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## AGAINST OPPORTUNIST LEGALISM

(On the Suppression of the Revolutionary Freethinkers' League in Germany)

THE economic crisis, which is deepening from day to day, against the background of the general crisis of the capitalist system, is accentuating both the internal class contradictions and the external antagonisms between the individual imperialist states to an extraordinary degree. We place the revolutionary way out of the crisis on the agenda of history; *our enemies*, however—point to the capitalist way out of the crisis, by violently repressing the revolutionary movements of the proletariat and peasantry, and imperialist war.

In connection with this the growth of Fascism is becoming a general, an international phenomenon. And this gives the following thesis from the resolution of the Second Congress of the Communist International an especial significance for us to-day:

“For all countries, even for the freest, most legal and most peaceful (in the sense of the class struggle being least accentuated) the period has fully matured when it is absolutely essential for every Communist Party systematically to combine legal and illegal work, legal and illegal organisation. For even in the freest and most enlightened countries with the most ‘stable’ bourgeois-democratic order of society, the governments are already beginning, despite their lying and hypocritical asseverations, systematically to make up secret lists of Communists, to violate their own constitutions in endless ways, to give secret and semi-secret support to the White Guards and to assassinate Communists in all countries, to smuggle *agents provocateurs* into Communist Circles, etc. Only the most reactionary philistines—however fine, ‘democratic’ and pacifist the phrases with which they may seek to cloak themselves—can deny this fact or the necessary consequence of it: the immediate formation of illegal organisations by all Communist Parties with a view to carrying on systematic illegal work, and complete preparation for the moment when the bourgeois persecution begins.”

At the same time the question of all workers' organisations *defending* themselves against attempts to repress them likewise acquires an especial significance. At the present moment we may expect an intensification of the campaign against revolutionary workers' organisations everywhere by an accentuation of the Fascist and government terror—even in those countries where our parties have hitherto been legal. The

attempts to repress our organisations in those countries are increasing in number. In most cases the bourgeoisie attempts to isolate the Communist Party by repressing the mass organisations, so as to more easily proceed to the proscription of the Party itself (e.g., Germany and Czecho-Slovakia). Full use must be made of the lessons to be learned from the experience of the Bolshevik Party of the Soviet Union to ensure success in the struggle to defend all workers' organisations. They may be summarised as follows:

1. To ensure that the organisation, while still legal, will be able to maintain its existence in illegality.

2. Not to surrender any legal position without a stubborn struggle, and to mobilise the masses for the defence of every such position.

3. To correctly combine legal and illegal work. To continue open mass work, and the mass struggle, in the most varied forms, and under the most diverse assumed names, by constructing the illegal apparatus carefully and in good time.

4. To always wage a prompt struggle against opportunistic legalism, which surrenders revolutionary principles from motives of expediency, and against the no less dangerous sectarianism, which divides the Party from the masses.

5. To employ every favourable opportunity which presents itself to emerge from the depths of illegality, and break through the legal barriers, to win back the open positions for Party work.

Such events as we have witnessed in connection with the suppression of the German Freethinkers' League warn us of the great dangers of legalism, which is to-day acquiring international significance and which must be fought against, averted and overcome.

Although the reactionary powers of the Fascist bourgeoisie in Germany have been demanding the prohibition of the Revolutionary Freethought Organisation for some time past and despite the fact that the press organs of the Brüning government, in particular those of the Catholic Centre Party, have obviously been preparing for the suppression of this organisation, the National Committee of the Freethinkers' League organised *practically no* defensive struggle. (On the one hand, there was

no adequate struggle for *legality*, for the *defence* of the organisation, and at the same time, the *internal* preparations for the suppression, made within the organisation, were also inadequate.) Initiative in this sphere was taken only by individual groups. The national committee of the organisation made no sort of internal organisational preparations against the suppression.

If, in those countries now going over to Fascism, the mass organisations of the revolutionary proletariat, living as they are under a constant menace, and finally even our own Communist Parties, were not to wage a struggle for the defence of their legal positions, what would be the result of such passivity? It would be quite intolerable. All attacks upon our organisations must be answered by the organisation of a *mass struggle*, by mobilising the workers at the various works and factories, the unemployed at the Exchanges, etc., and all mass organisations. The proletariat must not surrender any position without a struggle.

Despite the correct attitude of individual Communist fractions in the Freethinkers' League, the national committee of this organisation committed certain mistakes immediately before the suppression and subsequent to it? What were these mistakes?

In the first place this organisation of 170,000 persons was not sufficiently disposed, either ideologically, politically or organisationally, to *defy the suppression*. For this reason the situation which arose, the legislative gap intervening between the issue of the decree and executive instructions, could not be utilised for the holding of demonstrations or protest meetings. The organisation was not ready for this. It was beyond the power of the Brüning government to give the executive instructions which have not been issued to this day, as it collapsed of its own accord. The offices were abandoned and no management committee was left behind, even only a committee of marked men. In these circumstances the police did not even require to act. The police occupied none of the offices and employed no violence, since the "well-disciplined" German Freethinkers acknowledged the legality of the dictatorial decree and cleared out of their own accord. There were, however, spontaneous demonstrations and protest meetings of the workers on the streets, before the buildings of the Freethought Society offices, showing that the workers, in many cases, held quite different opinions to those of the national committee.

The second mistake of the national committee was that they pursued (in effect) a policy of *self-dissolution* on the part of the *central* militant organisations, and were

thankful that the continuation of the burial conveniences connected with the organisation was still permitted by the bourgeoisie. The national committee recommended all members to immediately form new local organisations, as the old ones were suppressed, on a legal basis, *without any central comprehensive leadership and to make use of the burial organisation as a reservoir for further recruiting*. As there were, in actual fact, many more members adhering to the Revolutionary Freethinkers' League than to the burial organisation, this meant that thousands of adherents were deliberately turned away.

The third mistake was that the National Committee recommended the members to *immediately* create new local organisations on a broad scale. They should have learned their lesson from the suppression of the Red Front Fighters' League, when the same premature course was taken. When the bourgeoisie suppressed the "*Ruhrwacht*" and the "*Antifa*" they did this on the pretext that these organisations were a continuation of the Red Front Fighters. Since, however, the organisations had not yet attained an organised stability, a large percentage of the adherents were lost, when they were suppressed. This mistake of the National Committee was the child of the opportunistic legalism which prevailed in its ranks and which will become a great danger if it infects the Party.

The workers, however, were to a large extent, of a quite different opinion from the National Committee of the Freethinkers. Thus, in almost all the lower organisations, resolutions were adopted defying the ban, to maintain and consolidate the organisation, to make use of all remaining possibilities, legal or semi-legal, for mass work, and to make a serious effort to break through the prohibition by the force of the masses. After the district committees of the Party had applied to the Central Committee of the Party, drawing the attention of the latter to the opportunistic instructions of the National Committee of Freethinkers, the Central Committee criticised them. The functionaries of the Freethinkers' organisation welcomed this assistance from the Central Committee of the Party. It is already apparent that the Freethinkers Organisation still has great chances of legal mass work and that this way to new, legal, mass organisations can best be paved by illegal mass organisations.

Another political mistake of the same sort was the formation of militant committees for secession from the church, instead of forming militant committees for the defence of the revolutionary workers' organisations. Such committees as the former ought to be formed,

but, by transferring the main emphasis of the struggle to the recruiting of members for secession from the church, the basis of the united militant front was restricted, instead of being extended, and the suppression of the Free-thinkers' organisation was not analysed as a preparatory measure for the general campaign against proletarian organisations and a measure to make social and cultural reaction more easy. This would, without doubt, have done better service to the movement for secession from the church than was actually done by the incorrect policy pursued. This mistake was likewise the child of opportunistic tendencies.

All this shows clearly and unmistakably what dangers are threatening the Communist movement in the face of the growing Fascist reaction, unless a timely struggle is waged against this legalism which precludes any offensive policy, and neither creates nor consolidates the illegal apparatus.

Hand-in-hand with these tendencies went tendencies to sectarianism, which represent an equal danger. Thus, after the opportunistic line of the National Committee had been corrected, there was a tendency to think that the organisation should only be continued after it had been *purged*. The alleged meaning of this purge was that the organisation should only be freed of *unreliable elements*. In reality, the discussion on the subject of the purge reflected all sorts of sectarian ideas. "The purgers" were likewise unwilling to make use of the great opportunities for legal mass struggle, which still existed and even went so far as to suggest that propaganda and organisational work in favour of the church secession movement should *only* be carried on within the mass organisations. The sectarians likewise did not reflect that now in view of the threatened suppression of the reformist Free-thinkers' confederation it is just the time when the fraction work in this confederation should be enlivened, so that a better and more vital policy of the united front can be developed from below. The lying assertion of the reformists' management committee who alleged that the revolutionary Free-thinkers' league had only been suppressed because of the *offensive manner* of its atheist propaganda, was likewise not combated with sufficient energy. It was suppressed because it was a proletarian organisation for the class struggle, suppressed with the active participation of the Socialist Party of Germany. The latter now wants to conceal this fact, but our Party must ruthlessly unmask it. The recruiting methods of these Social-Democrats were likewise not brandmarked as they should have been, when they declared that the members of the suppressed organisations should come to them, since the reformist con-

federation had not been suppressed. Now the suppression of the reformists' confederation is threatened too. In our opinion the management committee of the Social-Democratic confederation will swallow anything that the reactionary government demands in order to save their organisations from being suppressed. The Social-Democratic petty bourgeois will not have the courage to continue their organisation on an illegal basis. But for this reason the policy of a united front with the Social-Democratic workers on the basis of a struggle for *legal mass work* must first be pursued along the correct lines.

Another great failing in the work of the Free-thinkers' League was that they were too slow in transferring the district organisations from a residential Social-Democratic basis to an industrial one. Thus, at the time of the suppression there were still very few factory groups, most of them being located in the industrial area of the Rhine and Westphalia. But, there too, the existing factory groups, some thirty in number, are nothing like as numerous as the great industrial enterprises, and far from what the revolutionary possibilities demand. This organisational policy naturally had its effect upon *all deviations* from the militant revolutionary line against the suppression and from the correct organisational strategy after the suppression.

If, despite all these weaknesses and failings and despite these political mistakes, the organisation (with a few exceptions) has, according to the latest reports maintained its numerical strength and continues its work, we must attribute this in the main to the sound political will of the masses. The masses are beginning to resist opportunism to defy reaction. These are symptoms of a revolutionising process.

The Party itself, in most parts of the country, did not get beyond making a feeble protest. This is likewise a sign that the Party has *not sufficiently* organised the struggle for the defence of the mass organisations and that instructions from above are not promptly transmitted to the rank and file. It is also a bitter pill that the directives of the Central Committee often (as a result of inadequate control) reach the rank and file in a distorted shape and that the lower organs fail to develop their own initiative to an adequate degree. The Party has not given enough political guidance to this most vital mass struggle in the lower units.

The lessons to be learned from the suppression measures taken up to date in Germany, Czechoslovakia and other countries must be turned to good account. This means promptly fighting against the dangers that threaten us, both in the way of legal opportunism and of Left sectarianism, so that the remnants of Social-Democracy may be uprooted from our own ranks.

## THE MINERS' STRIKE IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA AND ITS LESSONS

**T**HE Central Committee of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party met on the 19th and 20th of March, 1932. In the resolution unanimously adopted it was said that:

"In the recent period the Party and the Red Unions were better able than hitherto to lead the opposition in the factories against the offensive of the employers. To-day, however, the attacks of the capitalists enter on a new stage; they are making a simultaneous frontal attack upon huge sections of the workers, whole branches of industry. This, and the successful development of the small strikes, calls for the transition to big mass struggles and strikes. The success of this task depends upon the further development of our influence in the factories."

The Central Committee was led to this conclusion by the following train of thought which was given expression in the reports and discussion in the committee.

The Party was successful in securing a somewhat significant success among the unemployed, by establishing a broad united front movement of the unemployed under its undisputed leadership. It developed—particularly in the Carpathian Ukraine—a broad and keen mass movement of the small peasants against Czechish imperialism. In many branches of industry (building workers, land labourers), it led a great number of small, and in the majority of instances, successful local strikes. But the decisive shortcoming of the mass resistance against the capitalist offensive, organised by the Party, was the absence of any big strike movements in the principal important industries. There the resistance in the first stage was in the form of guerilla warfare, of small fights. Action in individual factories, demonstrations outside the factories, short demonstrative strikes—this was the form of the development of the struggle, in the course of which the Communists and the Red Trade Unions fought slowly and stubbornly to develop the faith of the working masses in bigger struggle by means of the defence also of the smallest day-to-day interests of the workers. For the rest, this form of struggle also accorded with the form of the capitalist offensive; for in the majority of instances the employers did not give notice to end the collective agreements. They abandoned the higher cost of living increase, individually reduced the agreed wage-rates, enormously increased the measures of rationalisation, gave

notice to individual workers, and gradually carried through the dismissals.

In the recent period, with the rapid development of the crisis, the employers' offensive also proceeded at a faster rate. The capitalists went over to a great frontal attack; they terminated the agreements for whole sections of the workers; there was a setting aside of wage-rates and mass dismissals in whole sections. The old form of resistance no longer answered to the requirements of the situation. If the Communist Party is to win the confidence of the masses in the revolutionary way out of the crisis, it must defend the interests of the masses by a great struggle against the capitalist attempts to seek a solution of the crisis by means of a fearful impoverishment of the working masses. The position imperiously demanded the transition from guerilla warfare in the factories to the organisation of mass strikes.

On the other hand the guerilla warfare presupposed the solution of this task. For only through a number of small struggles can the Communists harness the masses, raise their self-consciousness and persuade them that the Communists not only are able correctly to estimate the situation and to show the perspectives, but also that they are able energetically and successfully to lead the daily struggle of the workers.

For these reasons the Central Committee put forward the transition to mass strikes, and particularly the organisation of the miners' strike, as the vital question. This happened on March 20th. On March 23rd the great miners' strike began.

\* \* \*

The prerequisite of a successful development of the great miners' strike against the will of the Social-Fascist leaders and in spite of the raging terror of the State apparatus was a number of small strikes, which had been already organised in all important districts under the leadership of the Party and the Red Unions since last autumn. Already in November of last year, in the Northern Bohemian mining district a broad movement was organised for the payment of the cost-of-living increase—abandoned by the employers. This demand at that time brought the masses for the most part into action. The correct tactic of proletarian united front was employed. A broad united front conference was organised and a United Area Committee elected, in which a number of Reformist factory committees and functionaries of the Reformist trade union groups

were represented. In December there was organised in the pits a number of short demonstrative strikes to demand payment of the cost-of-living increase, in which more than half the workers involved participated. At the State pits the action was successful in getting the cost-of-living increase granted. And it was precisely this wave of small fights and also the partial successes which the workers in many pits achieved, which strengthened the fighting determination of the North Bohemian miners and created the basis for a broad united front of mine-workers.

In December in the Kladno district the Communist Party and the Red Unions organised a fight for the concrete partial demands of the mine-workers, for the cost-of-living increase, against the reduction of miners' insurance, against dismissals, and for the six-hour day without wage adjustment. At the end of December this fight reached its summit in a united action of the Kladno mineworkers, linked up with short demonstrative strikes at the pits, demonstrations of the miners, their women folk and the unemployed before the pits and on the streets of Kladno. This action secured—as compared with Brůx—no material success, but it mobilised the masses and thereby prepared the solidarity action of the Kladno district for the Brůx strike.

In the Ostrau district as well the Party led a long preparatory campaign. Here in the foreground, besides the cost-of-living increase and the fight against dismissals, stood the special demands of the young mineworkers. A number of united front conferences mobilised the masses already in the summer and autumn of last year. The movement rose to demonstrative strikes at individual pits where workers had been dismissed.

While this action in all districts led to wide propaganda for the slogan of "Not a man to be dismissed: Not a farthing wage reduction," and for the six-hour day without wage reductions, and popularised the strike weapon, so also a situation was created in the districts in which the masses were ready to answer a new attack of the coal barons with a strike—a situation in which a spark would start an explosion.

