that we should return to the type of programme as presented in Marx's programme outlines, for example, in the well-known "Considerants" drawn up for the French workers' party in 1880. As is well known, in these outlines, as in his exposition of the "Statutes of the International Working Men's Association," Marx kept to a general formal division of the text into a section expounding the basic principles and a section taking the form of resolutions. But this division, which was necessary and adequate as a type for a programme of action of individual socialist parties before the war, is quite unsuitable as a model for a programme of the world Communist Party. It goes without saying that in our programme the theoretic analysis cannot be restricted merely to the most general basic principles, but must simultaneously provide an historically-concrete sketch of the dynamics of social development, and thus the Comintern programme cannot but to a certain extent approximate to the type of the "Communist Manifesto," or rather unite in itself to a certain extent both the form of a manifesto and the architectonics of a programme dealing with principles. In any case, there is no way of avoiding a certain synthesis of the general-historical and theoretic-principle aspects, and this consideration is a decisive one in determining the general form of the Draft. But all this does not exclude but even renders easier, a popular exposition of the programme, in which the fundamental theoretic bases must naturally be formulated in the most concentrated form, avoiding all unnecessary repetition and so on. We consider that in the final revision of the text of the programme these formal demands for popularisation should be given the most serious attention.

As we have already remarked, in regard to actual questions of principle, the discussional materials of the German C.P. raise the problems of imperialism, reform-

**The Course of the Programme—contd.**

ism and Fascism to the very first place. Consequently we consider it necessary to discuss in more detail the treatment of these problems in the theoretic journal "Die Internationale." (Nos. 11 and 12.) It is true that a discussion on these issues had developed among the German comrades before they had received the new Draft, but this makes no difference whatever to the considerations put forward by them on these themes. We note in passing that the specially set-up programme commission of the C.C. of the German C.P. began its work before the publication of the new text, basing itself on the Draft of 1924, owing to which the plan of these labours naturally has to be built up on the basis of discussion of separate problems.

**On Post-War Imperialism**

In the article "Programme Remarks on Post-War Imperialism," comrade Ludwig deals with the very essential question of the specific peculiarities of imperialist development since the war, directing his analysis not so much towards a simple comparison of the general and basic features of pre-war and post-war imperialism, as to an incomplete theoretic elucidation of the question to what extent the present stage of comparative stabilisation can be regarded as a typical instance, cleansed from all alloy of an immediate revolutionary situation, and as "the normal course" of development of all the contradictions of capitalism and its decline. Comrade Ludwig develops his undoubtedly sound methodical conspectus consequentially into an analysis of the basic peculiarities of imperialism, namely monopoly and trustification, the export of capital, the economic partitioning of the world, and so on, in its new forms and correlations—which, it seems to us, comrade Ludwig does quite substantially. Unquestionably the theoretic formulation of this question ought also to find a place in the Comintern programme.

On the question of reformism comrade Lenz's article "The Criticism of Reformism in the New Draft Programme," makes a highly valuable contribution to the discussion. The author of this article, who is the chairman of the German C.C. Programme Commission, approaches the problem of reformism, that worst enemy of the revolutionary movement of the world proletariat,

with the demand that the new Draft should deal with this issue in a complete and quite systematic form, instead of scattering the criticism of reformism over various sections of the programme and among the various "guises" of social-compromise. Especially worthy of attention are comrade Lenz's remarks on the question of the role and the practice of social-democracy in its two typical "methods of existence,"—as an opposition party (of "His Majesty") on the one hand, and a governmental party on the other. Undoubtedly he is right when he declares that it is necessary exactly to indicate the reasons why and conditions under which "social-democracy plays its treacherous role in the capacity of a governmental or an opposition party. Social-democracy only finds itself in opposition when the bourgeoisie has no need of its co-operation in order to suppress the working class; with an intensification of the class struggle, with a decline in the influence of the bourgeois parties, with a leftward movement of the social-democrats for the purpose of splitting and suppressing the proletariat, social-democracy enters the government." ("Internationale," No. 12, p. 433.)

The author's remarks on the law of development of reformism into social-fascism in the present historical stage, and also his demand for a more definite formulation of the bourgeoisie's exploitation of the methods of suppressing the proletariat (reformism and Fascism) equally have not only significance from the point of view of theory and principle, but also are of a profoundly actual importance. The formulas proposed by comrade Lenz on this question and also on the necessity for a clearer social characterisation of the "left" social-democrats, and in particular for the branding of the theory and practice of Austro-Marxism, have to be considered highly successful and quite suitable for inclusion in the text of the programme.

Of the other articles printed in "Internationale" we think it necessary to mention comrade Fried's article "On Fascism," and that of comrade Herber on "Crises and Wars." In conclusion we should like to express the desire for the discussions now beginning in various sections of the Comintern to touch in future not only on various "real" issues, but simultaneously to provide a general estimate of the present Draft from the viewpoint of principle and theory.

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# The Land Nationalisation Question in the Comintern Draft Programme

A. Martinov

**I**N the Draft Programme adopted by the Fifth Congress of the Comintern there was mention only of the "proletarian nationalisation of the great landed estates" and of the "struggle with usury and speculation in land." The present Draft, which will be presented to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, goes farther on this issue. It speaks of "confiscation and the proletarian nationalisation of all large landed properties in town and country . . . to be followed subsequently by the nationalisation of all the land." In place of the "struggle with speculation in land" there is mention of "the prohibition of the sale and purchase of land," and of "breach of this law to be vigorously prosecuted." In elucidation of this slogan the present Draft says: "The complete abolition of private property in land and the nationalisation of the land cannot be brought about immediately in the more developed countries where the principle of private property has become deep-rooted among broad strata of the peasantry. In such countries the nationalisation of all the land can only be brought about gradually by means of a series of traditional measures."

## "Gradualism"

Despite the fact that, as we see, the present Draft goes further than that of 1924 in regard to the nationalisation of the land, it has aroused objections from a number of comrades, A. Pietrov, V. Venderovsky (in "Pravda" for June 14th, 1928), Karpinsky (in the "Communist International," Nos. 25-26), who decry "gradualism" in the Draft and insist on the necessity of putting forward the demand for the immediate nationalisation of all land in all capitalist countries.

The arguments of these comrades will not bear criticism. Comrade A. Pietrov, who starts from Lenin's frequently expressed view that it will be more difficult to start the revolution in the developed countries than in Russia, but that it will be easier to finish the construction of socialism, accuses the Draft of "even exaggerating the extent of the various difficulties and compromises along the road of construction of socialism by comparison with technically backward Russia," where the nationalisation of the land was carried through at once. Comrade Pietrov's objections are based on a complete misunderstanding: it is unchallenged that it will be easier to construct socialism in the developed capitalist countries and in particular it will be easier to establish a technical basis for collective agriculture than it was in Russia, but for these countries the Draft Programme outlines only the gradual nationalisation of all the land, starting not from the question of what will happen after the triumph of the revolution, but from that of how to

draw the peasants into an alliance with the proletariat on the eve of the victory and on account of that victory.

Comrade Karpinsky's argument has still less justification. He writes: "In the first place it is not correct that the principle of private property in land has taken deep root among vast sections of the peasantry in the more highly developed countries. It is not correct for the simple reason that in those countries a peasant class is almost non-existent." This declaration is simply incomprehensible. Does comrade Karpinsky think that there is no, or almost no, peasantry in France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Czecho-Slovakia or Sweden? Or perhaps these countries are not highly developed capitalist countries?

These authors' objections do not hold water. None the less, the question raised by them is so important in principle that it is worth while dealing with it in more detail.

## Volte-Face

First and foremost it is necessary to clear away the presentation of the case as though the position taken up on this issue by the Draft represents something new in the Comintern, some *volte-face*. This is absolutely inaccurate. The theses on agrarian reform written by Lenin and adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern speak of nationalisation in the developed capitalist countries in the same manner as the present Draft. In the section of these theses touching on the middle peasantry we read: "The revolutionary proletariat cannot set itself the task (at any rate in the immediate future, and for the beginning of the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat) of drawing this group on to its side. It must restrict itself to the task of neutralising it. . . . The vacillation of this group between the one and the other force is inevitable, and at the beginning of the new period its preponderant tendency in the developed capitalist countries will be in the bourgeoisie's favour. . . . There can be no talk of the immediate abolition of private property by the proletarian government in the majority of capitalist countries."

That Lenin here had in mind private ownership in land and not private property generally is absolutely clear from the context.

But why does the author of these theses, Lenin, who even in 1906, during the period of the bourgeois revolution, put forward the demand for the nationalisation of the land in Russia, later put forward the demand for gradual nationalisation in highly developed capitalist countries during the period of the socialist revolution?

To find the answer to this question it is necessary

**The Land Nationalisation—contd.**

first to have a clear idea of the issues which guided Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1906 in putting forward the slogan of nationalisation. The sole basis was one of pure economic principle. "Nationalisation connotes the annihilation of absolute rentals, the lowering of the price of grain, the ensuring of maximum freedom to competition and freedom to capital to penetrate into agriculture," Lenin said in his closing words on the agrarian question at the Fourth "Union Congress" of the R.S.D.L.P. In another place Lenin wrote: "The radical bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, the bourgeoisie which carries the bourgeois revolution through to its end, will put forward the slogan of the nationalisation of the land." (Lenin: Works, Vol. XV., p. 438.)

But when Lenin put forward this slogan for Russia he based himself not only on principles of an economic nature, but also on the ground that this was what the peasantry in Russia desired. In the same closing words he said: "In answer to the reproaches to the effect that I am fastening nationalisation on the peasantry, I remind you that in my programme there is the 'variant A,' which specially mentions the avoidance of any idea of fastening anything whatever on the peasants against their will." (See Lenin: Works, Vol. IX., p. 420.) In correspondence with this factor the nationalisation slogan was first raised in February, 1906, in the article, "A Reconsideration of the Labour Party Agrarian Programme," and only after the peasantry through the Congresses of the Peasants' Union had pronounced themselves in favour of nationalisation. In this article we read: "In its struggle against landowners' property in land, against landed estates, the peasants will inevitably arrive, and have already arrived in the person of their leading representatives, at the demand for the abolition of all private property in land generally." (See the resolution of the Peasants' Union Congress for 1st August and 6th November, 1905, and the protocol of the Constitutional Congress of the All-Russian Peasants' Union.)

**The 1905-7 Programme**

But Lenin did not confine himself to the fact that this was the peasants' demand. At the beginning of June, 1907, in an article entitled: "The Agrarian Programme of Social-democracy in the Russian Revolution of 1905-1907," he explained why exactly it was that in the specifically agrarian conditions of Russia, with the existence of innumerable vestiges of serfdom, the peasants were bound to reach this demand, to arrive at a radical elimination of the vestiges of serfdom by means of the nationalisation of the land. In this article Lenin wrote: "Think of the modern peasant farm and the character of the allotment, *i.e.*, of the old form of peasant landownership. United by the commerce in tiny administrative-fiscal and landownership unions, the peasants are dismembered by the mass of varied divisions into categories and sections, according to the dimensions of the allotment, the extent of the payment, and so on. Take even the Land Statistical Handbook for Saratov Government; here the peasantry are divided into the following categories: copy holders, owners, full owners, State, State and communal

possession, State with one-fourth possession, State per landowners, allotment, renters of governmental plots, landless, owners formerly estate, on farms under process of purchase, owners formerly allotment, settler-owners, colonists, copyholders formerly estate, owners formerly State, freedmen, free of tax, free grain raisers, temporarily under obligation, former factory hands, and so on, and further, additional, transferred and other peasants."

We see why it was possible to raise the demand for the immediate nationalisation of all the land in Russia in expectation of support being forthcoming for this demand from all the peasant masses. It was because Russia was passing through a bourgeois revolution against the vestiges of serfdom and taking the form of the agrarian revolution, without which the peasant farms could not develop further.

Do those conditions exist in the modern highly developed capitalist countries? Of course not. They have long since passed through their bourgeois revolution, and, moreover, under such conditions that the hegemony in that revolution belonged to the bourgeoisie and not to the proletariat, as the result of which large strata of middle peasant proprietors were established there, largely conservative in their attitude and bound by a thousand threads with the bourgeoisie and in part with the large landowners.

In France the agrarian question was settled during the Great Revolution, by means of annihilating all feudal obligations and vestiges and the distribution of the land of courtier-emigrants. Concerning this resolution of the agrarian problem in France, Marx wrote in his book: "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte": "After the first revolution had transformed the semi-serf peasant into free landed owners, Napoleon stabilised and regulated the conditions under which the peasants could unhindered exploit the French lands only just supplied to them and could satisfy their young passion for ownership. This newly created class represented a continuation of the bourgeois regime in all its aspects beyond the gates of the towns, and its introduction on a national scale. The peasant class everywhere was an essential protest against the only recently overthrown landed ownership of the aristocracy. . . . The boundary marks of the petty landed proprietors represented the natural barrier of the bourgeoisie against all and every attack on the part of its old owners." It is true, Marx goes on to say, that having freed themselves from the oppression of the feudalism, the parcelled French peasantry fell into a new serfdom, that of capitalism, but, of course, they could liberate themselves from that serfdom no longer by way of an agrarian anti-feudal revolution, but only by way of a socialist revolution.

**The Prussian System**

In Germany and in a number of other European capitalist countries, the agrarian problem was resolved, as Lenin put it, "on the Prussian system," by way of a slow, painful development of the peasant farms into capitalist relationships, and by way of a capitalist regeneration of the former landowners. But here also the method of liquidation of feudal relationships had as its consequence the formation of large strata of peasant proprietors, middle peasants and kulaks, who took firm

**The Land Nationalisation—contd.**

hold of their property, and were not only economically but also politically bound with the bourgeois parties, or with the parties of large agrarians. That is why Lenin did not allow a direct copying of the Russian agrarian programme in its application to European capitalist countries no longer faced with the problem of an agrarian revolution. And that is why the resolution on the agrarian problem adopted by the Comintern Second Congress makes a careful distinction between the attitude of the C.P.'s of capitalist countries to various strata of peasantry, of which the resolution counts five. That is why this resolution carefully distinguishes these strata of peasantry which the proletariat can draw to its side before the conquest of power from those which during the period of revolution the proletariat will only succeed in neutralising, drawing them to its side only after the consolidation of power. That is why the resolution made such a cautious approach to the question of the nationalisation of the land in highly developed capitalist countries, in order not to turn possible future allies into real enemies at the moment of the struggle for power.

We think that the present Draft had no reason whatever for subjecting these well thought-out opinions of Lenin to revision. The Draft builds up a different agrarian programme for colonial and semi-colonial countries. Here is directly put forward the demand for the nationalisation of all the land, and this for quite understandable reasons: in colonial and semi-colonial countries in no less measure than in former Tsarist Russia the bourgeois-democratic revolution will pour and is

already pouring into the mould of an agrarian revolution, directed against the vestiges of feudalism (parallel with and in connection with the struggle against imperialism).

Comrade Pietrov accuses the Draft of not taking into account Lenin's indications at the Third Comintern Congress that the Comintern Draft Programme ought not to be "Russian throughout." We consider that this accusation is unjust. If the Draft pays great attention to the experience of the October revolution, if it has even introduced a new section by comparison with previous drafts—that on "the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. and the international socialist revolution," there were two serious justifications for this: first, the Russian experience is so far the sole experience of a victorious proletarian revolution; secondly, it is not by accident that our enemies the social-democrats and the ultra-left renegades of Communism wax indignant because, they say, the Draft wishes to fasten on "civilised" European countries the methods of a revolution consummated in a "barbarian country." If they are indignant at this, it only confirms how important it is to emphasise the great significance of the Russian experience for the benefit of the revolutionary proletariat of capitalistic countries.

But in emphasising the intensified importance of the Russian experience the Draft does not standardise it. And it is in the agrarian section in particular that it indicates the necessity of modifying the agrarian programme in application to the varying concrete historical situation. But by a strange misunderstanding the writer who accused the Draft of being "too Russian" has not observed this big feature.

## The Problem of the Petty Bourgeoisie in the Comintern Programme

D. M. Bukhartsev

"By reason of his very position, the petty bourgeois in modern advanced society becomes socialist on the one hand, and an economist on the other, in other words, he is blinded by the splendour of the great bourgeoisie and sympathises with the sufferings of the people. He is at one and the same time both a bourgeois and the people. In the depths of his soul he is proud of the fact that he is non-party, that he has found the true equilibrium, which has pretensions to distinction from common indifference.

"Such a petty bourgeois defies contradictions, because contradictions are the foundation of his existence. He himself is nothing other than a social contradiction, incarnated in action."—(From a letter from Marx to Annenkov on Proudhon.)

**I**N the Comintern Draft Programme (both in the section on strategy and tactics, and in other sections) the problem of the petty bourgeoisie and our attitude towards it is either missing or else is very little developed.

We have in mind not the village petty bourgeoisie, but a distinct social category: the urban middle-class, into which enter the petty traders, professional intelligentsia, science and art workers, and so on. This varied

mass of small owners and professional workers, cruelly exploited by monopolistic capital, has not only a quantitative but also a qualitative importance both on the eve of the social revolution and the day after it.

"The petty bourgeoisie is a component part of all maturing revolutions," Marx wrote in "18th Brumaire." "This was a time when the working class was still weak and the petty bourgeoisie acted as the organiser of revolutions, and had ideological hegemony over them. The artisans and craftsmen, the workers of the newly born manufacturing system, were only cannon fodder, who gave their lives on the Paris and Berlin barricades in the interests of the petty bourgeoisie. And if the day after a victorious revolution the workers endeavoured to put forward their own demands, to radicalise the petty bourgeois revolution and to carry to their logical conclusion those slogans around which the petty bourgeoisie mobilised them, their petty bourgeois allies were transformed into the class enemies of the Paris and Berlin suburbs."

Such was the inexorable dialectic of history, observed by Marx and Engels. The leader and organiser



**The Petty Bourgeoisie—contd.**

of to-day's revolution against the feudalists and the bankers, to-morrow betrays his comrades, openly passing over to the camp of yesterday's enemies in the name of "adaptation to the conditions of the bourgeois system." (Marx.)

The experience of the French revolutions of the nineteenth century provides a glaring example of this dialectical process. But since then the position has radically changed. The great masses of the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia feel the post-war burdens with particular severity, and are at present living under the post-war difficulties with still more sensitiveness than the working class. The comparative co-efficients of personal welfare before and after the war speak more to the petty bourgeoisie than to the workers. The petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia who have been ruined by the war and the post-war inflation, are living through a serious economic crisis even in the present period of comparative stabilisation of capitalism. The notorious stabilisation and its basis—capitalistic rationalisation—increases the income of the lord of finance capital and the depredatory exploitation of the labour of the working class, but none the less bring no substantial alterations in the situation of the petty bourgeoisie. The latter drag out a miserable existence as before, crushed by the weight of taxation and the impossibility of developing their "businesses" thanks to unemployment, the reduction in wages, and other consequences of rationalisation, which reduce the purchasing level of the internal market.