\* \* \*

At the beginning of March the broad offensive of the coal barons began. They demanded the dismissal of 15,000 mineworkers, wage reductions up to 30 per cent. and the worsening of a number of conditions in the agreement. (As regards Saturday allowances, etc.) It was clear that this was the beginning of a frontal attack of the coal magnates in all districts and the signal for a broad offensive against all wages. The

Party put forward a slogan of defence against these attacks by strong action, and began to mobilise the radicalised workers. The Social-Fascist leaders began to manoeuvre. They called a Unity conference of all the representatives of factory councils and local leaders of the district, and also invited the Red Trade Unions, who hitherto had always been strictly boycotted. They vowed solemnly to reject the conditions of the coal barons and that they would never willingly agree to wage reductions and dismissals. They spoke solemnly and at great length about the necessity of working-class unity and invited the Red Unions this time to the negotiations with the employers, although they were no parties to the contract, and although previously they had sought to keep their representatives far removed from all negotiations. But at the same time they endeavoured to lull the workers and to hinder all concrete measures of struggle as well as the establishment of a united front organisation. The mistakes of the Ostrau comrades, with which we shall be concerned later, made it possible for them to win time and to prolong negotiations.

In the meantime, the offensive of the coal barons commenced also in the district of Northern Bohemia; indeed, here the employers did not come forward with an open declaration of their demands, but they planned a 10 per cent. to 12 per cent. wage cut and began with dismissals. Shortly after a pit disaster, which had been brought about by rationalisation, and in which eight lives had been sacrificed and the mine-workers brought into a state of great agitation, the Brůx Mining Co. gave notice to the whole of the workers at the Humboldt pit, about 340 men. On the proposal of the Communists the workers replied with an immediate strike. The strikers pulled out the neighbouring pits and brought them to a standstill. Two days afterwards all the pits of this company were on strike. The Party put forward the slogan of an all-district strike. On the 27th March a Unity conference took place, called by the Pit Council, at the Humboldt pit, which put forward the demand for a general mineworkers' strike of the whole district. The Social-Democratic, National-Socialist and Fascist leaders declared the strike to be "wild" and called upon all their members to break the strike, forbade them to participate in the elected strike committees which everywhere had been rapidly established. Reinforcements of the police, gendarmerie and military quickly came into the district. The Ministry promised again to go into the question of compensation for the shutting down of the Humboldt pit. The district authorities issued a publication saying that thereby the grounds for striking had been removed and there-

fore they would suppress the strike "by every means." The miners, with their womenfolk and the unemployed, went from pit to pit, and in spite of the prohibition, held daily meetings (at which Communist representatives spoke) fought the gendarmes who had established themselves at the pits; and always the effect was the same; further enterprises refused to work under the "protection" of the gendarmes, came out, elected pit committees, established mass picketing and joined in the strike.

On the 23rd March, thirty-five pits were at a standstill; on the 29th March fifty-two, on the 30th eighty-eight, and on the 31st the strike was as complete as ever seen in this district; out of over 100 pits not one person was at work and from the whole area not a single piece of coal was transported without the permission of the central leadership.

The pits at Kladno came out on strike, and in a few days here also the strike spread to all pits in the district with the exception of two.

All this, in spite of the demands of the Social-Fascist leaders for the breaking of the strike; all this, in spite of the fact that at the strike of one of the pits longest at work, Julius V. in Komotau, the gendarmerie had already turned the guns on the crowd. The mineworkers answered with new mighty demonstrations. They did not, it is true, force their way through the military and police cordons up to Julius V. Pit. But the men answered the bloodbath by joining in the strike.

On February 27 the broad united front conference met in Brůx. It put forward the demands: Withdrawal of all notices, guarantees against all dismissals' and wage reductions for the period of a year, compensation for short time, holidays at employers' cost, six-hour day without wage adjustment, safety and sanitation for mineworkers, insurance at the employers' and State expense, State maintenance for all unemployed and abolition of Geneva system, prohibition of the filling of pit wagons during the days when not hauled, pit inspectors (safety measures) elected by all workers and paid by the State, immediate recall from the district of gendarmes and the military. A broad strike leadership was elected from all the organisations concerned (the organised Communists were in a minority, but had undisputed leadership). It was decided to extend the strike over the whole district, everywhere to elect strike committees, representative of and led by mineworkers only, and to set up mass picketing. The conference turned towards the Ostrau mineworkers with the invitation to join in a common fight against a common foe.

In the meantime the Party took up the line of the extension of the strike into a general strike of

mineworkers. It was decided to do everything to secure the participation of the other districts in the strike as quickly as possible.

On March 29, in spite of the most raging terror, in spite of the occupation of all the pits and mining colonies by hundreds of gendarmes, in spite of colossal endeavours of the reformist apparatus to break the strike, seven pits in the Silesian part of the Ostrau district came out. In two days the strike spread altogether to thirteen pits and embraced 8,000 mineworkers. The State apparatus answered by shooting, two mineworkers being killed and a number wounded. The police forbade any sort of strike agitation, no meetings, even if they were of T.U. groups or committees (!), were tolerated. In spite of that, great demonstrations took place in Karwina.

On March 31, the first three pits in Kladno came out on strike. Here also in a few days the strike spread to all the pits in the district with the exception of two.

Thus the prophecy of the secretary of the Social-Fascist Union, Brozik, was contradicted by events. A week before the strike, at a private meeting, he had said that in the Ostrau district "nothing would move them." Thus all the Social-Fascist and liquidatory prophecies were given the lie, prophecies which the day before the strike were confidently declaiming that there in Kladno no action would be taken.

Now the Social-Fascists began to manoeuvre. For Ostrau an agreement was made that the notices fixed already for April 1st should for the time being be withdrawn, and that *during negotiations* no worker would be discharged. The Government forbade for the time being the dismissal of the workers at the Humboldt pit and the Nelson pit in Northern Bohemia. The Social-Fascists brought into Parliament the proposals for the nationalisation of the mines.

And while all their organisations, the Czech Social-Democrats, Svaz, the German Social-Democratic Union, the Czech-Socialist, Jednota, the Hakenkreuzler (the Czechish Fascists) and the Christian Socialists in Ostrau, in Kladno, in the small mining area of Falkenau, where in consequence of the lack of brown coal there arose a boom, all these organisations, together with the State apparatus, strangled the "wild" strike, organised open strike-breaking, terrorised their own membership to drive them back to work, and adopted in the Northern Bohemian district, where they were compelled by mass pressure of their own members, a "flexible" tactic.

The Social-Democrats were the most determined strike-breakers. They continued to denounce the strike as "wild," again forbade (certainly without



success) their members to take part in the strike leadership, and carried on a shameless persecution of the strikers, against whom their Minister sent gendarmes and military forces. They no longer dared directly to summon their members to work. They now took up a "neutral" stand and left the responsibility to the "Communist witches."

The Czechish Socialists were still more "elastic." They declared the strike to be "correct," but "undertaken at an inopportune time." They did not forbid their people to participate in the strike leadership (although it wouldn't have made any difference if they had). In speeches at the meetings of the mineworkers they attempted to support the "correct" struggle and at the same time permitted the gendarmes and soldiers to shoot down the miners, gendarmes and soldiers whom their Minister sent into the district. At the same time they strangled the strike in all other areas in order to isolate the Brůx strikers.

The Hakenkreuzler went the furthest. They were on all strike committees, voted for all the Communist proposals, carried through all decisions (for they must, if they were not to lose all influence) . . . but simultaneously, together with the Social-Democratic bureaucrats, throttled the strike in Falkenau.

In the meantime Parliament met. The Communists put forward as their proposals the demands of the strikers: Ban on dismissals for a year, shortening of the working day, tax on the profits of the coal barons for the benefit of the unemployed mineworkers, immediate recall of the gendarmerie and military forces. . . The Social-Fascists, who had just put forward the proposal for "nationalisation of the mines," voted against these proposals and exposed themselves in the eyes of their own members.

The concrete proposals for the continuance, extension, and increasing of the fight unveiled the false "friends" of the mineworkers in the districts. The mineworkers were clearly persuaded of the correctness of the Communist estimation of the Social-Fascist leaders.

On March 31, there occurred, however, a serious repulse to the hitherto continually extending strike front. As it was not possible for the Mähr (Ostrau) part of the Ostrau-Karwin district to come out with the others (for the Social-Democrats have a predominant influence in this part), the Silesian pits began to vacillate and at some pits in Silesian Ostrau the strike collapsed. In the eastern part, in Karwin and Orlau, the strikers held fast and over 80 per cent. of the men were out. But in the absence of the

leading Party representative, who led the strike in the Ostrau area, the Ostrau comrades, in spite of strictly contrary instructions from the Centre, made a fatal mistake and broke the strike without close examination of the situation and without taking the decision of the workers themselves. The miners went into the pits, but still their fighting determination was so great that the employers dare not provoke them by any kind of persecution. At the funeral of the shot comrades, 25,000 mineworkers vowed to avenge themselves and resolved to take up the fight again as quickly as possible.

Still the breach in the fight had great effect. In Kladno the strike began to crumble away; it was necessary, after the exhaustion of all means for continuing it, to secure an organised retreat. In the small districts, where preparations had been made to join in the fight, it was necessary either to be satisfied with a demonstrative strike (Rossitz and Handlovka in Slovakia, where the demands were partially achieved) or single strikes which quickly caved in (Falkenau).

In the Ostrau district itself the Centre corrected the mistake. On April 3 a new conference of Red mineworkers was held with the participation of a number of Reformist delegates. The mistake of the Ostrau leadership was openly criticised by the Centre with the support of the worker delegates. The stoppage of the breakaway which had begun was thereby urged and the conference voted unanimously and enthusiastically for resumption of the strike in the next few days. Nevertheless, during the following week (April 3 to 10) only individual pits came out on strike, and it was not yet possible, through the continuance at work of the "Social-Democratic" pits in the Ostrau area, to win for strike action the decisive part of the district.

In this situation the bourgeoisie directed all their forces on the Northern Bohemia district in order to strangle the strike there. The employers gave out communications in which they demanded an immediate return to work. The authorities issued a decree on April 1 announcing that the Brůx Central Strike Committee was an "illegal body," since, it was alleged, the withdrawal of the notices at the Humboldt pit (which had provided the immediate cause of the breaking of the strike front) had taken away the grounds for strike. On the same day all the Reformist unions and the Czechish Social-Fascists called conferences of their organisations and directed their huge authority (among their big guns was the member of the Senate, Soukup, and member of the Executive of the Second International), towards carrying through the return to work on the 4th April.

Still the mineworkers put up their measures of resistance. After the dissolution of the strike leadership committee the Red Mineworkers' Union alone took over the leadership of the strike, called upon the mineworkers to persevere in and to sharpen the struggle. In the whole country the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia organised demonstrations and demonstrative strikes against the dissolution of the elected organ of struggle. As early as the 3rd of April a Unity conference of mineworkers was held in Brůx in which 774 delegates took part, 185 of whom were unorganised and 144 members of Reformist and Fascist organisations. The conference decided unanimously in favour of continuance of the struggle, demonstratively re-elected all members of the dissolved strike leadership on to a new strike committee, declared that this alone had the right to represent the strikers, withdrew its permission for the transportation of the coal already hauled for necessary social services until such time as the new strike leadership was recognised by the authorities; and called for a mass meeting on April 5th of the whole district at Brůx.

Meanwhile the Reformist conference met. The workers and the members of the leading organs of the strike, showed their sharp opposition to the strike-breaking leaders. The leaders were outvoted, and found it necessary to call a stop to the summons for the return to work; their resolutions were defeated by a majority.

The Social-Fascists were surprised. As early as the 4th April an organ of the Czechish Socialists, declared: "To-day all the Northern Bohemian miners will go back to work." Already in the evening of the same day they adopted another tone: for in the whole district not a single mineworker had returned to work.

Deputations of mineworkers threatened the withdrawal of the safety workers if the strike leadership were not recognised. The authorities were forced to recognise the new strike committee and their officials made a request for permission for the transport of coal which two days before had been withdrawn, since they viewed the hindrance of the free disposition of the coal baron's accumulated supplies as an "illegal" act.

The demonstration in Brůx was permitted. On the 5th April all the gendarmerie, police and military forces disappeared from the streets; 40,000 workers from the whole district marched in unity to Brůx and expressed their determination to continue the struggle until victory. Numerous enterprises stopped work. The movement became so much strengthened that the petty bourgeoisie were carried along with it. As an

example of solidarity the shopkeepers closed the shops, and distributed foodstuffs among the demonstrators.

Throughout the whole land meetings were held in which masses of Reformist workers took part, in spite of the prohibition of their leaders. A broad solidarity action developed in numerous meetings and demonstrations. This was linked up with the contemporary anti-war week which was particularly strong in Slovakia. In Brůnn, under the influence of the struggle of the miners, several thousand textile workers came out on strike. In Pilsen a strong movement was started against the dismissals in the Skoda works.

Even in the Carpathian-Ukraine there took place solidarity demonstrations and protest strikes (Uzhorod, Mukacevo, Bockov, Akna-Slatina).

Again the bourgeoisie adopted an intensified terror. The Government sent Dragoons into the district which rode through the towns and villages with drawn sabres. At some pits an attempt was made, under gendarmerie and military protection, to transport the accumulated coal.

As an answer to this and as a further intensification of the struggle the strike leadership decided on a one-day general strike of all workers in the Northern Bohemia district for Wednesday, 13th April, and called for mighty demonstrations.

On 10th April, in Komotau, Aussig, Dux, Brůx and Teplitz conferences of the working people were held. Workers from all branches of industry as well as numerous members of the middle class and their organisations were represented. One conference was broken up by the authorities; at the rest, the workers fought for legality. The general strike was everywhere unanimously supported and measures were taken for its carrying through.

Now the bourgeoisie decided upon a trial of strength. The Reformist unions forbade participation in the general strike. The demonstrations were forbidden; military forces and the gendarmerie appeared in masses; the Government put its whole power and prestige in frustrating the general strike and the mass meeting.

But in vain. At once the majority of the enterprises in the Brůx, Dux and Komotau areas came out on strike. In Oberleutensdorf, in the forenoon, collisions took place. Thereupon more enterprises came out on strike, as well as the workers on an electric railway line. From all sides the masses marched to Brůx. The authorities shot at the crowd; in Brůx some workers were killed. The enraged masses defended themselves. Cavalry charges were repulsed by barricades. Dragoons were wounded and also taken prisoner by the masses. Police officers were

beaten up. In Komotau the workers burned the motor lorries in which the gendarmerie reinforcements had been brought up. Only in Dux, where the authorities permitted the demonstration, were the proceedings peaceful. In short; the masses captured the streets, they did not permit themselves to be intimidated, the strike held fast.

A new wave of protest strikes and demonstrations took place over the whole country. This time there were protest strikes in Cesko-Moravska, the biggest factory in Prague, in the Reichenberger textile mills, demonstrations in Pilsen, Brünn and Königgrätz. In Reichenberg the authorities attempted to strangle the protest movement by arresting all the higher Party functionaries. Mass protests demanded their liberation. Under the influence of the workers, even the Reformist members of the factory committee at the Pilsen Skoda works demanded the resignation of the Minister of the Interior, only in order, it is true, to divert the workers.

And at the funeral demonstration of the murdered workers, 50,000 demonstrators took part. As the State power did not venture to appear upon the streets the demonstration was held without any collisions.

Meanwhile, the Ostrau district ended the strike for the third time. In the days during which the Social-Fascists hoped to throttle the strike, they had entered into a shameful pact with the coal barons: they gave them the right to dismiss workers individually, which meant acceding the permission to dismiss up to 10 per cent. of the employees. Concerning further dismissals they agreed to a short-time rota, which meant that every month 12,000 mineworkers would be stood off for an unpaid holiday, whereby they would, in the month that they worked, have to pay the insurance contributions for two months; they accepted wage reductions of the mineworkers up to 20 per cent.

This inevitably let loose a storm of indignation in the district and also opened the eyes of those mineworkers who hitherto had believed in the Social-Fascists.

The Red Union, which was represented at the negotiations, immediately informed the mineworkers and mobilised them to defence, and also constantly at the negotiations, put forward the demand of "Not a man to be dismissed, not a farthing off the pay." And they refused naturally to sign the agreement. All the other organisations signed the agreement.

On 10th April the conference of the organisations met. The Social-Fascists refused to call a united-front conference, although they had previ-

ously given assurances that the Unity conference alone would take the decision.

The conference of the Red Union, supported by the participation of 444 pit delegates, 54 of whom were from organisations and 57 of whom were unorganised, rejected the pact and again decided for strike.

But also in the other conferences the opposition organised a stormy resistance against the leaders. The Czechish Socialists and the Christian Socialists rejected the pact; among the Social-Democrats the leaders found it necessary to adopt a new manoeuvre and permitted a secret vote in their groups; among the Czechish Fascists the leaders decided to agree to the pact only under the pretence that other organisations had already done so.

In this way the situation called for a new strike. On 13th April, the day of the Northern Bohemian strike, there took place in Peterswald, a new, and this time, really broad Unity conference, at which over 1,000 delegates participated, among them hundreds of non-Communists. The decision to strike was taken. In spite of the most raging terror, armed occupation of the pits, prohibition of all meetings, anti-strike decisions of all other organisations, twenty pits, with 16,000 men, came out on strike until the 17th April. This time the basis was much broader. The strike had also enveloped some "social-democratic" pits on the Mähr side of the district; Reformist and Fascist organised workers joined in the strike, also some of the functionaries of these organisations participated in spite of the order of their leaders. At the pits broadly-elected strike committees began to be established.

But also this third strike met with a frightful terror on the part of the reactionary trade-union leaders and the State apparatus. And as the number of strikers were only to a small extent firmly organised, the strike broke down under this terror. On 18th and 19th April work had been resumed at a number of pits; at others the Communists remained isolated. In these conditions it was necessary for the Party to give the lead for calling off the strike.

In the Brüx district the coal barons and the authorities found it convenient, after all these struggles, finally to enter into negotiations. Besides the parties to the agreement (that is, Reformists and Fascists) they also invited the Red Unions; but, nevertheless, they refused to invite the strike committee. At the opening of the negotiations the representative of the Red Union energetically demanded the invitation of the strike committee. After the Social-Fascists were turned down at the enterprises, the strike leadership empowered the representative of the

Red Union also to represent them, and the Red Union declared that it would not be willing to sign any settlement without the endorsement of the strike committee.

The result of the negotiations was the acceptance of a pact which the Social-Fascists already previously had agreed to with the employers and the authorities. The conditions, as a result of the influence of the united struggle, were incomparably better than the conditions of the Ostrau pact, but they did not fulfil many demands of the strikers and left open all possibilities for dismissals and wage reductions. The conditions were: the notices to the Humboldt pit to be withdrawn until the end of 1933. Individual dismissals should be admissible, mass dismissals inadmissible except if all the pits of a company should be unable to keep working more than three days in the week. Overtime should not be permissible, also the filling of the wagons during the day when not hauled, should only take place in exceptional circumstances.

A general pardon to be given to the members of all the organisations which immediately signed the pact, with the others persecution to be applied.

This last condition the representative of the Red Union was to be compelled to sign without consultation with the strike committee. The comrades refused. The strike committee called a new Unity conference for Sunday, April 18th. This Unity conference firmly declared that the pact did not answer the demands of the strikers and that the leaders of the coalition of the unions had betrayed the rightful demands. They passed sharp judgment on their policy, decided unitedly to continue the strike, and called a new conference for the 20th April, which according to circumstances would decide further.

The Reformists put the brake on at their conferences and this time were successful—certainly with resistance from the worker delegates—in carrying through a decision for the termination of this strike. Thereby the leaders finally restrained the Social-Democrats as well as the Czechish Socialists.

And this time also the Hakenkreuzler put forward a secret ballot and called upon their people to abandon the strike committee. Their leaders abandoned the Unity conference, but the workers remained and condemned their treachery.

On Monday, 18th April, the Unity conference again scored a victory over the Social-Fascist strike-breaking tactics. In the centre of the district, in the Brůx and Dux areas, the strike remained unbroken. All the Dux pits were at a complete standstill. In the Rand area, particularly around Teplitz, the strike, however, began to crumble away.

There at the Unity conference, held on April 19th, it was decided to end the strike in order to maintain the unity of the workers, which was the most valuable feature of the fight.

Against any kind of measures of persecution or new offensive of the coal barons the workers would remain unitedly prepared for strike. The strike committees would be transformed into unity committees and arranged, as the next general task, to create great demonstrations for the 1st May. So ran the unanimous resolution of the conference.

On 20th April the mineworkers unitedly returned to work. Although the "general pardon" included only the Reformists, the employers did not dare to attempt any persecution.

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I have described the course of the struggle in order to make it possible for foreign comrades to get an understanding of the concrete situations in which the Party decided upon the individual tactical measures.

Now I will deal with the most important lessons.

The most decisive question in every strike under present-day conditions—where the great majority of workers are not yet under our influence—is *the correct application of the united-front tactic*. In the Northern Bohemia strike the united-front tactic during the whole struggle was correctly—one might say exemplarily—applied. The struggle ended there with a considerable material partial success and with an undisputed political victory of the Communist Party. In the Ostrau district, where the united-front tactic was applied only with serious mistakes, no success was achieved in spreading and holding the strike over the whole area, despite the heroic endeavours of the revolutionary section of the mineworkers; the coal barons on the whole exerted their dominance and the political success was much smaller.

In what consists the essence of the correct application of the united-front tactic in the Northern Bohemia district? Firstly, in that the Party understood how to win the great mass of mineworkers for every demand and every tactical measure, and so to select their proposals and measures of struggle that they were understandable to the great masses and regarded as necessary, while at the same time the Social-Fascist and Fascist leaders were forced into the position of openly serving capitalism.

Secondly, that on the initiative of the Party and the Red Unions at all pits in all areas, united-front organs were created, broadly and really democratically elected and acknowledged by all

workers; which really led the fight and enjoyed an enormous authority among the workers.

In almost all strike committees and also in the Central Strike Committee in Brûx the non-Communists were in a majority. On these committees workers from all organisations, Czechish and German Social-Democrats, Czechish National Socialists, followers of the Czechish Fascist Narodny Sdruzeni, German Hakenkreuzler, Christian Socialists and unorganised workers were represented. These strike committees operated permanently, dealt with all questions, accepted in every instance the proposals of the Communists. It can be said that in the Northern Bohemia strike there was not a single important decision made, not a single tactical turn carried through, about which the Central Committee of the Party had not previously decided. But, not a single one of these decisions was carried through before the democratically-elected organs of the whole of the striking workers, the strike committees, had thoroughly discussed and accepted it. The Communists had undisputed leadership in the united-front organs, but this leadership was not mechanical. The Communists took the lead because they had the greatest experience and initiative, because they always came forward with the correct proposals at the opportune moment, and all workers were persuaded of their correctness and necessity.

Thereby the decisions of the strike committees stood openly under the control of all strikers. The majority of the decisions of the central strike leadership were unanimously taken up. When, however, in one instance, a Reformist member vacillated during the day and on one decision abstained from voting, he was, the same evening, called before the miners he represented, to give a report and was so belaboured by the workers, among whom also were many Reformist members, that the next day he declared in the Central Strike Committee that he saw his mistake and was persuaded of the correctness of the resolution.

The resolutions of the Central Strike Committee were carried through by all the strikers with enthusiasm. Frequently it happened that huge meetings of strikers in the localities (which actually were not permitted by the authorities and were really "illegal") waited several hours in order to receive from the delegates who had been to the Central Strike Committee a report on the resolutions of that body in order to be able to carry them through at once. Without waiting for the resolution of the Central Strike Committee the safety men refused to remain at work. Without permission of the Central Strike Committee not a single piece of the coal already brought to

the top of the pits dare be transported, and in the ante-room of the Central Strike Committee the directors of the hospitals, the schools, the electricity and water-works and extinguished glass factory waited to beg permission for the transport of some wagons of coal. Even the officials of the Borough and the Garrison, nay, even the mining companies who required coal for their offices, visited the Strike Committee in order to appeal for their permission that from their "own" depôts, coal might be transported for their "own" offices. Naturally, all these requests, except those from the hospitals and the schools, were rejected. But they revealed the authority and power which the Strike Committee enjoyed. This authority extended, by the way, not only over the strikers, but also over other sections of the working class. The unemployed and working women carried through the resolutions of the Strike Committee, on which they had their representatives, with the same enthusiasm and discipline. When the strike leadership called for a general strike of the whole district on the 13th April, and confirmed their resolution at five broad Unity conferences, the majority of the factories in the districts struck work. When they summoned the closing of the shops, the small traders and shop people closed their shops, although it was forbidden by the authorities, and a fine for disobeying the order imposed. And after the end of the strike a deputation from a Brûx factory came to the strike leaders with a request that the Strike Committee should take up and organise the fight of the workers at this factory, who were completely unorganised, and engage in a wage struggle.

The authorities had attempted to dissolve the Strike Committee. This was not possible, thanks to the mass resistance of the workers. Two days after the dissolution of the strike committees (which was caused, among other things, by the fact that the strike leaders had had the "arrogance" to decide on the question of the transportation of coal out of the depôts which, after all, belonged to the employers), it was necessary for the authorities to again recognise the strike leadership, and the Borough officials presented their official request for a quantity of coal, which two days before they had withdrawn. If the strike leadership resolved to organise a demonstration, it was carried through whether the authorities permitted it or not. And in the end things developed so far that the Borough official of Komotau heatedly asked a Communist functionary: "Who actually is the Borough official here? I or you?"

The drawing in of the Reformist workers in the united-front organs awoke the initiative of

the masses and provided the strike with hundreds of new functionaries. In the Northern Bohemia fight, there was certainly no scarcity of functionaries. The whole day long in the headquarters of the Central Strike Committee, dozens of mine-workers were at hand, ready to go as messengers or as reporters in the localities and to the pits. In almost all places, local district and pit committees held mass meetings daily. In this common work the united front of the fighters was welded firmly together. The summons of the Social-Democratic leaders to resign from the common strike committee was simply taken no notice of by the Reformist workers. And when, in critical moments—after the breaking of the first Ostrau strike—the Social-Fascists called together conferences of their organisations and through their functionaries sought to carry through the breaking of this strike behind the backs of the strikers, they came up against the vigorous resistance of their own functionaries and were turned down by their own conferences.

There were individual comrades who, at the beginning of the strike, worked so defectively that the leading rôle of the Communist Party was hardly at all expressed. They saw the "defect" in that all decisions should be planned and announced in the name of the elected strike committees. They would rather have seen the leading rôle of the Party expressed perhaps in the fact that at the headquarters of the strike committee, the inscription "Office of the Central Strike Committee" should have had in addition the words, "Under the leadership of the Communist Party"! But the leading rôle of the Party is not expressed by declamations and mechanical instruction. The mine-workers struggled so unitedly and determinedly against all foes—including the Social-Fascist leaders—because they were conscious of the fact that they themselves, by means of their elected united-front organs, determined the leadership of the struggle. And in these organs they accepted all the proposals of the Communists and enthusiastically carried them out because they were themselves persuaded of the correctness and necessity of these proposals. When the first strike committee was dissolved by the authorities and the Red mine-workers' union alone took in its hands the leadership of the strike, all strikers understood that and welcomed it. They were evidently convinced that it was the only trade-union organisation which will and can lead their struggle successfully. When the coal barons refused to negotiate with the strike committee, the Central Strike Committee unanimously entrusted the representative of the Red mine-workers' trade union to represent the strike committee and all the strikers at the negotiations,

while the Red mine-workers' union declared that without the endorsement of the strike committee they would have no truck with any decision made at the negotiations. In the unanimous resolutions of the united-front conferences at which non-Communists were more numerous and finally were in a great majority, the strike-breaking rôle of the Social-Fascist and Fascist leaders continually became more and more evident. And at the end of the strike a huge conference (over 1,000 present) in which the Communists composed hardly a quarter, resolved unanimously that the Red union had alone defended the interests of the miners against the strike-breaking of the leaders of all the other organisations, and called for mass recruiting into the Red union.

To-day in Czecho-Slovakia there is not a single rational person who is able to deny that the strike of the mine-workers was led by the Communists.

Still, this leadership cannot come into being mechanically, but through the initiative, through energetically, consciously and dexterously setting up the broad united-front organs which work independently, which develop the initiative of the masses, which hold fast together the unity of the fighters, and which win for themselves enormous authority.

Through the initiative of the Communists and the conviction of the broad masses of the Party's correctness, the "left" manoeuvre of the Social-Fascists in the Northern Bohemia struggle was also exposed.

The Social-Democratic leaders placed themselves openly against the strike from the beginning. They declared it to be a "wild" strike, refused participation at the start, campaigned against the strikers in their Press in the wildest manner, and sent gendarmerie and the military into the district. Several times they attempted, behind the backs of the strikers, to send out orders to return to work and thus break the strike. When they were not able to achieve this and were defeated at their own conferences, they began to "tolerate" the strike, although they "rejected all responsibility," and ordered their members to come out of the strike committees. These instructions, however, were not followed by their members, and in Northern Bohemia the Social-Democratic leaders were powerless; for which also the bourgeois Press very sharply reproved them.

On the other hand, the leaders of the National-Socialists attempted to apply an "elastic" tactic of breaking the strike. After their first attempt at open strike-breaking had run aground, they announced their "solidarity" with the Northern Bohemian strike, but at the same time attempted to throttle the struggle in all the other districts,

in order to isolate the Northern Bohemian mine-workers, and they regarded with favour all the Government measures for the forceful suppression of the strike.

The Hakenkreuzler, in their manoeuvres, went still further. They participated officially in the strike committees, voted there—because they were forced to—for all the fighting resolutions, and carried them out. At the same time, together with the Social-Democratic leaders, which they otherwise savagely “attacked,” they throttled the strike in the Falkenau district. And at the decisive moment of the struggle they recalled their members from the strike committees and negotiated in secret with the Ministry over the signing of the agreement which had been turned down by the Unity conference. Thereby they exposed themselves before their own members, and instead of securing the expected victory at the expense of Social-Democracy, there now developed among their members a movement of recruitment into the Red union.

How did the Communists oppose these manoeuvres? They exposed the “false friends” of the mineworkers in that they put before the masses clear proposals for the further development, extension and intensification of the struggle, which were obvious and understandable to every Reformist worker, but were unacceptable to the agents of capital. Therefore, the workers were persuaded by their own experience of the treacherous rôle of the Social-Fascist and Fascist leaders, and of the deceitfulness of their phrasemongering.

One of the manoeuvres deserves special attention. During the struggle, the Czechish Social-Democrats and National Socialists, put forward in Parliament the proposals for the “Nationalisation of the Mines.” The Party castigated this swindle and explained to the workers that within the framework of capitalism the nationalisation of industry is impossible, that the State ownership of an individual enterprise—even if it were possible—would signify a still greater exploitation and repression of the workers. The Party, however, was not content merely with this propaganda of exposure.

In accordance with the demands of the Central Strike Committee, the Communist parliamentary fraction put forward the following proposals: That until the end of the year all dismissals at the pits be forbidden; that the net profits of the coal barons be heavily taxed for the benefit of the unemployed mineworkers; the six-hour day with full wage-compensation be introduced in the pits; inspection over the protection of life and health of the mineworkers be placed in the control of

organs elected by the workers; the gendarmerie and the military be immediately withdrawn from the districts and the strikers guaranteed full freedom for meetings and demonstrations. The Social-Fascists, together with other bourgeois parties, rejected all these proposals. And thereby their swindle of “nationalisation” was completely exposed even before the most backward workers. “How can we believe that they are earnest about nationalisation?”—declared the workers—“if they reject the mere prohibition of dismissals for a year and taxation of the profits of the coal masters?”

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While one can describe the Northern Bohemia strike as a model of correct application of the united-front tactic, one can, on the other hand, find serious mistakes in the application of the same tactic in the strike in the Ostrau-Karwin district.