The economic position of the petty bourgeoisie also defines their ideological outlook. The great masses of the petty bourgeoisie are worn out with the post-war troubles and the permanent economic crisis. In the first post-war years, the years of the "storm and pressure" of the proletarian revolution, large sections of the petty bourgeoisie openly sympathised with the workers and even assisted them. The temporary failure of the revolutionary movement is now throwing the petty bourgeoisie into the opposite camp, the camp of Fascism, which raises the slogan of nationalism, the struggle with bribery and corruption in the State machinery, anti-semitism, an anti-worker pogrom policy and other slogans which impose upon the petty bourgeoisie.

**The Town "Middle Class"**

A large part of the town "middle-class" have become disillusioned with "democracy," and have been attracted by the Fascist slogans, which promise salvation from the post-war woes and a "quiet, peaceful life," an all-powerful argument with the petty bourgeois. From Fascism he expected a restoration of his pre-war well-being. But the coming of Fascism to power has greatly weakened this wave of attraction towards Fascism on the part of the petty bourgeoisie.

Fascism at the head of the State has revealed its class essence, as the representative of the great capitalist and feudal landowners' interests. Italian, Polish and Hungarian Fascism has begun to carry out the policy of this class, thus putting itself into opposition to its ally the petty bourgeoisie.

In the Fascist counter-revolution the petty bourgeoisie has objectively proved to be in the same position as it placed the working class in during the revolution

of the nineteenth century. The petty bourgeoisie in the town and the village are becoming the object of exploitation by feudal-capitalist Fascism and the victims of its terror. The attack on the village in Hungary and Poland, the Fascist terror in Italy, directed not only against the workers but also against the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, are illustrations of the new correlations between the petty bourgeoisie and Fascism.

The petty bourgeoisie impotently tosses between the right and the left extremes, and, afraid of being shattered between the hammer and the anvil, the great bourgeoisie and the proletariat, catches at anything in order to save itself.

The economic lack of basis is reflected in the ideological outlook of the petty bourgeoisie, in the system of ideas and inclinations which organise it.

And here, too, one must note a factor which plays a great role in the formulation of the petty bourgeois outlook. That is the danger of a fresh war. The petty bourgeoisie has no desire for any kind of war, whether imperialist or civil.

For its own personal satisfaction the petty bourgeoisie creates pacifistic theories, and organises a pacifist movement under the flag of struggle with any form of war whatever. The great bourgeoisie approvingly claps the pacifist fools on the back, knowing that when everything is ready for war the pacifists of to-day will humbly take up the rifle, and forgetting their pacifistic slogans for the being being, will zealously annihilate similar "pacifists" on the other side of the trenches at the command of the bourgeoisie. And if a few idealistic pacifists refuse to go to war the bourgeoisie will suffer little from this woe: it will even be more advantageous for it if the opponents of the war are in the rear and cannot demoralise the army at the front.

**"Evolutionary Collectivism"**

Pacifism is only one of the basic ideological evangels of the petty bourgeoisie. Together with it all kinds of patented means of saving humanity (read: "the petty bourgeoisie") spring up like mushrooms, having their reflection not only in politics but in philosophy and literature also. The Pan-Europe theory in politics; the system of "evolutionary collectivism" of Wells, as the "Sun Machine" of Vinnichenko in literature, are all reflections of the ideological confusion which reigns in the brains of the post-war petty bourgeoisie.

The post-war petty bourgeoisie is radically distinguished from his pre-war predecessor. And this peculiarity of the post-war petty bourgeoisie demands a corresponding tactic on the part of the Communist International in regard to various sections of the "middle-class." Unfortunately, the question of our tactics in regard to the petty bourgeoisie has not received the expression it deserved in the Draft Programme. This is too serious an issue to leave with a few phrases, such as "The petty urban bourgeoisie, which constantly oscillates between extreme reaction and a sympathy for the proletariat, must also be neutralised and as far as possible won over to the side of the proletariat. This can be achieved by permitting it to retain its small property and a certain freedom of trade, and by abolishing usurious credit, etc."

**The Petty Bourgeoisie**—contd.

The programme should contain an analysis of the post-war petty bourgeoisie in at least general outline, for on the one hand, to paraphrase Marx, they form "a component part of all the maturing counter-revolution, and on the other they give their votes for the social-democrats at the elections." And neither the one nor the other can resolve the basic economic and political questions which torture the petty bourgeoisie.

The programme should provide a characterisation of the petty bourgeoisie of the period of rotting capitalism, differentiating this social category and its corresponding modifications in countries of highly developed capitalism, in those with an average development of capitalism, and in colonial and semi-colonial countries. In each of these groups of countries the revolutionary proletariat must apply a corresponding tactic in regard to the neutralisation or the winning of the petty bourgeoisie to their side.

In countries of highly developed capitalism the task of the proletariat is not only to neutralise the petty bourgeoisie, but also to organise it under their influence. In Germany the C.P. has at times done this work by no means badly, especially in regard to taxation campaigns, etc. The economic situation of the petty bourgeoisie in countries of highly developed capitalism is worsening with every day, large sections of it are becoming pauperised, and with an intelligent tactic the C.P. can organise these essentially declassified sections for struggle with monopolistic capitalism.

The most difficult task—that of neutralising or attracting the petty bourgeoisie, arises before the C.P.'s of countries with an average level of development. Here, especially in the newly formed States, the petty bourgeoisie's navel has not yet been separated from the great bourgeoisie. Here the petty bourgeoisie is by its economic situation "more patriotic in comparison with the bourgeoisie and in comparison with the proletariat." (Lenin.)

In these countries the policy which Lenin outlined in his "Valuable Confessions of Tsitirima Sorokina" is most applicable.

"The great bourgeoisie has passed through fire, water, and the brazen trumpet. It knows that a democratic republic, like all other forms of the State under capitalism, is nothing other than a machine for the suppression of the proletariat. The great bourgeoisie knows this from its more intimate acquaintance with the real leaders, and with the more secret springs (frequently for this reason the most secret) of any bourgeois State machine. By his economic position, by all the conditions of his life, the petty bourgeoisie is less capable of assimilating this truth, and even retains his illusions concerning the theory that the democratic republic connotes "pure democracy," "a free people's State," a non-class or super-class people's government, a pure manifestation of the all-popular will and so on in like manner."

In these countries the C.P.'s must carry on a long and stubborn struggle for the petty bourgeoisie to live down its patriotic, nationalistic illusions, showing it that only the victory of the working class can bring the petty bourgeoisie of these countries out of the crisis in which it finds itself and resolve the problem of unemployment which sternly confronts the intelligentsia.

Particularly important is the problem of winning the petty bourgeoisie in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Here the petty bourgeoisie can be mobilised comparatively easily against foreign imperialism, and against national oppression, while unmasking the anti-national policy of the great bourgeoisie, which in actuality follows the example of foreign imperialism.

And in conclusion, the programme must more definitely characterise the difference in the proletariat's attitude to the petty bourgeoisie before the seizure of power and after it, and this question has to be raised not only in regard to the technical intelligentsia but in regard to all the other varieties of urban petty bourgeoisie also.

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# The Comintern Programme and the Racial Problem

A. Shiek

**H**ITHERTO the question of racial oppression and racial movements has unfortunately always been thrust into the background, has been ignored, unnoticed, mistakenly identified with the national-colonial question, and mechanically connected with it.

The so-called "racial problem," as it is treated by reactionary bourgeois sociologists, does not exist for us. The theory of "superior" and "inferior" races, of the role of the racial factor in history, and similar conceptions are all pure falsehood. Such things as "superior" and "inferior" races do not exist. Of course, there exist inherited, comparatively stable (although not by any means absolutely invariable) physical differences between peoples, which give anthropologists the right to divide the human species into various so-called racial categories according to the colour of their skin, the shape of the cranium and so on. But all these secondary bodily distinctions have no positive relation whatever to the intellectual, moral and cultural development of peoples. The role of physical racial differences as such is practically non-existent in the history of humanity. The intellectual, cultural and other non-physical differences between individuals and peoples are the results not of these inborn physical differences, but are created by the influence of external natural and social circumstances. The very postulation of the question of "superior" and "inferior" races in regard to modern peoples is pure nonsense, for science has proved beyond all doubt that all modern cultured peoples without exception are extraordinarily mixed from the racial point of view. "Pure races" exist only in the heads of blinded bourgeois politicians.

## "Pure Races"

None the less, this radically false theory of "superior" and "inferior" races is not a simple invention of individual mistaken scientists or blinded politicians. It is the theoretical justification for the racial policy of the definitely exploiter classes.