The objective situation in this district was still more favourable than in Northern Bohemia. The attack of the employers was much more severe and directly threatened 12,000 mineworkers with dismissals, and the rest with wage reductions up to 30 per cent.

The preparatory campaign, which had already been carried through since the summer of the previous year, was, also in Ostrau, quite good. As a result of small fights, a number of demonstrations, demonstrative strikes and also small strikes (at the Wilzek pits, for example) the district was so well prepared that the Social-Fascists were compelled to meet the enormous militancy of the mineworkers by announcement of the employers’ new attack and their determination to fight; and by means of thoroughgoing “left” manoeuvres.

The Social-Fascist leaders declared that it was impossible to lie down before the dictatorship of the coal masters; in their agitation they made the slogan of the Red union, “Not a man off the job, not a farthing off the pay,” sound as if it were their own; they declared that unity was the great need, declared that all previous discords should be forgotten, and invited the Red mineworkers’ union to the negotiations with the coal barons, although they were not parties to the collective agreement; and they called a united conference of all the factory councils and chairmen of the trade-union groups of all the unions.

At this moment the opportunistic mistake of the Ostrau district leadership began. It had its roots in the false theory of the “double-edgedness” of the Social-Fascist “left” manoeuvres. The Ostrau comrades thought that the Social-Fascist leaders involuntarily radicalise the masses by their

"left" manoeuvre and thus make it easier for us to approach the Reformist workers. Consequently we must not exert ourselves so much with criticism since "for the time being" the Reformist workers would not yet understand. We only need to say "Yes" and "Amen" to the promises of the Social-Fascists, and in the course of the struggle the traitors would quickly expose themselves. From that resulted, at the beginning of the fight, an essentially *passive, waiting*, tactic. The Ostrau comrades argued that the coal barons would stick to their dictates and finally the Social-Fascists would be compelled, under the pressure of the masses, either to begin the struggle or to refuse to do so *and then* we would show them up and begin with *our* action. Conclusively and finally this false theory of the "double-edgedness" of the "left" manoeuvres of the Social-Fascist leaders led to the liquidation of the principle of *independent* leadership of the economic struggles.

The comrades fundamentally misunderstood the meaning of the "left" manoeuvres. The "left" manoeuvre was not the *cause* but the *consequence* of the *already-experienced* radicalisation of the masses. Their subjective and objective significance was not a possibility of our approach to the Reformist workers, not the erection for us of a bridge to the Reformist workers, but, on the contrary, the Social-Fascist leaders aimed, by this manoeuvre, at erecting a new barrier between us and the radicalised masses, in order to catch hold of the leftward-swinging masses and again deceive them in the interests of capital.

The "participation" of the Social-Fascist leaders in the struggle was certainly not quite excluded from the perspective, but only as a by-product of our course of the independent development of the strike. The Social-Fascists would "accompany," but only when there should really be no other way—if we should have beaten them among the masses. And *only for this reason*—in order to ensure new influence through "accompanying" the struggle, and with it break the strike. In every case our chief task was the line of independent leadership of the struggle even in the first stage of the conflict, and consequently the ruthless criticism of the Social-Fascist leaders, the entry into the struggle with independent initiative and the erection of a united front from below against the will of the bureaucrats was the precondition for this.

The Ostrau comrades did not understand that. In spite of opposite instructions from the Centre they went to the Unity conference of the 5th March without their own resolution and their own proposals for the immediate preservation and development of the fight. They even gave their support to a "unity" resolution, which indeed

was not lacking in radical phrases, but which assured the mineworkers that all organisations were now in unison, that the destiny of the struggle rested in good hands, that the mineworkers should wait and not undertake anything without the decision of the trade union. It was a direct warning of the need for initiative in the construction of the united front from below; it was a substitute of the united front from below by the false "unity" from above.

No wonder then that in the following week, all endeavours to create a real united-front organ at the pits came to nothing. Our comrades, by their support of the resolution, had themselves actually given ammunition for use against the creation of these organs; and the Reformist workers did not see their necessity if "without that everything was already united above."

The Centre of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia immediately criticised this mistake in the sharpest terms and also laid bare its roots. The Ostrau comrades acknowledged this criticism. They began, two days after the conference, to criticise sharply the Social-Fascists. But the mistake had already brought about a certain fear in the mass of mineworkers and to a certain extent also among our own cadres. And the Ostrau comrades did not energetically enough fight against this frame of mind. The fateful "waiting" tactic had dug itself in too deeply. The Reformist workers were persuaded that the decision as regards the fight must be held over until the conclusion of the negotiations with the employers. And a section of our own comrades remained of this persuasion—that before the termination of these negotiations nothing could be commenced.

In the meantime the Northern Bohemia strike began. The Centre took up the quite correct line of extending the strike to a general strike of mineworkers and gave the lead also to Ostrau, instructing them that the strike should be begun without waiting until the end of the negotiations, in which already the Social-Fascists had openly betrayed the mineworkers.

The outbreak of the first Ostrau strike which very quickly covered more than a third of the district showed the correctness of this decision. The Social-Fascists were surprised, the strike expanded itself. Under its influence the Kladno district came into the struggle and some small areas (Rositz, Falkenau, Handlova) made preparations for a quick entry into the fight.

Nevertheless, the old mistake avenged itself. It was not possible, in the Mähr half of the district where the Social-Fascists had predominant influence, to bring them quickly enough into the fight. It was not possible because the Reformist



workers, as a result of our mistake, still had faith in the Social-Fascists and awaited the course of the negotiations. And when the strike was broken at three of the twelve pits which had come out, the Ostrau comrades fell into a panic, and despite strict telephonic instructions to the contrary from the Centre, they passed the fateful resolution to call off the strike at all the pits. This took place without consultation with the strikers and their organs. This took place despite the fact that, as we shall show later, on the day of the breaking of the strike, over 80 per cent. of the workers, according to the official report of the employers, remained firm, and in place of the three pits who had gone back, two new pits joined in the strike. This break, which took place against the will of the Centre and the majority of the strikers, was a heavy blow against the extension of the strike into a general strike of mineworkers of all districts. Under its influence the struggle in the Kladna district began to crumble away, which, despite all endeavours, continued for a week up to the collapse of the strike. Under its influence the strike movement in Rositz, Halkenau and Handlova did not develop to a stoppage of work in these small district. And against the Northern Bohemia district, the Social-Fascists, employers and the State apparatus concentrated the whole of their attack, which, nevertheless, was repulsed by the correct application of the united-front tactic.

This mistake of the Ostrau comrades was also not accidental. It was a result of their failure to tirelessly root out the "waiting tactic." They went into the first struggle without being correctly persuaded of the right line and as a consequence of this capitulated at the first big difficulty, although the course of the strike itself gave the lie to their pessimism. Besides that, it was revealed—quite the contrary to Northern Bohemia—that there was at this first strike in Ostrau and its break, an underestimation of the organs of the united front, and the false attempts to substitute the united-front decisions by the decisions of the Party leadership, and council-board ordinances made without the consultation of all the workers.

The Centre again intervened, criticised before the mineworkers the mistakes which had been begun, energetically explained the question of the independent leadership of the struggle, and two days after the breakaway the conference of the Red Mineworkers' Union, with participation of the Reformist worker delegations, unanimously adopted a new strike resolution.

In the second and particularly in the third strike at Ostrau the mistake was corrected. The

whole district revolted against the treacherous pact which, in the meantime, had been signed by the Social-Fascists and Fascists. In the third strike we led already twenty pits into the strike, among them also some purely "reformist" and "Fascist" pits, against the will of their treacherous leaders. The third strike was led upon a broad united-front basis from below. But this third strike did not indeed lead to material success. It was not possible to tear up the treacherous pact; but it was a political success for the Party. It made it evident to the masses that it is possible to fight and that the Communists and the Red trade unions are the only people which defend the interests of the mineworkers. It powerfully shattered the position of the Social-Fascists and particularly the Fascist *Narodny Sdruziny*. That was revealed in the Municipal Elections which followed in some mining areas, where all opponents lost heavily and the Communists were easily victorious. It was revealed in the great increase of the number of demonstrators on the 1st May and finally also in a comparatively big recruitment into the Red Mineworkers' Union (after this strike the Union in the Ostrau district won about 1,000 new members).

But if this Reformist mistake had not been made at the beginning of the strike the success would have been much greater and the Ostrau Mineworkers would perhaps have warded off the attack of the employers in the form of a general strike of all mineworkers in Czecho-Slovakia. The Ostrau mistake should now be studied, together with the great positive experiences of Northern Bohemia as well as of the Ostrau struggle, in a broad enlightenment campaign. They show together with the immensely important lessons of the correct application of the united-front tactic in Northern Bohemia, the dangers of its false opportunistic misrepresentation and the danger of the false theory of the automatic "double-edgedness" of the Social-Fascist "left" manoeuvre.

Still a few words on the termination of the Northern Bohemian strike: In order to assure the greatest possible material and political success, it is certainly very important to choose the right moment for the termination of the strike.

The Social-Fascist and Fascist Unions, as was known, had concluded an agreement with the employers in the Northern Bohemian district behind the backs of the mineworkers. This pact contained some concessions of the coalmasters. The dismissals at the pits, which constituted a direct cause for the outbreak of the strike, were postponed for a year. The coalmasters promised the whole of the district that "on principle" they would carry through no mass dismissals. Several small demands of the strikers were acceded to

such as on the question of overtime, forbidding the filling of the wagons during the day when not hauled, etc. In comparison with the Ostrau pact there was a tremendous difference. There 12,000 mineworkers were to have compulsory short-time, wages were to be reduced up to 20 per cent. Here (in Northern Bohemia) no dismissals and no wage reductions were provided for.

Nevertheless the conditions of the Northern Bohemia pact were also completely insufficient and did not fulfil the demands of the strikers. The pact was full of reservations by means of which the coalmasters can evade all their obligations. And also in the principal question — protection against dismissals — the pact gave no real guarantee, for it contained the condition that mass dismissals are permissible in exceptional cases where the sale of coal would not once permit, the working of the pits in three shifts per week. The Northern Bohemian mineworkers saw, indeed, the tremendous difference between the pact for Ostrau where the employers were successful in throttling the strike, and the pact for Northern Bohemia which came into being under the pressure of their powerful and united strike. But they saw at the same time that they had been betrayed of the full fruits of their fight by the treachery of the Social-Fascist leaders, and that without this treachery of the Social-Fascist leaders it would have been possible to achieve much more.

The Social-Fascists and Fascists signed the pact unconditionally, and promised that the miners would return to work the following Monday. The Red Union refused to sign the pact and the unity conference also decided to reject it and to persevere in the struggle.

Once more it was possible to repel the concentrated attack. On the Monday the strike in the centre of the district stood firm. At all the bigger pits the workers struck solidly; the instructions of the Social-Fascists were not heeded. Still, at the periphery of the district the strike began to crumble, a number of small pits returned to work, and this time the Social-Fascist and Fascist leaders were able to carry through at the conferences of their organisations the resolution for stopping the strike. Thereby the treacherous leaders were again exposed before the masses, and this time also the Hakenkreuzler who had previously manoeuvred so cunningly.

The strike had reached its apex. The political success, the confidence of the masses in the Communist Party was stronger than ever. All the enemies of the mineworkers were exposed and compromised.

The pact was indeed insufficient, but still it was a partial success and everybody was aware that the partial success was a result of the leader-

ship of the strike and the Red union; its insufficiency, however, the result of the Social-Fascist and Fascist treachery.

On the other hand it was clear that the best guarantee against further attacks of the coalmasters lay not in the clauses of the pact but in resoluteness and unity, with which the fight would be conducted and with which the miners would also end it.

To carry on the strike, signified in the first place the perspective of a long struggle in the most solid centre of the district. On the other hand it meant a crumbling away at the periphery of the district and a struggle between the mineworkers themselves, between, on the one side, those who had persevered in the struggle, and on the other those who, having fought heroically for four weeks, had then, through hunger and treachery, preferred the unsatisfactory pact to a further lengthy strike.

The means for sharpening the strike in the district itself were for the most part already employed. As is well known, the strike had already previously been raised to a one-day general strike in the whole district with great illegal demonstrations and severe collisions with the armed forces. The strikers used excellently the threat to withdraw the safety men and flood the pits. They used the withdrawal as a threat after the dissolution of the first strike Committee and had compelled recognition of the newly-elected strike leadership. At some pits they withdrew the safety men since the authorities endeavoured under military protection to transport coal from the depôts.

The best chances for the continuation of the fight was naturally its extension, the leading of further sections of workers in the country into the struggle. Yet at this time there was no real prospect of a quick realisation of this.

The mineworkers' strike in Kladno was ended; in Ostrau it was impossible to take the whole district along in the struggle and the third partial strike in Ostrau was defeated by the forces of terror and the treachery of the Social-Fascists; the other small areas were forced to content themselves with partial struggles and demonstrations. In Brünn the textile workers' strike was already terminated.

In these circumstances the termination of the strike was the only correct thing to do. The struggle was ended at the moment of the greatest political success of the Communists and the proletarian united front. The mineworkers returned to the pits united and with fighting resoluteness. They were resolved to answer every attack of the employers with a new struggle.

This slogan was no empty phrase. Since the termination of the great struggle in the mining district of Northern Bohemia there have already been seven pit strikes. The cause was always the same. Some workers were late in starting work for the simple reason that they had been arrested, i.e., for accidental causes. The pact promised to take on only those who turned up for work at the right time. When, however, the pit managers refused to re-employ one worker only, the whole of the men came out on strike—with always the same result. In all the seven instances the bosses were forced to re-employ the men.

The strike committees remained together and transformed themselves into mineworkers' unity committees. At a number of pits campaigns were inaugurated for an immediate new election of the pit councils and it was possible thereby to win the legally prescribed two-thirds majority. The unity committee summoned a general Red May Day demonstration which took place with the participation of tens of thousands of workers of all political tendencies, while the Social-Fascist festivities shrunk into small gatherings. In the district an active recruiting campaign for the Red Mine Workers' Union took place. Whole groups of Reformists and Hakenkreuzler workers joined the Red Union. All this showed that the Party and the Red union had not only led the strike correctly but had also ended it at the most opportune moment in the correct manner; had thus created conditions for a shattering of the Fascist and the Social-Fascist influence in the district, and for a permanent strengthening of the revolutionary front.

The mineworkers' strike in Czecho-Slovakia has had great significance for the class struggle in that country. For the first time the Party and the Red Trade Unions, during a period of economic crisis, were able to lead independently a great mass strike. Of all the 80,000 mineworkers in all the districts, 55,000, even according to official statistics, took part in the strike.

In the Northern Bohemia district it was possible to bring the attack of the coalmasters to a standstill. In other districts proof was conclusively brought forth that the workers can fight and that the Communist Party is the only party which really defends the interests of the workers.

All the strike-breaking arguments of the Social-Fascists were contradicted through the struggle. It was shown that it is a lie to say that during crisis the workers cannot fight, for never before was the mineworkers' struggle in Northern Bohemia so united and so complete. It was revealed that the Social-Fascists had lied when they declared that the unemployed would stab the strikers in the back; on the contrary, the unem-

ployed had supported the strike in exemplary fashion and at the end of the strike the Social-Fascists exposed the mendacity of their arguments themselves in that they said that only the unemployed prevented the mineworkers from returning to work (which naturally, was a new lie). The falsity of their arguments was revealed that without sufficient funds no strike could be successfully carried through, when on the one hand the miners without any regular support showed the greatest endurance in the strike, and on the other hand it was possible to organise a broad parallel solidarity campaign amongst all sections of the working class and, in spite of the prohibition of the reformist organisations, to collect hundreds of thousands of Kronen for the strikers. It was also revealed that the arguments of the Social-Fascists, that it was impossible to strike because the coalmasters had gigantic stores of coal at the depôts which they would sell during the strike, were an empty threat, as, for the first time in the history of Northern Bohemian miners' strikes, the strikers successfully prevented the transport of coal from the depôts, and at the end of the strike, there was a perceptible scarcity of brown coal.

The miners' strike revealed to the workers, particularly the Nationalist and Reformist adherents, the rôle of the bourgeois State apparatus; but it also revealed that it was possible to fight successfully against the severest terrorist measures. The mass of mineworkers fought for their right to strike and their right to the streets. Under their pressure the dissolved strike committees were again permitted. The general strike and the mass demonstration of the 13th April were carried out in spite of the ban, gendarmerie, military forces and the shooting.

The miners' strike showed clearly that by the consistent and dexterous application of the United Front from below, it is possible to come up successfully against the treachery and the strike-breaking of the Social-Fascists and the Fascist leaders. In the Northern Bohemia district the Reformist leaders were powerless. No one heeded their instructions. Their own carefully-sifted delegate conferences turned down their proposals. Their influence was tremendously shaken.

These lessons do not remain without effect on the broadest masses of the Czecho-Slovakian proletariat.

During the miners' strike we also had a rise of the strike movement in other districts. We had a strike of the *textile workers in Brünn* against the reduction of the cost of living increase, which, to be true, embraced only a part of the industry and after a few days was compelled to break up. But under this pressure the employers

no longer dared to reduce the whole cost of living increase and to a certain extent granted it. We had a strike in the *Rima Muranga Railway works* in East Slovakia. A strike lasting eight weeks was unitedly carried out in the *textile factory of Doubleby in East Bohemia* and ended, despite no material success, in the strengthening of the Red Trade Union. And of the support which the workers' struggle produced among the working masses the following incident is characteristic. In the Richter textile factory in Mildenau in Northern Bohemia, the employers gave notice to thirteen workers. Thereupon the whole of the workers, numbering 1,100 men, came out under the slogan of "Not a man off the job," and after three days enforced the re-employment of all the discharged men.

After the miners' strike a wave of strikes developed in a number of areas and branches of industry.

The building workers for some time led a successful small struggle against the attacks of the employers. According to the statistics of the Red Building Workers' Union, from the beginning of the year to the middle of April, 20,000 building and stoneworkers in 350 enterprises (building and quarries) had taken part in partial and demonstrative strikes under their leadership. During this period the Union had recruited 4,507 new members.

Now, however, the question of the transition to a greater strike in the building trade stands on the order of the day; a strike which will embrace the whole of the workers, in which tens of thousands of building workers, under the leadership of the elected strike committees, the organ of the united front, will carry on their successful struggle.

The *landworkers* in the Galanta territory in Slovakia (about 4,500 men) had fought a united struggle for a 30 per cent. wage increase on the existing wages, payment for overtime and the recognition of their elected and trusted representatives. This strike was carried out against the collective agreement signed by the Reformists. It was won in a district of the greatest terror where the previous year the notorious shooting took place in Kossuth. Now the strike encompasses a number of more distant areas of the Slovakian landworkers. In the Carpatho-Ukraine the strike of wine-workers ended with a partial victory.

In the textile industry there was a number of partial struggles. For July a great strike against wage reductions and rationalisation was prepared in the East and Northern Bohemia districts included in the agreement. The position is the same in many other branches of industry.

At an organisers' conference, the C.C. of the Czecho-Slovakian Party, after a thorough exam-

ination of the lessons of the miners' strike discussed and laid down concrete tasks for the development of the economic struggles in all spheres. It is expected that the attacks of the employers will come up against resolute resistance of the working masses organised by the Communists, and that they will lead to further mass struggles in the course of which the Communists will lead still broader masses and win them for the fight for the liberation of the working class. At the same time the Party mobilises the masses for resistance against the application in Czecho-Slovakia of emergency measures on the model of Brüning and Von Papen in Germany.

As is known, the rudder of the Czecho-Slovakian State has up to now been held by a "great coalition" of almost all the bourgeois and Social-Fascist parties, which possess a great majority in Parliament.

Still, in recent times, more and more frequent complaints have been made within the bourgeois camp that the Government acts too slowly and with insufficient energy, that Parliament is too lethargic, and that a great new form of government is required.

The rapid development of the crisis, the hopelessness of a quick realisation of the Tardieu middle-European plans leading to some kind of "amelioration" of the crisis, the shaking of the Social-Fascist influence over the masses, the success of the Communists, all make necessary a new manoeuvre.

The bourgeoisie plans new attacks on the living standards of the working masses; reduction of wages and the salaries of civil servants; reduction of the wretched unemployment relief and the introduction of compulsory labour for the unemployed; new indirect taxes; reduction of rent protection, etc.

And above all the war plans of the Czechish bourgeoisie make quick action necessary.

For these reasons the tendency to displace the great coalition by a cabinet of officials or a "cabinet of personalities" grows rapidly, to set it up through a law of authorisation with full powers as in Germany Brüning had and Von Papen has to-day, to dissolve parliament, to drive forward in the severest manner against the revolutionary working class movement, up to the dissolution of the Communist Party. The first step towards that has been the banning of the W.I.R. and I.L.D. as well as the Young Communist League. The Social-Democrats would be able further to play their rôle of the chief social support of the bourgeoisie, but in a slightly altered form. They would reject all direct responsibility for the deeds of the "Government of the Strong

Hand," but support this Government on the principle of the "lesser evil."

This whole programme is presented rather undisguisedly in the speech of Klofac, the leader of the Czechish National Socialists, a confidante of Masaryk. He demands the end of the "Kerensky regime" which, in recent times, and especially during the mineworkers' strike, has ostensibly insinuated itself, recommends the appointment of a "War Cabinet" of quick action,—ostensibly for war against the crisis — and exposes his programme with the slogan of a "Second Republic," which is damnably similar to the Hitlerite slogan of the "third Reich."

Simultaneously with the rise of the struggle for economic partial demands, the Party begins a broad campaign of exposure of these plans which are closely linked together with the war preparations of the Czechish bourgeoisie, and for the mobilisation of the masses against capitalist dictatorship,—for the revolutionary way out of the crisis. And also here the fight for the reformist workers, the fight to win them over into the proletarian united front is a central question,—in full accord with the experiences and lessons given to us by the great miners' strike.

## NEW MANOEUVRES OF POLISH SOCIAL-FASCISTS

By J. LENSKY.

**T**HE graver the economic crisis, the more energetic the resistance offered by the toiling masses to the capitalist offensive, the faster the revolutionary crisis matures, the more determined become the manoeuvres of Social-Fascism, the main social buttress of the bourgeoisie. While the bourgeoisie seeks to solve the crisis by a frantic offensive upon the toiling masses and by new imperialist wars, primarily by a counter-revolutionary war against the U.S.S.R., while the front of the internal counter-revolution closely interweaves everywhere with feverish preparations for war, all the manoeuvres of Social-Fascism have the aim of diverting the toiling masses from the revolutionary solution of the crisis, of directing them to the path of "democracy" in the name of the salvation of capitalism and away from the proletarian revolution with a view to "unnoticeably" embroiling the masses in the whirlpool of imperialist war.

Social-Fascism makes use of a complete scale of various manoeuvres which frequently come as a surprise to our Party. With the speed dictated by the ever-aggravating situation the Social-Fascists of the different countries spread among the masses new "theories" and deceitful "left" slogans. In regard to this question some of the chief exponents in the Second International are the Social-Fascists of Poland. They have borrowed a good deal from their foreign comrades, chiefly from the German and Austrian Social-Democrats, from Hilferding and Bauer, whose ideas are being transplanted into Polish soil by the Nedzialkovskys and Czapinskys. There is no lack, however, of original ideas as equally well designed to dupe the masses, which,

in turn, other sections of the Second International are borrowing from the Poles.

It can hardly be said that we have succeeded in exposing these manoeuvres. On the contrary, we are constrained to note a certain weakening of the vigilance of our Party with regard to these manoeuvres, which sow illusions not only among the masses but to some extent also among our Party members. To use the examples of the everyday struggle for the purpose of explaining concretely each new manoeuvre, to strengthen our leadership of the struggle, to expose the close connection between the theory and the counter-revolutionary practice of the Social-Fascists, to unmask before the masses every new deceit, — such is the only means of capturing the majority of the working class for a revolutionary solution of the crisis.

### THE SOCIAL-FASCIST PROGRAMME OF THE SOLUTION OF THE CRISIS.

The basic cause forcing Social-Fascism to resort to new programmes and slogans cloaked in revolutionary phrases is the ever-aggravating crisis, the growth of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries, and the enormous successes of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R., which is passing from the laying of the foundation of socialism in the first successfully completed Five-Year Plan to the "final liquidation of the capitalist elements and classes in general," to the creation of a classless socialist society. The tremendous influence exercised over the toiling masses of all countries by the Soviet Union which points out to these masses the revolutionary solution of the crisis, the immense popularity of the socialist Five-Year Plan among the millions of

the international proletariat, deprive the Social-Fascists of the opportunity of denying the facts which testify to the successful fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan. Actually these facts are now unanimously recognised even by the official Polish bourgeois press.

While recognising the "planfulness of the Soviet economy" which promotes a high degree of development of the productive forces, the Polish Social-Fascists, like the Second International as a whole, make every effort to "prove" that the U.S.S.R. is not building socialism but State capitalism, that the Five-Year Plan is being fulfilled with the aid of "feudal" serfdom, that the international proletariat cannot follow the example of the U.S.S.R.

The home-grown "theoretician" of Polish Social-Fascism, Nedzialkovsky, in his articles on the Five-Year Plan, attempts to hide from the masses the class essence which distinguishes socialist industry, the industry of the proletarian State, from the State industries of capitalism.

Nedzialkovsky cannot deny the fact that the Five-Year Plan has raised the welfare and cultural level of the millions in the U.S.S.R. This is admitted also by the official "Gazeta Polska." In unison with the Fascist scribes he consoles himself by prattle about "feudal relations in Soviet Russia." In this respect, as well as in the general appraisal of the Five-Year Plan, the socialist "Robotnik" and the "Gazeta Polska" are in complete agreement.

But the Nedzialkovskys are forced to consider the sympathy of the masses for the Five-Year Plan. It is not easy to go to these masses and fulminate against the Five-Year Plan. They therefore seek to frighten the masses by the patriotic threat of the loss of "independence" in case the Five-Year Plan should be extended to Poland.

"He who dreams of extending to Poland the concrete plan of the Soviet *Piatiletka*," writes the "Robotnik," "must, irrespective of his desires, include Poland in the economic system of the U.S.S.R., in other words, he must put an end to Poland's independence."

Nedzialkovsky suddenly forgets that bourgeois Poland constitutes a link of the capitalist economic system, that she depends upon the big imperialist powers, that she fulfils the rôle of the gendarme of international imperialism. The Polish Socialist Party wants to preserve this rôle for Poland. The victory of the proletarian revolution would overthrow the yoke of native and "allied" imperialism which the Nedzialkovskys style "independence." Poland would no longer be the gendarme of capitalism, it would become an equal member of the world Union of Socialist Republics.

A fraternal alliance with the U.S.S.R. would help the Polish proletariat quickly to take up the building of socialism, this being a true guarantee of the genuine independence of the proletarian State from the capitalist States.

"How does socialism reply to the legend of the Five-Year Plan?" asks "Robotnik." "Without irony and without malice. It opposes it by the conception of a *planned economy* developing, not on the basis of a 'feudal' dependence of the masses upon a dictatorship, but upon the basis of a *Social-Democracy* inseparably connected with *political democracy*."

A planned economy not based upon the dictatorship of the proletariat, not controlled by a proletarian democracy as represented by the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Red Army Deputies, but by a Parliamentary democracy, the bankrupt form of bourgeois dictatorship, such is the solution of the crisis recommended by the P.S.P. which covers it up by lying phrases about a "super-class" social and political democracy.

In addition the C.C. of the P.S.P. has promulgated the so-called programme of "immediate mitigation of the effects of the capitalist crisis." This programme contains the following demands:

- (a) Socialisation of the sufficiently-developed industries.
- (b) Establishment of workers' control over all industrial undertakings.
- (c) Re-opening of the closed undertakings.
- (d) Centralisation of savings in the Bank of Poland.
- (e) Organisation of export and import by the establishment of a State monopoly of foreign trade.

Who is to carry this programme into effect "to-day"? Evidently the capitalist State. This programme follows the line of the further concentration of capital and the strengthening of the fascist dictatorship by means of an extension of its economic functions. Essentially the question resolves itself into the salvation (at the expense of the toilers) of the bankrupt enterprises, to the throwing of the debts of the bourgeoisie upon the backs of the masses and to the strengthening of the customs barriers promoting higher prices on the home market. This is precisely how the "nationalisation" of the bankrupt factories and banks by the capitalist State, the instrument of the class rule of the bourgeoisie, would take place.

"A State monopoly under capitalism," says Lenin, "merely represents a means of increasing and securing the profits of the millionaires of this or that industry standing on the brink of bankruptcy."

Like the entire Second International the P.S.P. advocates a peaceful "growth into socialism" by the strengthening of the elements of State capitalism. In the sphere of State capitalist demagoguery it imitates German Social-Democracy. Following the example of Hilferding who called Brüning's fourth emergency decree "a piece of socialism," the editors of "Robotnik" see in this decree a symptom of an anti-capitalist policy which will develop into a socialist policy.

"The nationalisation of the banks," writes "Robotnik" in connection with Brüning's bank decree, "may prove to be a stage on the road to the socialisation of the banks . . . The task of the German working class will be to see to it that development should follow precisely this direction. Under the pressure of necessity Germany's Government has been forced to take up the path of an anti-capitalist policy. The working class will see to it that this anti-capitalist policy should develop into a socialist policy."

Thus, the capitalist measure of Brüning's Government adopted in order to save the insolvent banks, adopted in the interests of finance capital, is pictured by "Robotnik" as the path to socialism.

The economic programme proposed by the P.S.P. for to-day also signifies a consolidation of the economic positions of the bourgeois State for war against the U.S.S.R. The same object is pursued by the policy carried out by the fascist Government in regard to the cartels. While pretending to oppose the cartels Pilsudsky's Government actually accelerates the establishment of cartels of industry, not only from the point of view of the civil, but also from the point of view of the military interests of monopoly capital. Such is the character of the decrees on the reorganisation of the coal and oil industries, on the basis of which, the Government with the aid of the cartels, has powers to regulate the production and distribution of coal and oil products.

The National-Democratic press describes the coal decree as the nationalisation of the coal industry. This is, at best a gross exaggeration.

"In one of the most important industries," says "Gazeta Warszawska," "there has been introduced the so-called planned economy of which the socialist camp is the strongest adherent. This does not mean that the coal decree will be carried out in the socialist spirit. It may possibly benefit not the workers but the industrial bureaucracy employed in the cartels and the Governmental bureaucracy controlling these cartels."

"Gazeta Warszawska" is right about this being only "so-called" planned economy, for as long

as the capitalist system survives the anarchy in economy cannot be eliminated by any decrees.

The P.S.P. programme of the planned "mitigation of the effects of the crisis" of capitalism, a programme ostensibly pointing "the way to the planned socialist economy," represents a new fraud designed to distract the masses from the revolutionary solution of the crisis. This fraud is based upon the portrayal of the bourgeois State as a super-class State organisation capable of exercising control over the capitalist monopolies in the interests of the toiling masses. Our task consists in showing to the masses that a planned economy is possible only after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie under the dictatorship of the proletariat. An instance of such an economy is found in the U.S.S.R. The only way to it leads through the proletarian revolution.

The false programmes of the P.S.P. are aimed against the U.S.S.R. In the arsenal of the anti-Soviet war preparations they represent a subsidiary ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie. The tremendous sympathies of the toiling masses for the U.S.S.R., the State building socialism, does not permit the Social-Fascists openly to conduct anti-Soviet war agitation. For this reason they carefully undermine the faith of the masses in the socialist character of the Five-Year Plan, describing it as a product of State capitalism and the enslavement of the working class.

The P.S.P. does not dare to come out with an open call for a military intervention against the U.S.S.R., though it fully shares the interventionist view of Kautsky. Such a position was taken up by the P.S.P. in the discussion which has long been proceeding in the Second International on the question of the Five-Year Plan. This is evidenced by the diplomatic accounts published in the "Robotnik."