1. The bourgeoisie of the oppressing nation exploiting the backward colonial and other weaker nations, is interested in consolidating the present conditions, favourable as they are to the achievement of super-profits at the expense of the oppressed nations, in order artificially to keep in check the economic development of these nations. Consequently their interests demand the continuation of the isolation of the oppressed nations as such, their complete segregation from the oppressing nation and the prohibition of their intermixing with the latter. In order to ensure itself the support of the great masses of the toiling population of its own country (which masses are not interested in the oppression and exploitation of colonial and subject nations and have to carry on their backs the enormous expenses indispensable to the realisation of this oppression), the bourgeoisie on the one hand bribes the upper ranks of the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat, granting them a

certain share of their colonial super-profits. On the other hand, in order to establish a strong barrier between the toiling masses of their own nation and the nation it is oppressing, the bourgeoisie creates a false racial ideology and spreads it among its own nation, working up hatred and contempt for the oppressed nations among the working masses, and thus lightening the task of the ruling class of carrying out their policy of violence and isolation in regard to these oppressed nations. It is true that occasionally the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nation resorts to the diametrically opposite policy, to the policy of enforced assimilation, but the isolation policy is the rule, and the assimilation policy is the exception. The latter is applied only in those cases, also truly not rare instance, when there can no longer be any question of keeping the oppressed nation in the position of a backward nation exploited beyond the normal, and when it is a question only of retaining the territory of the oppressed nation or its oppressed masses for their exploitation at least equally with the home territory and the home toiling masses.

Racial belief and racial prejudices are also exploited by the imperialist bourgeoisie for other purposes, and particularly in two directions.

2. The bourgeoisie of the U.S.A., owing to the historical development of circumstances, cannot ensure itself such a share in the exploitation of colonial countries as would correspond to the incredibly swiftly expanding appetites of American capitalism. The American bourgeoisie has extricated itself from this difficult situation by establishing a system of super-exploitation of the negroes, at first as slaves, and afterwards (when thanks to the development of large capitalist industry, the slave-owning plantations became disadvantageous to the stronger, Northern section of the American bourgeoisie, interfering with the further development of capitalism) as a special social group, placed in the position of non-equal members of the nation and society, ostensibly on the ground of racial disparity in value.

3. In many countries, the bourgeoisie puts forward pseudo-intellectual and moral racial peculiarities in relation to one or another national, ethnical or other group, in order on the one hand thus to save themselves from the rivalry of certain other strata of capitalist bourgeoisie, which rivalry is undesirable from the viewpoint of the politically dominating strata of bourgeoisie. On the other hand they are put forward in order that by sowing hatred and dislike among various sections of the toiling population, the bourgeoisie can lighten its task of breaking the opposition of its own toiling masses to capitalist exploitation, and particularly in order to weaken the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, especially where there is no possibility of doing this on a national basis owing to the presence of national dismemberment. Anti-semitism is a typical example of this kind of racial policy.

**The Racial Problem—contd.**

From the foregoing it is clear that in all three instances the racial policy of the exploiters has a concrete economic basis.

In the first instance we are concerned with the oppression and exploitation of certain social groups in their quality as nations, in the other two instances with their oppression and exploitation on the verbal basis of their ostensible racial disparity in value, but actually in consequence of the historical development of force-relationships between them and the oppressing groups, (the negroes, former slaves; the Jews, a former nation scattered throughout the world).

**What is a Race?**

In not one of these cases does either the "race" which oppresses or the "race" which is oppressed correspond with the "race" of which anthropologists speak. They talk, say, of a "yellow race," but not of the "race of Chinese," or of a "black race," but not of a "race of American negroes," and so on. The race subjected to special oppression represents only a part of the anthropological race, another part of which perhaps is quite unoppressed on a racial basis, (the differing position of the Jews in various countries), or is oppressed in completely differing ways, (the racial oppression of the American negroes and the national oppression of the African negro peoples).

The establishment of this fact is very important in order to get a clear idea of the radical error in the resolution of the Comintern Fourth Congress dealing with the negro question, which says that "it is necessary to organise a world movement of negroes," that the "American negroes, especially the negroes of the North," are the advance-guard of the emancipation movement of the "entire African race," that the Comintern must set up "an international organisation of the negro people."

The same resolution says that it is "the duty of the Communists to apply" the theses on the colonial question "to the negro problem." But at the same time it is clear that it is impermissible simply to identify racial oppression and exploitation with national-colonial oppression, that it is impermissible to deal with the racial under a clause on the national question. For of the instances specified above, in the one sole case where the oppressed race is a nation, there is no question of special racial oppression as such. The Chinese people or the African black peoples are oppressed not as races but as backward colonial nations. The racial factor, or better speaking the racial ideology found among the great masses of white population and created by the imperialist bourgeoisie, and the racial prejudices exploited by that bourgeoisie here also, of course, play a great role, by increasing and intensifying the national colonial oppression. None the less this form of oppression and exploitation comes entirely under the category of the "national-colonial question," and the "theses on the colonial question" are entirely applicable to it. But neither in the second instance (negroes in America) nor in the third (the Jews) have these theses any point. For when we speak of the oppression of colonial or other subject nations, we have in mind not social groups, formed on the basis of general secondary physical peculiarities, having no practical importance, but groups

consolidated by the real bonds of common territory, economic system, language and culture, and striving towards an independent national existence. There is no question of these factors existing among the American negroes, or say the Hungarian or Polish Jews. John Reed's words, uttered at the Second Congress, to the effect that "The negroes make no demands whatever for national independence," are absolutely true not only for 1920 but for to-day. (Of course, Reed is referring to the American negroes.) All those movements which had as their aim an independent national existence for the negroes, have been failures, as happened with the "Back to Africa" movement. The negroes regard themselves as Americans and feel quite at home in the United States.

This question is of great importance because the American negroes, like the whole American nation of which they are members, are divided into classes. To the negro worker and poor peasant all thought of national independence is foreign. Moreover the negro bourgeois is not averse to having a monopoly in the super-exploitation of the millions of toilers of his own race. It is the coloured bourgeoisie who invent all sorts of legends anent a "special negro culture," the "brotherhood of the whole African race" and similar nonsense. (One cannot understand why these terms could have found their way into the Fourth Congress resolution.) It is they who project the various "nationalist" movements of negroes demanding self-determination. But Communists should not allow themselves to be caught in such snares. They should put forward demands on behalf of the oppressed American negroes not as a nation, but as a race (and the same applies to the oppressed Jews in certain capitalist countries) and they should demand not the right to national self-determination (self-determination has no practical meaning here!) but complete political and social equality.

**National Wars and Colonial Revolts**

The Draft Programme says that national wars and colonial revolts, "though not in themselves being socialist movements of the revolutionary proletariat, objectively constitute a component part of the world proletarian revolution." (Section 4, par. 1.) This (with certain provisos) can and ought to be said also in regard to the emancipation movement of an oppressed race whereas a racial movement makes its appearance in a pure form, i.e., wherever it is a question not of a movement of colonial peoples, the oppression of which is intensified by the racial policy of the imperialist oppressors, but one of the oppression and exploitation of a racial minority within a capitalist country. Such racial emancipation movements and national anti-militarist movements among the colonial peoples are distinct from one another by the character of the movement, and by the role played in it by the bourgeoisie. In so far as they are really directed against the imperialist bourgeoisie and in favour of national emancipation (and not against one imperialist Power in the interests of another) the movements of the colonial peoples or national minorities can be revolutionary, even when they are directed by the bourgeoisie, and even if there is no proletariat, or almost no proletariat in the ranks of the movement whatever. But the bourgeoisie of an oppressed racial minority cannot play a revolutionary role. As a component part of the bourgeoisie

**The Racial Problem—contd.**

of an imperialist nation, they are not interested in an anti-imperialist movement. Their aim is not the overcoming of imperialism, but only the winning of complete equality for themselves, and participation in the imperialist spoils on a basis of equality with the rest of their class. They strive not to overcome the imperialist oppression of the toiling masses of their own race, but towards an agreement with the white bourgeoisie in regard to the exploitation of those masses.

But an enormous revolutionary role can be played (and always is played) by the anti-imperialist racial-emancipation movement of the workers and the petty bourgeois masses of a racial minority, directed by the proletariat. (The petty bourgeoisie, who waver between the revolutionary anti-imperialist proletariat and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, cannot have an independent movement.) Communists should support and organise such a racial movement by all means, but on no account should they support "any form of negro movement," as the Fourth Congress resolution says, nor the "international racial movement against capitalism and imperialism" (in the same resolution). The latter movement cannot exist in nature, for as we have seen above, such a movement can be only bourgeois and reactionary.

**The Negro Question**

In the United States more than ten million negroes represent an enormous reserve for the revolutionary proletariat of America, one that can be a mighty ally in its struggle against American capitalism. In order to transform this potential into an actual ally the C.P. should work out a corresponding revolutionary strategy and tactics in regard to the negroes and their movement. The basic strategic task is to safeguard the hegemony of the proletariat in the emancipation movement of the race, consolidating the great masses of the oppressed racial minority around the Party in the form of a non-Party mass racial organisation, under the leadership of Communists. To this end it is necessary to ensure the confidence of the negro masses in the Party. And this cannot be achieved otherwise than by way of bringing certain activities to the forefront as part of the militant tasks of the Party. Such activities should be the re-education of the white workers, and of the Communists themselves in the first place, in order to speed up the process of outliving racial prejudices, with at the same time a declaration of a ruthless ideological struggle against such prejudices within the Party and within other workers' organisations under Party influence and also the concentration of special attention on the racial question in the everyday struggle of the Party.

What statement should the Comintern make in its programme in regard to the racial question?

1. The programme should first and foremost show the oppressed races that the C.P. does not recognise and does not possess any racial prejudices whatever, that it rejects any division of humanity into "superior" and "inferior" races according to their intellectual and moral qualities, that when speaking of a racial question, racial movements, "coloured races" and so on, as a political question, it has in view not the race as it is understood by anthropology, and not as it is understood

by the imperialists and the non-class-conscious section of the white workers and petty bourgeoisie deluded by the imperialists and blinded by racial prejudices, but a race as a group of people distinct from their brothers by nation and class not only by the colour of their skin and other unessential bodily peculiarities, but by the fact that they are subject to special oppression and exploitation.