Together with the entire bourgeoisie the P.S.P. seeks a way out of the crisis in a counter-revolutionary war against the U.S.S.R. But its participation in the preparation of the war is disguised by a heavy veil of social-pacifist phraseology. The P.S.P. policy of manoeuvring on the question of war is closely connected with its opposition manoeuvres towards the Pilsudsky Government. This explains why the representatives of the P.S.P. in the *Seym* have for the first time voted against the budget and the conscription order. But this has nothing in common with voting against the military preparations of the Polish bourgeoisie. In a veiled declaration the P.S.P. proceeded from the premise that Pilsudsky's Government cannot ensure successful preparations for war and that it will fail to attract the masses to an offensive against the U.S.S.R. According to the leaders of the P.S.P. this task can be solved

only by a Government of unity, by a national coalition under a democratic Populist exterior, such as the Witos-Daszynsky Government of 1920. It was under this slogan that the recent celebration of the Daszynsky jubilee was held.

The P.S.P. carefully hides from the masses the preparation of an armed intervention against the U.S.S.R. It weakens the vigilance of the masses with regard to the imperialist war begun by Japanese imperialism by assurances about the peaceful interference of the League of Nations. With "As soon as Japan hears the resolute voice of the League of Nations she will begin to evacuate," the "Robotnik" attempts to dispel the suspicions of the toiling masses. The League of Nations will "put an end to the hostilities." Henderson's election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, according to "Napszed," meant that "the desire to realise disarmament has won." The League of Nations is an unquestionable instrument of peace. That this instrument invariably kills all the disarmament proposals coming from the Soviet delegation is something about which the P.S.P. Press keeps completely silent, while eulogising the mock project of moral disarmament which "disguises" the feverish arming of the imperialist States. While shouting about peace the P.S.P., through the mouth of Pujak, who addressed the Military Commission, demands an "extension of military training which in our country is backward."

Instead of planful growth into socialism we have a planful growth into an imperialist war, planful preparation of a new offensive against the U.S.S.R. Such is the counter-revolutionary essence of the Social-Fascist programme of solving the crisis which cannot be obscured either by the bombastic sophisms of the Nedzialkovskys or by the polemical acrobatics of the Czapsinskys who furiously attacked my article in the January issue of the "Communist International."

#### THE STRUGGLE OF THE SOCIAL-FASCISTS FOR THE MASSES.

The speedy growth of the revolutionary crisis determines the policy of the P.S.P. in its struggle for the masses. The leaders of the P.S.P. believe that the bourgeoisie will succeed in prolonging their existence only if they succeed in preserving and extending their influence over the masses.

The strike wave is growing. The heroic strike of the Dombrow miners has opened up a series of battles over a wide front against the capitalist offensive and the fascist dictatorship. The fact that the strike lasted a whole month, that the mining proletariat of Dombrow unanimously rejected Government arbitration, that despite the terrible distress the workers twice voted against

a return to work, that for a long period, despite the tremendous unemployment, the number of strikebreakers was negligible, all these facts testified to the powerful fighting enthusiasm of the masses.

The example of the Dombrow miners caused a movement of solidarity strikes, raised the fighting sentiments of the entire proletariat, and especially of its basic sections. The frontal attack of capital and of the Government upon the social gains, the further attempts to cut the wages and the mass dismissals in practically all the industries, the highly-strained political situation, the speedy extension of the strike front, all this awakens in the working class a desire for uniting their forces for joint struggle, stimulates the idea of and leads to a general strike.

The Dombrow strike at the same time served as an example of a mass adoption of more acute forms of struggle. These consisted not only of stubborn bloody clashes with the police but of a fight for the removal from work of the maintenance staff who were employed under police protection. The slogan of a "black strike" advanced by the masses developed into a formidable warning to the coal barons.

An example of a heroic strike struggle involving the seizure of a factory was shown by the workers of the "Gortensia."

Crowds of unemployed besiege the city halls, engage in bloody battles with the police, stop the trains. The bourgeois Press reports attacks by "organised and armed bands" of hundreds of people against whom "the police are helpless."

In the villages the peasant masses cut down the woods and drive out the police. Vigorous resistance to the collection of taxes has become a mass phenomenon.

The influence of Communism grows from day to day. The number of Communists arrested in 1931 was twice as large as in 1930.

"... The Government has not enough forces to deal with Communism," "Robotnik" complains. "Our Government becomes 'stronger,' but Communism, too, grows stronger. One might even hazard the statement that the 'stronger' the Government's 'clean sweep,' the stronger is Communism. Yet we constantly hear about the liquidation of the Communist centre, about the crushing of the Communist organisation, about the arrest of the Communist leaders."

Under these conditions the new manoeuvres have the object of preventing the growth of the proletarian revolution. Such was the character of the one-day general strike throughout Poland proclaimed by the P.S.P. This fact signals a change in the tactical policy of the P.S.P. The strike policy of the P.S.P. leaders began to change



already at the time of the second strike of the tramwaymen. The experience of the first strike of the Warsaw tramwaymen confronted the P.S.P. with the danger of breaking away from the masses and the speedy growth among them of the influence of Communism in all its acuteness. The strike of the Lodz silk mill workers and tramwaymen confirm the threat of this danger. As a result of the concentration of the initiative and leadership of the strike primarily in the hands of the Communists the mass basis of the P.S.P. began to fall away. The fact that the Social-Fascists came to the masses already in the process of the strike struggle organised or taken up by the Communists, considerably weakened, and at times completely killed the chances of preserving influence over the masses and disrupting their struggle from within. For this reason the leaders of the P.S.P. have now begun to arrive at the right time, that is, at the moment when the struggle has become inevitable but has not yet begun. This helps them to mitigate the acuteness of the situation and oppose the extension of the struggle. This helps them also to dampen the fighting spirits of the masses by the application of a peaceful protest strike.

This preventive policy of the P.S.P. is a hundred times more dangerous than all its previous manoeuvres. With its aid the P.S.P. seeks to gain control of the powerful mass sentiments in favour of unity against the capitalist offensive. They want to take over the initiative of the mass united front not only on a local but on a national scale. With the aid of "big" actions they are attempting to turn the revolutionary sentiments of the masses to the path of a "democratic solution of the crisis." The latest strike actions of P.S.P. have a clear-cut political character (in the spirit peculiar to it). The strike of the municipal employees was conducted by it under the slogan of democratic self-government as part of the "Parliamentary democracy." In connection with the strike the P.S.P. on March 16 advanced the slogan of a Polish People's Republic as well as of a "Worker-Peasant Government." By these actions the P.S.P. also seeks to raise the importance of Social-Fascism in the camp of the bourgeoisie as its saviour and as a pretender to power.

The general strike proclaimed by the P.S.P. on March 16 was a far-fetched manoeuvre. But thanks to the revolutionary sentiments of the masses and the efforts of our organisations the strike assumed extensive proportions and its character did not justify the hopes of the P.S.P. which failed to confine the mass actions within the boundaries of "a peaceful demonstration." Contrary to the leaders of the P.S.P., the masses went on to the streets, congregated in the squares,

held meetings and demonstrations. In a number of places the walkout of March 16 developed into a mass revolutionary strike. It revealed the preparedness of the great proletarian masses to take up the political struggle. Even that section of the proletariat which had not previously participated in the strike movement, such as the metal workers and to some extent the munition workers, participated in the strike of March 16.

The resolution of the Party Central Committee analyses at length our achievements and defects, the weaknesses and mistakes committed during the campaign of March 16. We want to warn the comrades both against the Right (and most dangerous) as well as against the Left-nihilist attitude towards the manoeuvres of the P.S.P. again. In the first case the achievements of our Party are interpreted as a by-product of P.S.P. action. The P.S.P. appears in the rôle of a factor unleashing the revolutionary actions of the masses, of a factor facilitating, through its legality, the leadership of the masses by us. This conception contains an underestimation of the counter-revolutionary character of the Social-Fascist manoeuvres, to the P.S.P. is assigned an objectively revolutionary rôle and the independent rôle of our Party, which opposes the P.S.P. in principle and mobilises the masses for revolutionary actions despite and over the head of the P.S.P., disappears. This conception leads to the surrender of the initiative to the P.S.P. as a legal cover or a temporary ally, and in consequence leaves us at the tail of the P.S.P. This is surrendering to the difficulties in the organisation of the mass struggle, it is an expression of the underestimation of the revolutionary sentiments of the masses, of the distrust of the forces of the Party which grow, despite all the difficulties, thanks to the objective conditions.

The other point of view ignores the fact of the proclamation of the one-day general strike by the P.S.P. instead of convincingly explaining to the masses the causes, character and aim of such manoeuvres. Such a mistake was committed also in the April appeal of the C.C. giving an estimation of March 16.

"March 16," we read in it, "again revealed how deceitful the work of the P.S.P. tricksters was. The words of the Communists have been confirmed: the leaders of the P.S.P., while making it appear that they were proclaiming a general strike, did everything possible to prevent it, to extract its revolutionary sting, to destroy your will for a general strike."

Here is interwoven a correct analysis with an incorrect denial of and simplification of the facts. It is true that the leaders of the P.S.P. sought to narrow down the strike, clearly sabotaging it at

such important sectors as those of the railwaymen and tramwaymen, and endeavoured to "extract the revolutionary sting of the strike." But it is useless to deny (without merely contradicting all reason) that they, for their obvious counter-revolutionary aims, did proclaim this strike and in some cases led it in their own way. Nor can we close our eyes to the fact that in some labour centres, particularly in the provinces, the P.S.P. succeeded in giving the strike a peaceful character. The argument that "the leaders of the P.S.P. only pretended to proclaim a one-day general strike" does not sound convincing either to the P.S.P. members or to the members of our Party.

The basic task confronting our Party in connection with March 16 has been the correct treatment of the general strike question. The material published throughout the country is noted for a lack of clarity on this question. What we are concerned with is to co-ordinate the Leninist slogan of the general strike with the political situation, with the question of the struggle for power, with the slogan of an armed uprising. From this point of view the C.C. appeal took up a wrong position.

The resolution of the C.C. on March 16 emphasises that the question of a national general strike must now be treated differently.

"Under modern conditions such a strike developing out of the great economic battles, of the mass political strikes, demonstrations, etc., may become a matter of the near future; each big acute partial struggle (a general strike in Warsaw or a railwaymen's strike) may under our leadership develop not only into a rehearsal of a general strike but also into a national general strike. For this reason the popularisation of the general strike is to-day no longer sufficient; at present the Party must adopt a more determined policy of going over from big battles to a national general strike. The agitation in favour of such a strike and the preparation of the masses for it by the extension of the strike front, by political strikes and demonstrations must be closely connected with systematic popularisation of the armed uprising of the workers, peasants and soldiers as the only means of overthrowing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie."

Yet, the March appeal of the C.C. creates the illusion that the general mass political strike alone is capable of "overthrowing the power of the manufacturers and landlords," thus breaking away the agitation in favour of this strike from the popularisation of the slogan of an armed uprising which was completely forgotten. Thus the general strike becomes the *most important*

*form* of struggle instead of the armed uprising. This contradicts the Leninist position.

"The general political strike," says Lenin, "must be regarded at the given moment of the movement not so much as an independent means of struggle but as subsidiary to the uprising" (Collected Works, Volume IX., page 42).

The promulgation of the isolated slogan of the general strike without the propaganda of an armed uprising resembles the position of the Anarcho-Syndicalists who still see in the general strike the highest independent and all-powerful means of struggle and who, where they are strong (Spain), have virtually in their main section degenerated to the rôle of Social-Fascism.

As far back as the 80's this point of view was sharply criticised by Engels in his polemic against the Bakunists.

The linking up of the general strike slogan throughout the country with the propaganda of an armed uprising does not yet mean that every strike of this kind must at once develop into an armed uprising. A revolutionary general strike is possible without the existence of a situation making for an armed uprising, which will not automatically spring forth from the general strike, but will come as a result of a series of important class battles. This is demonstrated by the experience of the revolution of 1905. This is how the question of general strikes was regarded by Lenin. The closest approximation to our own situation is the directive contained in the resolution on the strike movement adopted by the Summer Conference of the Bolshevik C.C. in 1913 (the present situation in Poland having reached a higher stage of revolutionary development).

"The conference greets the initiative of the St. Petersburg Committee and of a number of Party groups of Moscow who raised the question of the general political strike and took steps in this direction in July and September of this year. The conference recognises that the movement is approaching the point where an All-Russian political strike will become the order of the day. Systematic agitation in preparation for this strike must be started immediately everywhere."

This is followed by the basic slogans of the political strikes: a democratic Republic, an eight-hour day, confiscation of the landlords' estates. Such a treatment of the general strike question excludes the automatic connection of this strike with an armed uprising; i.e., automatic in the sense of its being independent of the degree of maturity of the objective situation.

Some comrades in Poland wanted on March 16 to advance the slogan, "Long Live the General Strike to the Point of Victory." Such a slogan

would have remained suspended in the air and would have been a paper slogan.

But it is always necessary to remember that each truly national general strike confronts the masses point-blank with the necessity of a direct struggle for power; and confronts the Party with the question of organising the forces for an armed uprising.

"The general strike," says our May-Day appeal, "represents an opening battle developing into a revolution, an opening attack preceding the general storm, the armed uprising."

In other words, the armed uprising will not automatically jump out of this strike but will depend upon the degree of maturity of the objective factors and of the preparation of the forces. It is clear that under the conditions of an armed uprising the question of the strike is subordinated to the strategy of this uprising.

We have discussed these questions at some length since only a clear Bolshevik attitude towards them can help successfully to expose the new manoeuvres of the P.S.P. The central point in this exposure must be the question of power and of the roads leading to the capture of power.

#### OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST SOCIAL-FASCISM.

It is difficult to foresee now how the P.S.P. will manoeuvre in the future. It is necessary to bear in mind that with the sharpening of the crisis the manoeuvres of the Social-Fascists will become more elastic and dexterous. At the present moment the P.S.P. is seeking by all means to avoid the streets (with the exception of the May-Day celebrations which are legal to Social-Fascism), where the masses are led by our Party. But this does not mean that at the moment when the masses will fill the streets, breaking down the barriers of the fascist system, Social-Fascism will not attempt to head the movement of the masses, to break our leadership, and prevent a direct struggle against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie on the part of the masses.

Right now we must warn the masses against democratic illusions during the period of the revolutionary crisis. We must foresee different democratic manoeuvres such as "free elections to the *Seym*," "Parliamentary Governments," "People's Governments," etc., and such other means of saving the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. In its agitation the P.S.P. advocates a return to 1918. Our task consists in reminding the masses of the experience of the "democracy" of that time as one of the forms of the class rule of the bourgeoisie, and showing that such Governments (during a period of revolutionary crisis) essentially signify a pseudo-democratic variety of the fascist system, as they would com-

bine the fascist methods of struggle against the socialist proletarian revolution with large-scale deceptive democratic manoeuvres.

The P.S.P. platform of May-Day slogans sounds very revolutionary. Here we find both the "struggle for socialism, for the overthrow of capitalism, peace between the nations, down with the threat of new war, down with the fascist dictatorship, for a worker-peasant Government, for a Polish-Socialist Republic," etc. This rich menu of paper slogans, some of which have been borrowed from us (the overthrow of capitalism, down with the fascist dictatorship, etc.) is capable of misleading the uninitiated workers and of creating among the P.S.P. workers the impression that their Party has developed from an "opposition" Party, into a thoroughly revolutionary organisation.