2. The programme should make it clear that the C.P. attaches great importance to the racial question, that in the oppressed masses of coloured proletariat it recognises its brothers by class and comrades in struggle, while in the other coloured toilers it recognises its closest allies in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism. And further that it realises and fully estimates the enormous revolutionary role of the racial movement of the toilers and supports it with all its powers.

3. The programme should tell the oppressed races that the Communist Party stands for the complete political and social equality of races, which equality it will realise without delay as soon as it captures State power; while until the victory of the revolution it will not only support the revolutionary anti-imperialist movement of the toiling masses of the oppressed race, but will itself struggle against the racial policy of the bourgeoisie, against super-exploitation on a racial basis, against all forms of political or social restrictions and inequalities suffered by coloured citizens.

In accordance with the foregoing, I propose the following definite amendments and additional paragraphs to the Draft Programme.

To the Introduction:

1. In par. 4, instead of: "With bonds of blood and iron it ties the proletarians of all countries, nationalities and races . . ." to read: "all countries, peoples and nations." In the original draft the word "race" is used in the anthropological sense, which has to be avoided.

2. At the end of the same par., instead of: "Irrespective of nationality, race, sex or profession . . ." to read: "irrespective of nationality, national distinctions, profession, sex, colour of skin and similar physical differences." If we speak of "racial distinctions" side by side with national distinctions, every negro will take it to mean that we recognise the existence of racial peculiarities in addition to physical differences.

3. At the end of par. 8 (7) instead of: "the Communist International was formed, and for the first time in history the most progressive strata of the European and American proletariat were really united with the proletariat of China and India and with the coloured labourers of Africa and America" . . . to read: "the most progressive strata of the proletariat of the western capitalist countries with the proletariat of China and India, and other colonial and semi-colonial countries." Because (i) the America negro, who also is a "black-skinned labourer," may not be separated from the "American proletariat"; (ii) the Communist International is not a federation of "labourers," even of black-skinned labourers, but a federation of proletarians: it educates, organises and federates other labourers under its direction, but not in the ranks of the Comintern itself.

To Section One:

4. In the penultimate paragraph, instead of: "all the colonies, all races and all nations," to read: "all the colonies, all peoples and nations." (See par. 1 above.)

**The Racial Problem**—contd.

To Section Two:

5. In the middle of par. 12 (10) (on Fascism) after the words: "by a peculiar form of social demagogy," to strike out the word "anti-semitism" (within parentheses). Also a few lines lower, after the words: "discontent with the passivity of Social-Democracy" to strike out "etc." and to add "in order to disintegrate and weaken the working class and the revolutionary toiling masses, Fascism zealously preaches racial theories, kindling racial hatred among various sections of the working class and toilers of the petty bourgeoisie (anti-semitism, a contemptuous attitude to coloured peoples), and exploiting the racial prejudices of the non-class-conscious masses of their own 'race,' inciting the latter to participate in terroristic acts organised by its own agents, which acts cost the lives of many hundreds and thousands of toilers of the oppressed races (Jewish pogroms, the lynching of negroes)." Anti-semitism is by no means simple "demagogy." It is unfortunately practised not in words but in deeds!

6. In the same paragraph, after the words: "combination of social demagogy, corruption," insert the words: "racial policy."

7. Between the second and third paragraphs from the end to insert the following new paragraph: "Together with the intensification of class contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, in a number of European countries, especially in the 'liberated' 'national' States newly created by the Entente after the world war, thanks to the creation of these States according to the needs of the larger imperialist Powers fresh severe national conflicts have developed, resulting in a constant clash between the bourgeoisie of the dominant nations in these countries on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie and still more the toiling masses of the oppressed national minorities on the other (Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugo-Slavia, Roumania). In consequence mainly of the transference of enormous masses of negro poor from the agrarian south to the industrial north of the U.S.A., a process begun after the war and still continuing, the consciousness of the negro proletarian and semi-proletarian masses has greatly developed, dissatisfaction has grown with their lack of equal rights, and with their revolutionary determination to win complete equality. This has led on the one hand to numerous racial revolts, and on the other to the great masses of coloured toilers realising the necessity for the oppressed race to struggle in an organised manner against racial oppression. It is true that in the majority of cases the negro movement still remains under the leadership of compromising coloured bourgeoisie (Du Bois and Garvey's movements, and others) but of recent years the first steps have been taken towards the organisation of the negro masses under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat and its Communist Party (the Negro Workers' Congress and the entry of negro workers into the Party)."

8. In the following paragraph, after the words: "millions of the masses in the colonies"; to insert: "and also the oppressed national and racial minorities within the capitalist countries themselves."

To Section Three:

9. In the section on world communism it is necessary to point to the disappearance of national and racial

barriers among peoples. To this end the following new paragraph to be inserted before the last paragraph: "With the disappearance of all kinds of artificial barriers between peoples and all hindrances to their mingling with one another, and with the unprecedented perfecting of all the possibilities and resources of communication and transport, all national distinctions between peoples will gradually disappear. The physical racial distinctions now existing will cease to exist as racial, in other words group peculiarities, since no intermediate groups attached by the social conditions of life to one definite natural environment will exist between the individual and society. The physical distinctions between people, as also the distinctions in capabilities and knowledge, will continue to exist in the quality of individual distinctions, but they will be reduced to a minimum, thanks to social conditions of existence common to all members of the single human society."

10. In the last par. after the words: "which have not yet managed to die out," to continue: "including the traces of the now completely eliminated economic and social inequalities among nations, since on the one hand the cultural distinctions between peoples and the natural barriers to their complete union cannot be set aside in a moment, while on the other hand the elimination of the ideological superstructure will follow only tardily after the elimination of the economic basis."

To Section Four:

11. In the first par., after the words: "Maturing social revolution," to change the wording to read: "period of national wars, colonial revolts and revolutionary movements among the oppressed racial groups."

In this section it is necessary to point out exactly what Communism gives the oppressed nations and races during the transition period of the dictatorship. To this end the following have to be added:

12. At the end of the fifth par. after the words: "overcoming of classes," to add: "the total liquidation of national disputes and the gradual living down of all national and racial prejudices."

13. In the thirteenth (12th) par., after the words: "abolishes inequality among citizens," to continue: "abolishing all and every political privilege or restriction in rights founded on differences of sex, religion and nationality, without any delay and without exception."

14. In the same par. after the words: "sex, religion and nationality," (as above) to add: "colour of skin and other physical characteristics," (or simply "races," only then the word must be placed within inverted commas!)

15. At the end of the same par. after the word: "colonies," to add: "ensuring the former oppressed races (negroes, Jews and others) the material realisation of their social equality."

16. The beginning of the par. on the struggle with religion to be re-written as follows: "among the tasks in the struggle with bourgeois prejudices and superstitions the struggle with the opium of the people, religion, and with racial prejudices occupy special places. The struggle against religion must be conducted systematically. . . ." etc.

17. After this par. to insert a fresh par: "In the struggle against racial prejudices the proletarian government will not limit itself to the declaration of the social equality of formerly unequal groups and the

**The Racial Problem—contd.**

material guaranteeing of the possibility of realising that equality, but will moreover carry on an extensive instructional and educational work among the great masses of the population, with a view to the ultimate outliving of all remnants of racial prejudices, and will keenly watch to ensure that the toiling masses shall not manifest an unjust or contemptuous attitude (inherited from the bourgeoisie) towards these groups of the population: while the endeavours of the overthrown exploiting classes to exploit the remnants of such prejudices for the purpose of inciting the non-conscious proletarians or the toilers of the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian government (anti-semitic agitation, pogrom attempts, and such methods) will be punished with all the harshness of revolutionary justice."

18. In the following par., after the words: "colonial revolutions," to add: "anti-militarist racial movements."

19. In the first phrase of the third par. from the end, after the words: "movements for national emancipation," to add: "and movements of the toiling oppressed racial minorities for their political and social equality."

To Section Five:

20. In the seventh (sixth) par. from the end (on the U.S.S.R.'s support of the revolutionary movements) to change the last phrase to make it read: "the support of the struggle against national and racial oppression in whatever form it may appear."

To Section Six:

21. In the par. treating of the Party's strategical aims, after the words: "guided by the Communist Party," to add: "the winning of the confidence of the national and racial minorities and the guidance of their movement."

22. In the par. on the strategy and tactics of the C.I. it is especially important to point out the Comintern's attitude to the national and racial minorities, to their demands and their movements, which is done quite inadequately and unsatisfactorily in the draft. In the sixth par. from the end, nothing whatever is said about national minorities. In regard to racial minorities mention is made only of propaganda and the support of their movements, but there is not a word on the struggle of the Party itself. But mention is made of the support of

any struggle carried on by the oppressed race "against the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nation," which is inaccurate, since we ought not to support the reactionary racial movements of the coloured bourgeoisie, which are also directed "against the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nation." Moreover, it is impermissible to mention the struggle against all forms of chauvinism in the same sentence as the struggle against imperialist racial policy, since we ought to struggle against chauvinism among the oppressed nations and races also. This par. must be re-written as follows: after the first parenthesis (for example in Latin America) to continue: "and also in the imperialist countries themselves; it not only supports all revolutionary, anti-imperialist movements of the oppressed and exploited national and racial minorities by all means in its power, and not only conducts a written and oral propaganda and agitation in favour of full equality for both these minorities (in regard to the national minorities in favour of their right to self-determination also), but in its every-day, practical work it energetically and uncompromisingly attacks the national and racial policy of the bourgeoisie, and both generally and in every separate case it insists on the abolition of super-exploitation on a national or racial basis, and also of all and every political or social restriction and inequality in application to individual members of oppressed national and racial minorities. While not for one moment ceasing its struggle for the complete political and social equality of races, the Comintern simultaneously puts forward clear and definite, concrete, militant partial demands, the realisation of which may in larger or smaller measure alleviate the position of the toiling masses of the oppressed national or racial minorities. The acceptance of partial achievements is not in the least contradiction with the principle of an uncompromising, militant, national and racial policy.