In our agitation a bigger rôle must be given to slogans, with the aid of which a sharp line is drawn between Communism, the camp of the proletarian revolution, and Social-Fascism and the entire bourgeois counter-revolution; *the slogans of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of Soviets of workers, peasants and Red Army deputies, of an armed uprising as the only means of overthrowing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.*

We must give these slogans more prominence and drive them home to the consciousness of the masses. In opposition to the Parliamentary-democratic fraud of the Social-Fascists we must more and more resolutely popularise the slogan of Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Red Army Deputies as the only form of working-class democracy. Our basic slogans determining the attitude of the Communists towards the questions of power must be concretely co-ordinated with the existing situation, with the current battles, must point out concretely to the masses the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

Another series of slogans contrasting us to the Social-Fascists are those slogans which cause the masses to clash directly with the fascist State apparatus, which place before them the question of power and facilitate the transition to higher forms of struggle. Ever more insistent becomes the need for the systematic promulgation and, depending upon the concrete conditions, of the carrying into effect of these slogans which are fully in accord with the conditions of the severe economic crisis, with the tremendous destitution of the masses and with their growing aggressiveness. The slogan, "Not a penny taxes," has become extremely popular. But there is still no extensive agitation for the slogan in favour of the confiscation of foodstuffs, the seizure and use of the pastures and woods, the protection and

release of the political prisoners, the disarming of the police and fascist detachments; while the masses are spontaneously beginning to take this path.

The struggle against the aggression of Japanese imperialism in China, for the defence of the U.S.S.R. against the imperialist intervention must become part of the united front of the toiling masses, with the active participation of the workers and peasants from the Social-Fascist and National-Fascist parties. On this question we can expose very forcefully before the masses the counter-revolutionary essence of the P.S.P. At each meeting, at each factory gathering, at each peasant meeting, this question must be clearly raised in order to preclude the possibility of manoeuvres on the part of the Social-Fascists and National-Fascists. The centre of activity must now be concentrated upon actions of the working class and revolutionary peasantry, upon a mass refusal to pay taxes, upon demonstrations, upon go-slow strikes and protest strikes, against the preparation and provocation of war, upon the detention of transports with arms, etc.

A necessary condition to the successful frustration of the new manoeuvres of Social-Fascism consists in the strengthening of our initiative, of our organisational and leading rôle in the strike struggle. In the past the Communists played a predominant part in these struggles. However, the last weeks signalise a growth of difficulties. The lessons of Dombrow and Silesia teach us that the question of our strike leadership to-day stands more acutely than in the past period, the period of mainly successful strike battles. Lately the Social-Fascists have sometimes been successful in taking up or capturing the leadership of the strikes, weakening them and causing their collapse with the aid of various manoeuvres. Social-Fascism speculates on the growing difficulties of the struggle, taking advantage of their legality before the masses, urging the masses that without their mediation it is impossible to get along, and in this way penetrating even the strikes led by us. We must strengthen our efforts tenfold in the creation of strike committees, of united-front organs, in order successfully to repulse the strike manoeuvres of the Social-Fascists. We must particularly expose the Social-Fascist policy of manoeuvring combined with the slogan of a demonstrative general strike as a means of giving vent to and dampening the revolutionary sentiments of the masses. These manoeuvres deflect the attention of the masses from the everyday partial struggle, from the response by a strike to every wage cut and dismissal. With the aid of the manoeuvre of March 16 the P.S.P. succeeded in delaying the strike of the municipal

employees. The P.S.P. has been somewhat successful in the application of this policy among the farm workers and is attempting to carry it out among the Lodz textile workers.

The Dombrow strike is evidence that we have entered a phase of big strike battles. But it would be a mistake to forget that these battles will develop on the basis of various, perhaps very trifling, everyday struggles against the capitalist offensive. The organisation and development of these battles represents and will continue to represent a most important vital task of the Party.

It is necessary to avoid replacing this everyday work by empty talk of general strikes as was the case in the Dombrow Basin, where the organisation called upon the miners to declare a general strike even when the strike had already been broken and the bulk of the workers had returned to work. There were cases of the Party organisations proclaiming a general strike in individual industries on paper alone without a sober estimation of the strike sentiments and without any preparations.

Some comrades do not even understand the difference existing between the policy of a general strike and the actual proclamation of such a general strike in any given industry or district. This policy must be adopted and carried into effect whenever a favourable situation arises. The proclamation of a strike on a definite day demands a correct estimation of the sentiments of the masses, the choice of a proper moment, a sober account of the forces and a concentration of the efforts upon the decisive strategical centres. Any verbal juggling with the general strike slogan weakens the authority of the Party among the masses and helps the Social-Fascists to undermine the faith of the masses in our Party.

The strike of March 16 revealed considerable possibilities of attracting the metal workers, railwaymen and armament workers into the strike struggle. The extension of the strike struggle among these sections of the proletariat must become a paramount task of the Party as a serious factor in the struggle against the imperialist war, against the attack upon China, against the anti-Soviet intervention.

Finally, a basic condition of successful struggle for the masses is the constant, persistent, steadfast struggle against all concessions to the manoeuvres of Social-Fascism in the ranks of our Party, against all expectation of initiative on the part of the P.S.P., which leads to the replacing of the leading rôle of the Party by a sort of opposition for the P.S.P.

The Dombrow strike revealed a growth of new illusions in relation to the P.S.P. The illusions of our active members applied not so much to the

leaders as to the P.S.P. delegates who are directly in charge of the masses and who act under their pressure. There were cases of our comrades refusing to elect strike committees under the influence of the P.S.P. delegates. It is necessary to make it clear to the whole Party that the united front from below means a joint struggle with the lower workers from the P.S.P., the Bund, etc., under the leadership of the Communists. We are fighting against the theory of the "small Zörgiebels." But this does not mean that a P.S.P. delegate pursuing the line of his Party can also be our ally. Only that delegate who acts contrary to the directions from above, actively participating in the revolutionary struggle of the masses, is capable of establishing the united front with us from below. We will be able to attract such delegates only if we fight against their views. Any obscuring of the difference of view actually marks a desertion into the camp of Social-Fascism.

The rank and file of the Social-Fascist and National-Fascist parties are speedily being radicalised. The deep economic crisis and the growing class struggle create highly favourable conditions for wresting away these masses and attracting them to the revolutionary struggle. This process can be accelerated only by an able and energetic exposure of the manoeuvres of Social-Fascism which consists in pointing to the masses the "peaceful democratic solution of the crisis."

We must not pursue the united-front policy from time to time only. It must be developed along the entire front of struggle, against the offensive of capital and the fascist Government. At each factory, in each union and at each meeting the Communists must act as initiators and organisers of the united front of the masses against the furious attacks of capital and bloody outrages of the fascist terror, they must ably co-ordinate the economic strikes with the political, more and more frequently lead the masses into the streets and resort to the mass political strike.

It is necessary to create an unbroken united front so as to unite the entire struggle taking place at present and the campaigns organised by the Party into a single political whole, and turn our face to the workers who follow the Social-Fascist Parties. Such a campaign has recently been opened by the C.C. of the C.P. of Poland.

It is necessary on the basis of the experience of the everyday struggles to convince the million-strong masses that the Fascist dictatorship will not resign on its own accord and that capitalism will not collapse of itself as the Social-Fascists maintain. It is necessary patiently to explain to the masses our solution of the crisis by means of the proletarian revolution and, extending the front of the everyday struggle, to lead along this road hundreds of thousands, the millions of workers and peasants.

## EDITORIAL NOTE

The editors desire to draw the readers' attention to the fact that owing to careless translation and faulty editing the first part of Com. Piatnitsky's article: "The Bolshevisation of the Communist Parties of the Capitalist Countries by Means of Overcoming Social Democratic Traditions," published in No. 8 of the "Communist International" for May 1st, 1932, contains a

number of inaccuracies which distort the author's meaning. The translation has now been carefully revised and the whole article will be reprinted in pamphlet form by Modern Books, Ltd. Readers are asked to note that the pamphlet version alone gives a correct rendering of the views Com. Piatnitsky expressed in this article.

—Editors, "Communist International."

# LESSONS OF THE MINERS' STRIKE STRUGGLE IN THE RUHR IN 1931-32

By S. PEREVOZNIKOV.

**I**N the Ruhr district is represented one of the decisive sections of the class struggle in Germany. Despite the growing replacement of coal by new synthetic fuels, the Ruhr coal basin still remains the chief fuel and power base of Germany. In addition to coal, the leading section of the German metal industry is also located in the Ruhr. "The reduction of the cost of production and the increase of the competitive power of our industry can be begun only with the Ruhr," this slogan, thrown out by the "Bergwerkszeitung" (journal of the coal industry) already at the beginning of the introduction of capitalist rationalisation, has been stressed and enforced particularly during the years of the crisis. The capitalist solution of the crisis, which involves a reduction of the living standards of the working class, begins with, and in a great measure depends upon, a constant and strong pressure upon the workers, particularly of this coal and metal base of the German industry. And for this very reason the struggle of the Ruhr workers is of the greatest importance to the organisation of resistance and a counter-offensive of the German proletariat against the effort of the bourgeoisie to solve the crisis at the expense of the great toiling masses.

The C.P. of Germany and the revolutionary trade union opposition of the Ruhr province have been able to accumulate a great deal of experience in independent leadership of the economic struggle. The original application of this policy of independent leadership began in the Ruhr during the lockout of the 213,000 metal workers in 1928. The first mass strike prepared and conducted from the beginning to the end by the Red Trade-Union Opposition of Germany also took place in the Ruhr, namely the strike of 60,000 miners in 1931. For this reason it appears especially important to trace on the basis of the experience of the Ruhr, the causes of the absence of big economic strikes in Germany during the past year despite the growing acuteness of all the class contradictions.

In the first half of 1931 the C.P. of Germany and the Red Trade-Union Opposition of the Ruhr Province had a series of remarkable successes. They independently conducted a big miners' strike in January, 1931, and in connection with this struggle created the all-German Red union of miners. The factory committee elections in March and April, 1931, revealed the growth of

the political influence of the Party and of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the factories: the Red tickets received in 120 mines 68,324 votes against 35,262 at the previous elections, while the Social-Democratic and reformist trade unions lost 26,000 votes. These elections showed that the masses approved of the policy of the Party and revolutionary trade-union opposition in the January strike, as well as of the creation of a Red union.

Since then the strike struggle in the Ruhr has been marked by a steady decline. In October, 1931, the Party and the Red union succeeded in leading in the fight against the 7 per cent. wage-cut only scattered groups of miners (about 25,000-30,000 on the whole) and keeping them in the strike for only a few days. In January, 1932, the Communist Party of Germany and the Red Trade-Union Opposition of the Ruhr mobilised an even smaller number of miners against Brüning's emergency decree, only a few thousand miners striking for one or two days in six mines. This decline of the strike movement in the Ruhr has been accompanied by a retardation of the growth of the political influence of the Party (and even by its weakening) and by stagnation in the Party organisations, in the Red miners' union and in the revolutionary trade-union opposition of the Ruhr province. In the elections to the Prussian Landtag last April the C.P. of Germany polled in the Ruhr (Westfall-North and South) 25,000 votes less than in the Reichstag elections of the autumn of 1930, not to mention the fact that it failed to capture the 80,000 votes lost by the Social-Democratic Party during this period. The Fascists (Nazi) who gained 380,000 votes chiefly at the expense of the bourgeois parties, became the second strongest Party (next to the Centre) in this proletarian region.

One of the main causes of the temporary discontinuation of the growth and partial decline of the influence of the Party among the masses of the Ruhr consists in that the C.P. of Germany and the Red Trade-Union Opposition failed to organise the workers' resistance to the lowering of their living standards.

During the past year the situation of the Ruhr miners has been steadily deteriorating. According to the "Gewerkschaftsarchiv". (January, 1932), the wages of a miner working full time

and receiving full rates amounted on the average to the following :

	Skilled	Unskilled
1929/30	120.8 marks	75.7 marks
January, 1931	114.3 „	71.9 „
November, 1931	105.8 „	66.4 „
January, 1932	95.2 „	59.8 „

The actual monthly wages of a Ruhr hewer, that is of a skilled miner, are shown in the following figures :

In July, 1931, a hewer received for	
20 1/5 shifts ... ..	162.74 marks
Plus the "family allowance" ...	5.26 „
<b>Total</b>	<b>168.00 marks</b>

The following deductions were made :

Insurance ... ..	23.02 marks
The wage tax and the "crisis tax"	4.05 „
Repairing instruments ... ..	2.55 „
<b>Total :</b>	<b>29.62 marks</b>
Rent ... ..	38.05 „
<b>Total :</b>	<b>67.67 „</b>

Remainder for living expenses ... 100.33 marks

Already in January, 1931, the wages of this worker were reduced by 11.31 marks (before January he earned 174.05 marks). The wage cut in October, 1931, and the reduction of the "family allowance" by six pfennigs further reduced his wages by 9.72 marks per month while the wage cut under the fourth emergency decree issued in January, 1932, brought with it a new reduction of wages by 15.02 marks.

It is necessary to remember that a large proportion of the miners have 4-5 free shifts per month amounting to a loss of 30-35 marks out of the monthly wages. According to the newspaper of the Christian Union of Miners, in February, 1931, the average number of free shifts per miner in the Ruhr amounted to 3½ per month. During the succeeding months this figure did not decrease but actually increased.

In the budget of many of the workers of the "Thyssen" mine there are references to cuts in the monthly wages by 10-15 marks effected in the summer and autumn of 1931 through transfers to lower wage groups. This is a very widespread practice of cutting wages in the Ruhr. In this connection the "Ruhr Echo" writes :

"In the mining industry for instance, the situation is such that the employers reduce certain groups of workers to lower grade scales. Such examples have taken place not only in the mining industry in which there are about 30 different rates, but also in the other industries."

The organisation of the struggle of the Ruhr

miners against this pressure of the employers upon their living standards has unquestionably met with a number of objective difficulties.

The first of these is the existence of a huge army of unemployed and the constant growth of this army. The total number of miners employed in the Ruhr decreased between December, 1929, and January, 1931, from 382,331 to 290,313. This means that 92,498 miners were dismissed in the course of one year. Between January and July, 1931, to January, 1932, between 20,000 and 25,000 more miners lost employment. The fear of the employed workers losing their jobs in consequence of a strike plays a definite part in the organisation of the economic struggle.

Another difficulty is presented by the ever-growing terror of the police, employers and Fascists against the strikers which leads in each strike to the purging of the mines from the most militant revolutionary workers. In a speech delivered at the meeting of the all-German Committee of the revolutionary trade-union opposition in March, 1932, the Chairman of the Red Miners' Union stated :

"We have no less than 4,000 functionaries who have been victimised while thousands have been discharged this year. There are places in which the Red shop-committee members have been dismissed five times in succession. . . . Complete pit groups (of the Union and Red opposition) have been thrown out of the mines, not once, but several times" (Stenogram, page 311).

The slight reduction of the prices of consumers' goods, while lagging far behind the wage cuts, still enabled the employers and the trade-union bureaucrats to lull the miners by talk of "preserving the real standard of living despite the wage cuts."

A characteristic thing about the price movement is the fact that the prices of bread, potatoes and sugar, which hold an important place in the budget of the poorly-paid workers not only did not go down, but actually went up.

The basic difficulty in the organisation of the miners' struggle consists of the extensive influence of the Reformist and Christian trade-union bureaucracy, who seek by all means (by skilful manœuvres and open strike-breaking) to keep the miners from taking part in the struggle and who broke the strikes whenever they did occur. The Reformist union of miners has about 40,000 members in the Ruhr, while the Christian union has about 30,000 members (the membership of the Red union in the Ruhr amounting to 16,000). In all the strikes of the miners during the past period—in the general strike of 1931, in the October strike of the same year and in the January movement of 1932—the Reformist and

Christian trade unions of miners proclaimed the strikes to be "outlawed" and urged their members to continue to work. Their tactics in breaking up the strikes we shall deal with further on.

Experience has shown that all these difficulties can be overcome (the January strike of 1931, the extensive strike movement of the miners in Poland and Czecho-Slovakia where the biggest of these difficulties also exist) and that the sharpening of the class contradictions in Germany creates additional opportunities for the development of the struggle of the masses (the growth of the discontent among the workers, the growing fermentation among the members of the Reformist and Christian trade unions, the class solidarity and activity of the unemployed, the unceasing pressure of the bourgeoisie which again and again stimulates the workers towards militant resistance, etc.). The most important cause of the decline of the class struggle in the Ruhr during this period is to be found in the weaknesses of the subjective factor—of the Party, Red trade-union and revolutionary trade-union opposition of the Ruhr valley.