"The Comintern struggles against all forms of chauvinism and the arbitrary treatment of one nation by another, one race by another, but it struggles with especial energy against the chauvinism of the great power nations, a chauvinism which is preached both by the imperialist bourgeoisie and by its social-democratic agency the Second International; it further struggles with racial prejudices against coloured peoples and the Jews, continually contrasting the conduct of the imperialist . . . and so on."



# How the American Communists are Conducting Their Election Campaign

Jay Lovestone

**T**HIS year will see the American Communists participating in a parliamentary campaign more intensively and on a greater scale than in any previous year. For a number of months the Workers' (Communist) Party has been engaged in direct preparations for putting the Party on the ballot in its own name in as many of the 48 states as possible. Leaflets and pamphlets have been issued. Election conventions have already been held in over 20 states. A highly successful national nominating convention was held at the close of May for the adoption of an election platform and the selection of comrades W. Z. Foster and Ben Gitlow as the presidential standard-bearers of our Party in the November elections. Hundreds of Communist mass meetings are being arranged throughout the country. Scores of thousands of copies of the election platform are being distributed.

Organisers are working in new industrial centres where the Party organisation is weak or non-existent. For the first time in the history of the Party an organised, intensive effort is being made to pierce the "Solid South"—the most reactionary tier of states in the country, notorious for their disfranchising and severe oppression and lynching of the negro masses. Increased attention is being paid to the exploited farmers, the negro masses, the youth and working women. The entire election campaign has as its keynote the class struggle, and is based on such activities of the Party as the great miners' strike, the textile workers' fight and the long-drawn-out struggle of the needle trades workers.

## Setting up the Election Machinery

Our Party was born as a result of the break-up of the old Socialist Party in 1919. Through this split it inherited a wholesome opposition to parliamentary cretinism, to the miserable opportunism of the old Socialist Party parliamentary politicians. But in this wholesome reaction, there was also carried over a dangerous syndicalist opposition to participation in parliamentary activities.

Thus in the 1920 presidential elections, our Party's national slogan was "Boycott the Elections." In 1924 we had great difficulty in mobilising our Party for active participation in the election campaign. We have not yet completely shaken off these syndicalist prejudices. An essential part of the present election campaign of our Party has been to elevate the ideological level of the membership so as to give them an increasing understanding of Leninist, revolutionary, Communist participation in the election campaigns.

Our Party districts are organised along the line of industrial sections. We have one district, for instance, covering the Pittsburg coal and steel territory known as the Western Pennsylvania District. We have another district consisting of the metropolitan area of New York City and neighbouring New Jersey industrial cities in

which are found such industries as textile, oil refining and metal products. We have other districts like the Kansas districts which include a number of states equivalent to an area of five or six of the European countries. States like New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, are included in several districts while districts like the agricultural, the Seattle, the Kansas, the Minneapolis and the South, consist of several states. But for the election campaign, the individual state is the unit. It is therefore necessary for our Party to adjust its organisation and set up special election machinery.

Besides, there are innumerable difficulties set up by the much-vaunted American bourgeois democracy to make it almost impossible for a revolutionary proletarian party like our own to participate effectively in parliamentary elections. Each of the forty-eight states has its own set of election laws limiting the ways and means of parties getting on the ballot. The slightest technical error can be used to deny the Communist Party the right to be on the ballot. In 1924 the Communist Party was on the ballot in only fifteen states.

The aim of these election laws is to prevent the organisation of new parties and perpetuate the so-called two-party system—Republican and Democratic. Comrade Lenin has thus characterised the two-party system: "This so-called 'two-party system' reigning in America . . . has been one of the most powerful methods of preventing the foundation of an independent Labour, that is, a genuine Socialist Party."

In a number of industrial states where the Party has the best prospects, these legal restrictions are the worst. For example, in Ohio, our Party must secure a petition for placing it on the ballot signed by about 25,000 citizens, before it can put up its candidates. In New York, an even larger number of signatures is required. In California, a minimum of 30,000 signatures must be secured in order to place the Party on the ballot. These endorsements of the Party's being on the ballot by citizens are not valid unless they are from all sections of a particular state. A minimum number of signatures is required from each county of the state. It often occurs that in a number of rural counties our Party organisation is either very weak or non-existent. If one ineligible person signs a petition, then the whole list is challenged and our Party is denied the right to appear on the ballot. Then in such states as Oklahoma and other Southern states, the Secretary of State who is in charge of such work often simply refuses to recognise the Communist Party's right to appear on the ballot and does not even consider petitions when presented.

## Mobilising the Party

Mobilisation of the membership for participation in the election campaign began rather early this year. This was occasioned by the following facts. First of all, we have a splendid opportunity, due to the economic



**American Election Campaign—contd.**

depression and the rising readiness of the masses for struggle against the capitalist offensive, to utilise the election campaign for Communist propaganda and mobilisation of the working masses for struggle. Then, there is the need to overcome the lingering indifference and even hostility in our ranks towards Party participation in parliamentary campaigns. Third, there are the great barriers put up by American "democracy" against Communist participation in election campaigns.

The presidential election takes place on November 6th. Simultaneously, there are elections for the United States Senate and highest state offices in a number of states. In the February Plenum of the Central Committee of our Party it was made clear to the Party that the prospects for a National Labour Party or even a United Labour Ticket in 1928 were exceedingly slight. Great emphasis was placed on the need for mobilising the Party resources to get on the ballot. Various political letters were sent to the units to counteract the indifference and hostility still pervading the attitude of certain sections of our Party towards Communist participation in election campaigns, as well as to warn against opportunist errors. As early as February 29, the Political Committee instructed all districts to prepare for putting petitions into the field for Foster and Gitlow. Immediately, special machinery was set up to help the districts overcome the technical obstacles for the Party's getting on the ballot. On March 19 all districts were instructed to put full Workers' Party tickets into the field. A National Election Campaign Committee was elected and similar committees were elected on a district scale.

On March 28th, the Political Committee appointed additional field organisers for the election campaign and announced its decision to propose comrades Foster and Gitlow who were our standard-bearers in 1924. Special organisers were sent into the south and south-west. Our mobilisation for the election campaign began with the preparations of the Party itself, then, the mobilisation of sympathetic masses and their organisations. These preparations were ideological and organisational. The Party units were given material preparing them for the issues and various phases of the election campaign.

**Placing the Party on the Ballot**

We have seen the numerous difficulties placed in the way of our Party's getting on the ballot in the presidential elections. This year there is a likelihood that we will be on the ballot in at least thirty states or double the number of states we were on in 1924. Already our candidates are on the ballot in such states as Michigan, Delaware, Oklahoma, Georgia, Virginia and West Virginia. In none of these states did we have a ticket in the 1924 elections.

Our Party is utilising the campaign to get on the ballot as an opportunity to spread *Communist propaganda*, to bring the *Communist programme* before greater masses, and to introduce our Party to thousands of workers hitherto unreached. House-to-house canvass, factory and factory-gate agitation, open-air meetings, canvassing workers' fraternal and educational organisations, drives in the trade unions, are among the ways

employed by our Party organisers for securing the sufficient legal requirements prerequisite to our being on the ballot. The entire membership is being drawn into this campaign. This drive also serves to bring life to some of our lagging nuclei.

The campaign to get the Party on the ballot is an integral part of the campaign we are now waging to increase the Party's membership and vitalise its units. Then, in our efforts to put the Party on the ballot in the south we are establishing new contacts, developing our work particularly amongst the negro masses. This is very significant for the entire working class because *there is practically no labour movement in the south*, and even the few weak conservative trade unions that exist there lead a precarious semi-legal existence in many instances.

Of course, the campaign for securing signatures to get on the ballot is fraught with certain serious dangers that have to be faced in the effort to overcome all the difficulties set up by the American bourgeoisie. Some comrades may drift into dangerous opportunistic errors. For instance, an example of such gross errors is to be found in a circular prepared by a technical worker in our election campaign giving suggestions for securing signatures. These suggestions were completely disregarded, and were in utter violation of the basic policy of the Party that the signature campaign must be used for developing Communist propaganda and agitation, and for winning new adherents to the Party. This document reflected a crass reformist concept of parliamentary activity. The author of this document had no authority to draw it up. Before distribution of these suggestions got well under way it was immediately prohibited from circulation by the secretary of the Party. This circular containing the silliest non-Communist suggestions aiming to get signatures to place the Party on the ballot through "tricks" instead of through Communist propaganda, was never the policy of our Party or any section of it, and was prepared by an office clerk without permission and in violation of instructions and decisions of the Political Committee of the Party. It was drawn up before the Election Campaign Committee had been organised.

Detailed official instructions were sent on several occasions in the name of the Political Committee to the Party units giving the correct Communist line of approach in securing such signatures. Subsequently the Political Committee severely condemned the author and contents of these non-Communist suggestions, and branded them as entirely against the Party policy in election campaigns, as foreign to Communism, and decided once more to send additional instructions to all Party units and prepare articles for the Party press to make impossible the recurrence of such an incident in the campaign to get on the ballot.

**Character and Aims of Our Campaign**

The declaration sent by the Political Committee to the Party dealing with the preparations for the National Nominating Convention, characterises the procedure and objective of our participation in the election campaign as follows:

"The Party's election campaign will be based upon all the other campaigns that the Party is

## American Election Campaign—contd.

conducting at the present moment, and organically tied up with the struggles of the working class . . . the mining campaign, unemployment, organising the unorganised, struggle against imperialist war—Nicaragua, China, Defence of the Soviet Union, textile and needle trades' struggle. . . . The keynote to be struck by our Party throughout the campaign must be the class struggle . . . in connection with the dropping of this slogan by the Socialist Party at its last Convention. . . .

"The election campaign must present our Party as the champion of all sections of the working class, strikers, unorganised workers, negroes, youth, women, children, colonial masses. *Our Party must appear in the election campaign as the single revolutionary working-class force, as the sole fighting force against the reactionary trade union bureaucracy, as the organiser of the unorganised, as the deadly enemy of the Socialist Party.*

"*The campaign should not restrict itself to our immediate demands, but we should stress all our final aims before the working class. We should raise issues of a workers' and farmers' government, the overthrow of capitalism, the problems of a Communist society. We have to throw all forces of the Party into the campaign, and at the same time have to guard ourselves against all kinds of parliamentary illusions. To gain seats in the various legislative bodies is very important for our Party, because we can utilise them as mass tribunals to reach out for the workers, but we should not forget that our basic aim in this campaign is the mobilisation of the broadest possible masses.*"

At the National Nominating Convention a resolution was adopted on building the Party during the election campaign, reading in part as follows :

"The presidential campaign gives the Workers' (Communist) Party *an excellent opportunity to reach the broad sections of the American working class with the slogans and programme of Communism.* . . . No campaign meeting should be allowed to go by without making a strong appeal to the workers present to join the Party. Every copy of our campaign literature, every Party publication, must contain as a part of its general contents a similar appeal to non-Party workers. . . .

"It must be *systematically emphasised that the election campaign is but one phase of the class struggle which must be prosecuted all the year round,* and that for this purpose the building and strengthening of the Workers' (Communist) Party is the main guarantee for a revolutionary fight against American imperialism. . . .

"Particularly, efforts must be made to enlist into the Party factory workers so that out of the election campaign a broad network of Communist factory nuclei shall have been established in the industrial centres. Similarly, energetic steps must be taken to draw into the Party the native

American workers and exploited farmers and negroes."

## State and National Nominating Conventions

In order to mobilise more effectively the Party and greater non-Party masses, as well as in some instances to meet certain technical legal requirements, in order to dramatise before the American workers the plan of the Party to participate effectively in the presidential election campaign, there were organised a number of state conventions and a national convention for the purpose of adopting the Communist election platform and selecting standard-bearers. Already more than 20 states, among these such southern states as Virginia and Georgia, have held state nominating conventions. The National Nominating Convention took place at the end of May. In the call issued by the Central Committee for the holding of these conventions we find the following keynote struck :

"In the presidential campaign of this year the class-conscious workers must mobilise the working masses and unify all the struggles against the exploiters. . . . *The Workers' (Communist) Party is the only Party of working-class struggle in the United States. Our Party is a Party of revolutionary class struggle. We are not only vigorous participants but energetic leaders in all the struggles of our working class. The Central Executive Committee is calling this National Nominating Convention in order to mobilise more effectively our Party's resources for participation in the coming presidential elections with a view towards utilising this election campaign for arousing and organising effective resistance by the working class to the capitalist offensive.*"

The National Nominating Convention was called for the purpose of adopting an election platform, nominating presidential candidates and electing a National Campaign Committee. The entire Party was mobilised for this convention.

Delegates from factories, mines, mills, from organisations of the negro masses, from societies of the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial masses of Latin America, from working-class women's organisations and youth organisations, striking miners, textile workers and needle workers, were to be found in large numbers in all the state nominating conventions, and particularly in the National Nominating Convention.

The number of delegates participating in the convention exceeded all expectations. There were 296 delegates from 39 states and the district of Columbia. There were about 150 fraternal delegates, mostly non-Party workers, from trade unions, co-operatives, youth and working women's organisations, unemployment councils, negro organisations, anti-imperialist societies, farmers' organisations and Councils for the Protection of Foreign-born Workers. The fraternal delegates especially were elected at mass meetings of workers. Amongst the regular delegates there were at least 25 negro workers. Amongst the fraternal delegates there were representatives from Nicaragua, Chile, Mexico, Haiti and Canada.

Never before was there so much enthusiasm manifested at a gathering of Communists in the United States as at the National Nominating Convention. The bour-

**American Election Campaign—contd.**

geois press was compelled to admit that it was the biggest and most enthusiastic gathering of this kind that they have yet seen. Delegates came all the way from the Pacific Coast to New York by "skipping freight"—"riding the rod," as we say in the United States—that is, by hiding in trains, because of the high railroad fare. Some came by autobuses, others "hiked," still others organised special tours by automobile, piling in a number of workers into one old, second-hand cheap car, secured at an insignificant price, sufficient for making a trip and return, in order to avoid the heavy cost of railroad fare.

The National Nominating Convention was significant in five main respects :

*First.*—There were a large number of delegates who are native Americans. The American bourgeoisie have been pounding away for some time on the fact that our Party has to date largely attracted foreign-born workers. The latter are the ones found primarily in the basic heavy industries.

*Second.*—In this convention there were delegates who had won the confidence of the masses through years of struggle in the early anarchist movement, syndicalist movement, and the old socialist movement, as well as in the trade union movement. This convention presented our Party as the inheritor of the best and revolutionary traditions of all these movements.

*Third.*—The Convention clearly established the fact that our Party was the sole champion of the negroes, the colonial masses, the workers battling against the mine-owners, the exploited farming masses, the working-class women and youth. The large number of negro delegates participating in the work and leadership of the Convention was symbolic of the determination of the Party to break through and enter the "Solid South," and very clearly distinguish our Party from the parties of the big and small bourgeoisie—the Republican, Democratic and Socialist Parties—in which the negroes were either segregated or given a back seat.

*Fourth.*—The Nominating Convention brought into bold relief the fact that our Party is now national in scope. Our Party has been called by the reactionary trade union bureaucracy and other capitalist organs an "eastern" party. At the Convention there were represented delegates from Maine to California, and from Texas to Vermont. Every section of the country was represented. Delegations of striking miners and textile workers from New England and from the Pennsylvania-Ohio and West Virginia coalfields played a conspicuous role in the Convention.

*Finally.*—The Convention emphasised to the American workers the fact that our Party is an international Party, a section of the Communist International. The greetings from the Communist International evoked tremendous enthusiasm. The election victories of the Communist Parties of Germany, France and Poland were of striking and basic importance for us in securing the effective mobilisation of our Party members and sympathetic non-Party masses for the election campaign. The Convention denounced the criminal Shakhty conspirators against the Soviet Union then on trial in Moscow. Pledges of revolutionary proletarian solidarity were made

to the Communist Parties of Great Britain, Germany, Soviet Union, France, Poland, etc.

The Convention selected comrades Foster and Gitlow as the presidential standard-bearers in the election campaign and adopted the Party election platform.

**Our Election Platform**

The election platform adopted by the Convention is the most complete presentation of Communist analysis and indictment of capitalism as well as statement of the position of the Party towards the basic questions confronting the working class that we have got out to date. American imperialism is presented in its true light. The striking gap between the wealth of the bourgeoisie and the poverty of large sections of the working class and exploited farmers is brought into clear contrast. The unemployment crisis is analysed from a Marxist viewpoint, and a programme for immediate action is proposed. The parties of the big and small business interests—Republican, Democratic and Socialist—are put before the masses in their true light.

A programme to meet the offensive of the capitalists is outlined in detail. Special attention is paid to the heroic struggle of the miners. Particular emphasis is laid on the need for mobilising the masses to paralyse the aggressive imperialist manœuvres of Wall Street against the central and South American countries, China and the Soviet Union. The Party pledges itself to do everything in its power to turn the next imperialist war into a civil war, and raises the slogan : "Not a man, not a gun, not a cent for the imperialist army and navy." The Party called upon the American marines to go over to the side of the revolution in Nicaragua and China. The Party demands complete and immediate independence for all American colonies and semi-colonies. It demands immediate recognition of the Soviet Union and establishment of direct connections between the American and Russian working class.

The veil is stripped from the hypocritical capitalist democracy serving as the most cunning, powerful, ruthless strike-breaking agency in the world—the strike-breaking United States Government. The Party makes clear its position as an advocate of the building of a national mass Labour Party, but at the same time emphasises that it is "a dangerous illusion to think that the workers can assume power by electing more and more members to Congress or executive officials." Our Party demands a Labour Party "because it considers this the first decisive step towards independent political action by the working class, the first step of the workers to break away from the parties of the bosses. At the same time the Communist Party considers it its duty to tell the workers frankly that a Labour Party has its limitations, and that it will not be able to lead the workers in their final struggle for their emancipation. Only a Communist Party can do that."

The Communist position towards tariff and taxation is made clear in the platform. The plight of the exploited farming masses is brought home very effectively. Particular stress is laid on the oppression of the negroes. The Party demands the abolition of race discrimination and stands for full racial, social and political equality. The platform demands :

"Abolition of all laws which disfranchise the negroes on line of colour. Abolition of all laws

## American Election Campaign—contd.

forbidding inter-marriage between persons of different races. Abolition of all 'Jim Crow' laws. Immediate removal of all restrictions in all trade unions against the membership of negro workers. Equal opportunity for employment, wages, hours, working conditions for negro and white workers."

The platform further draws the attention of the workers to the need for solidarity of all working men, native as well as foreign born, in order to resist the attacks on the foreign-born workers, which attacks are only part of the general offensive against the whole working class. The status of working women and working youth, and an immediate programme to meet these conditions, are outlined in the platform.

In discussing the prohibition question, the platform brands alcoholism as "one of the most terrible social diseases of capitalist society." It declares further that "only the overthrow of capitalism will sweep away the despicable boot-legging industry and the equally despicable, corrupt, hypocritical prohibition enforcement." The platform then declares:

"The Workers' (Communist) Party favours:

- (1) the repeal of the Volstead and the 18th Amendment;
- (2) dissolution of the Federal, and State prohibition enforcement apparatus;
- (3) energetic propaganda against alcoholism as one of the most malignant social diseases under capitalism."

Our summing up slogan is "Forward to a Workers'

and Farmers' Government." We emphasise that a workers' and farmers' government in the United States will "free all American colonies immediately, will grant the right of full self-determination to all Latin-American peoples, will realise social equality for negroes, will disarm the master class, and will arm the working masses, will expropriate all large-scale industries, railroads, power plants, meat-packing plants . . . will nationalise all large land estates, and will hand them over to the mortgaged and tenant farmers and agricultural workers, will nationalise all banks and commercial interests."

The whole spirit and purpose of the Party election campaign is summed up in the conclusion of the platform, which calls upon the working masses "to go forward by means of relentless class struggle," and emphasises that "*the Workers' (Communist) Party is the Party of the class struggle. It is the deadly enemy of capitalist society. It fights for the complete unity of the working class, for the united struggle of native-born, foreign and negro workers against the common enemy—trustified capital.*"

We have a good start in our election campaign. The coming months will see our activities intensified. The entire Party is being drawn into the fight. The outlook is, that because of the energetic activities of our Party in the big struggles of the workers like the miners and textile strikes and the needle trade, that our American Section of the Communist International will receive this year many times greater support in the election campaign than ever before.

## On a Certain Election Document

THE American Communist Party began its election campaign comparatively recently. Until the last moment the Party lived in the hope that it would succeed in uniting the great working masses in the "Labour Party" before the forthcoming presidential elections, and that this party would be able to enter the struggle against the bourgeois parties and against their agents the bureaucrats of the American Federation of Labour and the reformists of the American Socialist Party. The efforts of the American Communists to set up a mass Labour Party or at the least to organise a united election list for the wide mass of workers' organisations have proved fruitless, and the Party has now taken on itself the organisation of the workers to participate in the election campaign under the Communist standard.

It goes without saying that the Party will need to demonstrate the maximum energy and pressure in the work of preparing and carrying through an election campaign. The conference called to select presidential candidates has been successfully held. Simultaneously the Party is mobilising all its forces and striving to link up the election campaign with all the mass struggles of the American workers in which the Party is playing an active and at present a leading role.

The American C.P. is faced with exceptional difficulties. It has to work in a country in which a mighty capitalism is based on a perverted and bribed innumerable upper group of proletarians. The organised ex-

pression of the Labour aristocracy is the Gompers Federation of Labour, which sells workers' votes wholesale and retail to the dominating bourgeois parties. The fundamental Gompers formula: "to exploit the electoral right for encouraging friends and punishing enemies," still enjoys quite a large success, both among the labour aristocracy and among those proletarians who continue to be dragged at the tail of the Gompers' agents of the bourgeoisie. In these conditions and this situation the task of mobilising the proletarian masses presents extraordinary difficulties to the young and small Communist Party.

These difficulties are increased and added to by the peculiar system of realising parliamentary democracy in the land of the dollar. As during strikes, so during elections the American bourgeoisie openly and cynically combines the methods of ruthless violence (through hired hands) with methods of the coarsest and most shameless and open corruption, in the form of bribes not only by promises of comfortable jobs, but in cash. In addition the American "democrats" have taken care to set up a number of constitutional wire entanglements which have as purpose to prevent the people masses from having the possibility of exploiting the electoral law in their own interests. Among these constitutional obstacles has to be reckoned the law according to which a political party cannot put forward candidates unless these candidates have received the preliminary approval of quite a solid section of the electors. This law does

**An Election Document**—contd.

not apply to the dominating parties, which are maintained by rich financial cliques. But this law exists for (to be more exact, against) the C.P. Naturally the Party had to get to work on a swift collection of signatures.

Among the various electoral documents we have received from the American C.P. is the following:

1. Remember that you are occupied in the collection of signatures, and not with the enrolment of members. This means that you should not put forward any arguments whatever. We have no time to stand about in conversation. Get the signature or get on, without wasting time.

2. The best time for collecting signatures is dinner-time or Sunday morning. It goes without saying that signatures can be collected from housewives at any time.

3. Never answer insults or unfriendly comments. In all such cases it is best to go away, remembering that your aim is the collection of signatures and that you can find a sufficient number of willing signatories.

4. If anyone asks for or wishes to receive any information in a friendly or a neutral tone, write this down and return later, by appointment if possible.

5. Don't ask for signatures in the name of Communism. Ask the citizens to sign in order to give the "Workers' Party" the possibility of participating in the elections. The request should have as basis that we wish to have the possibility of taking part in the election. If it be necessary, you can explain that the signature in no case implies the obligation to vote for our Party. Remember that support for us is support for the movement to organise a "Labour Party."

6. Don't give unnecessary explanations. Get the signatures, and the swifter you work the more you will be able to collect. Address yourself to friendly disposed citizens with the following words, holding your indelible pencil or fountain pen ready in your hands: "Please sign this petition in order to give the Workers' Party the possibility of putting forward candidates in the elections." And add in an easy tone by way of explanation: "It is a question of the elections you've heard of."

7. So far as is possible try to act as though you were an election agent by profession. In case of necessity give the impression that this will be a personal favour to you, even in cases where you are a person quite unused to election agent's work.

8. Before you say what you want always make sure that your interlocutor possesses citizen's rights. Never talk about your mission to persons of whose signatures we have no need, since if you give them time to think they will ask you too many questions.

9. It would be unwise to try to follow the order of the registration lists when collecting signatures, as this takes up too much time with too poor results. It is best of all to go from house to house. Ask concerning citizens' rights, and then collect the signature.

10. Think over what methods you can work out for yourself, and communicate your experience to the national secretariat, New York, East 125 Street, No. 43. Other Party organisations also wish to know of your experience and we shall distribute this information throughout the country.

Preserve this for reference in future!"

From the telegram we received from the Secretary of the American Party in answer to our query, it appears that the Politbureau unanimously condemned this circular after it had been sent to the organisations and censured its author. But the fact that such a "document" could see the light forces us to deal in detail with its contents.

This document substantially adopts those methods and "ideas," or lack of ideas, to be more exact, which are applied both by the bourgeois parties and by their reformist lackeys. The Communists' task consists not only and not so much in breaking with these methods and traditions in the most resolute fashion, but also in ruthlessly exposing such methods.

Even in 1919 in answer to MacDonald's invitation to unite the Communist International with the Second International (now taken up by Maxton and Brockway) Lenin wrote that in order to overcome opportunism it was necessary to "carry on all propaganda and agitation from the aspect of revolution in opposition to reformism, systematically elucidating this opposition to the masses both theoretically and practically, at every step of parliamentary, trade union, co-operative and other work." The document now analysed by us copies the methods of the reformists instead of setting all the propaganda and all the agitation in opposition to the propaganda and agitation of the reformists from the very beginning.

The present stage of the class struggle is characteristic by the very fact that everywhere and always reformism is being more and more blended with the entire apparatus of class oppression. The European workers' movement is being "Americanised"; or, to put it more simply, is beginning to apply the methods of Gomperism, while the American Socialist Party is following the example of the older European parties and is hastening to renounce any suspicion of socialist phraseology. Under these conditions it is easier for the Communists to oppose its tactics and its methods of work to the tactics and methods of the reformists in all spheres of the class struggle. And for this very reason any slippery step taken even by an individual member of the Party which brings us nearer to a repetition of the reformist paths is dangerous and impermissible.

The American electoral campaign is only just beginning. The American Communists cannot leave unexploited the experience of the two election campaigns carried out by the French and German Communists. Both in Germany and in France the sections of the Comintern succeeded in transforming the election campaign into a genuine class battle, which was carried on not only against capitalism and against reformism, but also against parliamentary cretinism, parliamentary falsehood and parliamentary licentiousness. Owing to a whole series of objective conditions the American Communist Party is faced with more difficult and complex tasks. The more difficult the situation, the greater the tension demanded from the Party and all its members. For it is in America, in the country of the most shameful corruption, that the C.P. must unfold its banner to the four winds of heaven, and in all the stages of the class struggle, including the parliamentary and presidential elections, it must act in the most resolute and definite manner as the revolutionary Party of the proletariat.

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