The main weaknesses of the Party and of the Red Trade-Union Opposition as displayed in the economic struggle in the Ruhr since the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I. are as follow :

a. The insufficient political initiative and political aggressiveness towards the enemy (instead of an independent choice of the time for the struggle as was the case in January, 1931, they wait for the blows and manœuvres of the employers; instead of a political offensive against the Social-Democrats and the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy (whose position has been even less tenable by their support of Brüning and the introduction of wage cuts), defence against their manœuvres.

b. The incorrect methods of preparation for and leadership of the struggle (schematism, regimentation, the absence of the united front from below, an incorrect approach to the Reformist and Christian workers; preparations from above, instead of at the places of work).

c. The incorrect methods of the leadership of the Red Miners' Union by the Party organisation (petty appraisal, supplantation, etc.).

d. The opportunist fluctuations in the estimation of the importance of partial strikes and on the question of the general strike.

e. The weakness of the entire mass work in the mines and pits, the weak connection with the masses.

f. The practically complete absence of work in the Reformist and Christian trade unions (the

liquidation of the groups of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the mines, etc.).

In January, 1931, the trade-union opposition organised a strike of 60,000 miners, against the 12 per cent. wage cut demanded by the employers. During this period no Red Union of Miners existed in the Ruhr, while the Red Trade-Union Opposition among the miners had only 4,000 members. What made the organisation of that strike possible? First of all, the fact that the Red Trade-Union Opposition seriously prepared for the strike, most of the preparatory work being carried out in the mines. In its report on the preparation for the struggle the all-German leadership of the Red Trade-Union Opposition of the miners, wrote :

"The preparation for the miners' strike began in June, 1930 . . . . About 1,000 meetings were held in the mines (from December 9, 1930). The "Ruhr Echo" devoted a page every day to the miners' struggle under the heading "The Mines are Prepared to Fight," this page containing reports of the Central Committee for the Preparation of the Struggle. This page was published separately every day in 5,000 copies and distributed in 134 mines and was also posted in the workers' villages and in the streets leading to the pits. . . .

"Preparatory committees of struggle were set up in 101 mines. . . . About 50 of them carried on their work every day.

. . . "In 30 mines programmes of demands were worked out at general meetings which helped to mobilise the miners."

Further, the fact that the Party was mobilised for the preparation and conduct of the struggle :

"The C.P. of Germany ably supported the preparation for the struggle. By calling special Party conferences locally and meetings of the groups the Party was mobilised down to its last organised unit." (From the same report).

Then there was the fact that the Red Trade-Union Opposition, basing itself upon the connection with the masses in the mines established during the period of the preparation for the struggle, succeeded in completely retaining the initiative of fixing the date of the struggle, following the correct policy of taking the enemy by surprise.

"On December 12, the conference (of mine delegates) adopted a decision that the signal to strike will consist of a notification of the Central Committee of Struggle to the effect that the fight is to begin. This decision was necessary in order to catch the enemy unawares and prevent him from taking counter measures" (report of the all-German leadership of the Miners' Red Trade-Union Opposition).



This decision was discussed at the general mine meetings.

By displaying considerable initiative and carrying on mass preparatory work the Red Trade-Union Opposition succeeded in quickly reacting to the manœuvres of the trade-union bureaucracy.

The leadership of the miners' Reformist trade union at first responded to our strike preparations by the statement that "at a time of a crisis it is impossible to advance wage demands and decide upon the cancellation of the wage agreement." (From the same report). However, when the Red Trade-Union Opposition declared at the mine meetings that this means that the trade-union bureaucracy is prepared to accept a wage cut the Reformist leadership, confronted with the growing strike sentiments among the workers, carried out a manœuvre; after the wage agreement had been annulled by the employers the Executive Committee of the reformist union of miners put forward the demand for a 50 pfennig wage increase and a seven-hour shift. The Red Trade-Union Opposition then withdrew its demands for a wage increase of one mark and a six hour shift declaring that in the interests of unity in the struggle it was prepared to fight for the demands advanced by the Reformist trade union, being confident that these demands could be secured only by means of a strike. Since the Reformist leadership naturally did nothing to prepare for a struggle for its own demands, this manœuvre was exposed by the Red Trade-Union Opposition before the masses.

All this made it possible for the Red Trade-Union Opposition to mobilise the workers for the strike on its own record. On January 2, even before the negotiations between the employers, the trade unions and the arbitration bodies for a reduction of the wages led to any definite decision, to their complete surprise, a strike was declared in 32 mines. On January 3, 53 mines were on strike (37 completely and 16 partially). The decision to open the strike was adopted on January 1 at a conference of mine delegates and was confirmed in the morning of January 2, at the pit meetings which added to the former demands the following:

"The immediate cancellation of all dismissals; the mine administrations must undertake not to reduce the wages; for giving work to the unemployed"

These demands were immediately presented to the administration.

"The workers' meetings (held in the morning of January 2) authorised the committees of struggle immediately to open negotiations with the administration of the mines and pits. Up to the completion of the negotiations the workers

remain at the meetings held in the washing rooms. In case the demands should be rejected the strikes would begin at once." (Ibid).

The power of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the organisation of this strike consisted in that it did everything in the closest contact with the masses of miners. This contact was maintained during the days of the strike as well.

"Strikers' meetings were held daily . . . Between the Central Strike Committee numbering 80 members which was elected at the conference of January and which included Social-Democratic and Christian workers . . . and the district and mine strike committees' constant connections were maintained through messengers and instructors. . . . Despite the unprecedented police terror there were mass strike pickets . . . in which the unemployed took an active part. . . . Where, owing to the police terror, it was impossible to picket the mines the strike committees organised pickets in the mining villages. . . . During the days of the strike the masses were on the streets."

The political initiative, the activity and the mass preparations created the conditions for the organisation and conduct of the strike against the will of the trade-union bureaucracy and made it possible to attract more than 62,000 miners into the struggle despite the savage terror. The Government hastened to issue the compulsory arbitration award cutting the wages by 6 per cent. (the employers demanded an 8 per cent. wage cut in the last negotiations while the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy agreed to a 4 per cent cut. From January 6 the strike began to decline and several days later came to an end. Upon the conclusion of the strike a Red Union of Miners was organised at a conference of mine delegates.

The January strike of 1931, in the Ruhr, could unquestionably have served as a point of departure for the development of the economic struggle in the Ruhr and throughout the country. It could not but have stimulated the growth of militant sentiments among the workers and the strengthening of the prestige of the Red Trade-Union Opposition among the masses. This should have been ably utilised with a view to the changing situation. However, neither the Party, the newly-created Red Union, nor the Red Trade-Union Opposition, did this.

It is necessary to note that already in this generally well-prepared and well-conducted strike a number of weaknesses were demonstrated which subsequently were particularly aggravated. The most important of these was the narrow base of the united front from below. Of the 101 preparatory committees of struggle only 47 proved

to be real organs of the united front. The other 54 committees did not succeed in leading their mines in the struggle chiefly owing to the fact that they were founded upon a very narrow basis and were passive. The Red Trade-Union Opposition succeeded in gaining very little support among the Reformist and Christian workers in the strike; the big conferences held during the preparation for the struggle, such as the conference held on July 6, 1931, with the participation of 720 members, were attended by only 3 Social-Democrats and one Christian worker. Even at the conference held during the strike (January 1) there were among the 800 delegates from the mines only 36 members of the Reformist union, 12 members of the Christian union and 4 Fascists. There were also cases of none but members of the Party and Red Trade-Union Opposition joining the strike. In a letter on the strike it was reported, for instance, that "there have been such cases as 10 or 30 comrades alone leaving the mine, believing that in this way they were supporting the miners' struggle."

To overcome these weaknesses and, with a view to the experience of the successfully-organised mass strike, to develop a great struggle of the miners against all further pressure upon their living standards—such was the task.

To do this it was necessary first of all to take into consideration the changed methods of the enemy. At the end of 1930 the German bourgeoisie started an offensive all along the front upon the wage rates of the workers after the super-tariff rates had already been reduced. Having met with resistance on the part of the Berlin metal workers in November, 1930, and of the Ruhr miners in January, 1931, the employers took up highly diverse forms of lowering the standards of life.

In the Ruhr constant dismissals and transfers of workers to lower grades have been practised in the mines ever since the spring of 1931. In June, the so-called "family allowances" were reduced while the working day was lengthened.

Ever more extensively, beginning with Waldenburg and spreading to all the other mine fields, the so-called "Krimper-system" began to be employed involving the replacement of the workers for two or three months with the subsequent re-employment of the former workers, thus establishing turns between the employed and unemployed workers. Every time that one set of workers was replaced by another the number of workers was reduced and the piece rates were cut.

As regards discharges, up to 40,000 miners lost employment during the first half of 1931 alone.

Under these new conditions the Party, the Red

Trade Union and the Revolutionary Trade-Union Opposition did not concentrate their attention upon the organisation of the workers' struggle in the mine against the new forms of lowering their living standards. The entire Party and trade-union press ("Ruhr-Echo," "Grubenarbeiter") wrote about preparing for the coming "fight of 500,000" (that is miners and metal workers) while it was necessary to develop the struggle at the places of work without any delay. The abstract directions about preparing "a fight of 500,000" distracted the organisations from the concrete struggle of the day. For the first 7-8 months of 1931 the partial struggle in the shops was practically neglected.

This situation was due to the weak connection with the shops and to the underestimation of the importance of the partial strikes.

As regards the partial strikes, the Chairmau of the Miners' Red Union had to note as one of the biggest weaknesses of this period:

"The underestimation of the importance of the partial strikes: Our comrades had the idea that a successful struggle is possible if there is "firing all along the line." (Comrade Funk's article in "Ingewerkspress," No. 81, 1931).

The Red Union of Miners, which during this period built up its pit groups, thus developed without connection with the concrete struggle in the pits, without connection with the defence of the every-day needs of the workers, with their protection against dismissals and with the various forms by which their living standards were lowered.

The failure to protect the daily needs of the workers in the pits during this whole period constitutes the main reason of the setbacks in October and in January, 1932. For it was precisely during this period that the Red Trade Union and the Red Trade-Union Opposition could and should have gained the confidence of the workers and brought the workers into motion by organising hundreds and thousands of strikes in the mines, protest strikes, demonstrations, etc., could have unquestionably scored victories in hundreds of cases and thus best prepared for mass strike struggles. To Comrade Dahlen's question of why the workers in the Ruhr did not strike in January, 1932, when they were called upon to strike by the Red members of the factory committees and why they did not defend the factory committee members against being arrested, he received from a miner the following reply:

"During the last year and a half the piece rates in the mine have been reduced in several stages from 2 marks to 87 pfennigs without resistance on the part of the Red Trade Union, without resist-

ance on the part of the Red factory committee members. The workers do not feel confident that this time the Red Trade Union Opposition and the Red Trade Union will act any better in case of a wage cut." (Stenographic report of the Enlarged Plenum of the all-German Committee of the Red Trade-Union Opposition held March 2, 1932).

Without a consideration of this factor it is difficult to determine correctly the cause of the declining tendency of the economic struggle in the Ruhr since the January strike of 1931. During these months, when the employers conducted a systematic attack upon the workers in the mines and pits while the Red Trade Union and the Red Trade-Union Opposition remained passive they lost the initiative in the struggle and the connection with the masses which they had in the January strike of 1931.

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In October, 1931, the employers in the mining industry again took up an offensive along a wide front, demanding a 12 per cent. wage cut. Remembering the experience of the January strike of 1931, they now made every preparation to attack the workers unexpectedly and take them by surprise. For this purpose they first of all agreed with the trade-union bureaucracy not to talk "too much" about the annulment by them of the wage agreement and their intention to cut wages by 12 per cent. When this demand of the employers became known from the words of the Secretary of the Christian Union, Recklinghausen, the Red Union issued in August an appeal to the workers to be ready to strike. The new demand for a wage cut aroused a wave of indignation in the mines and pits. This was reported by the bourgeois newspapers, such as the "Hessische Landeszeitung" of September which wrote: "The danger which threatens us (from the possible strike in the Ruhr) is greater to the State and business than the currency prices in London." Immediately the employers and trade-union bureaucrats started manoeuvring. The latter issued a denial that any "wage cut and a cancellation of the wage agreement are impending." The entire bourgeois press, inspired by the Employers' Association, published the statement that the Reichskanzler intended to prolong by means of an emergency decree the existing wage agreement, many of the bourgeois newspapers, for greater effect, wrote about the "grave position of the miners." The Red Trade Union and the Red Opposition did not properly react to the employers' manoeuvres, and according to the report of the union leadership "the strike sentiments during this period—in the middle of September—had subsided." This means, in effect, that the work

of the Red Union and of the Trade-Union Opposition of preparing for a struggle was temporarily weakened. The employers secured what they wanted; namely, they gained time. The decision of the arbitration court to cut wages by 7 per cent. came as a complete surprise to the workers. A fresh wave of discontent developed. The organ of the Reformist Union of Miners "Bergbau-industrie," No. 41, wrote as follows:

"The arbitration award of a 7 per cent. wage cut aroused great indignation among the miners and had it not been altered the Communist tactics of putches and strikes would have been more successful."

However, it was not so much the change of the arbitration award which came during the strike itself, as the manoeuvres of the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy, and our own weaknesses which decided the failure of our strike slogan. The Reformist leadership carried out a series of big manoeuvres. They knew very well what a mass miners' strike in October would have meant to the development of the class struggle in Germany during the coming winter, the worst in a hundred years. In very radical language the trade-union bureaucrats opposed this new wage cut, while declaring at the same time that:

"Isolated strikes will not achieve the object, the workers must be prepared for a general strike unless the unbearable policy of cutting wages by 7 and 10 per cent. is discontinued." (From the speech of a member of the Executive of the Reformist Union in Bohum).

They called union membership meetings in some parts of the Ruhr valley, which they had not done before, and declared there as well that the trade unions at the necessary moment will issue a call for "big action," that in the meantime it is important "not to divide up the forces." Only at a few of the meetings, according to the Reformist "Bergbauindustriezeitung," did the Communists come out with a call for a strike. The "Ruhr-echo" and "Grubenarbeiter" did not even report these meetings.

The Red Trade Union and the Trade-Union Opposition did not succeed in at once exposing this manoeuvre. On the contrary, our functionaries themselves fell into the trap. About the sentiments "for a general strike" Comrade Funk wrote as follows:

"The general strike is the only weapon against the wage robbers, this tendency prevails not so much among the miners as among a section of our functionaries." (See "Ingewerkspress" of November 3, 1931).

Another important manoeuvre of the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy at this moment was the slogan of the "united front of the trade unions."

On October 1, all the Reformist and Christian newspapers published an appeal by all the trade unions (of the all-German Federation of Trade Unions, the Christian and the Hirsch-Dunker organisations) calling for "united action."

Our Press in the Ruhr practically failed to react to this demagogic trick of the Reformists.

Already after the arbitration award has been announced the Executive of the Reformist Miners' Trade Union carried out a new manoeuvre; namely, it sent a telegram to the Ministry of Labour asking that the arbitration award should not be made compulsory. They gave great publicity to their "action," and since the Red Union and the Trade-Union Opposition proved themselves to be quite helpless in the face of the Reformist manoeuvres in all the weeks preceding the strike, this manoeuvre also had its effect.

"When the Red factory-committee members spoke to the miners in the wash-rooms on the first day of the strike they heard on all sides the reply: "Let us wait and see whether the award will be made compulsory."

While the employers and the trade-union bureaucrats displayed a large variety of manoeuvres the Party organisation, the Red Union and the Revolutionary Trade-Union Opposition displayed, despite their apparent activity (appeals, long appeals, to struggle in the Press), extremely limited initiative. The mass preparation in the mines was much weaker than it was in January. Most of the work consisted of proving that a reduction of wages was inevitable and of a weak defence against the manoeuvres of the employers and trade-union bureaucracy. The actions and statements of the Reformists (the demand not to make the arbitration award compulsory, "the united front of the trade unions," "the general strike" in the future) rather than our slogan of the strike, rather than our demands (the wages to remain at the pre-January level, a seven-hour shift with equal wages, etc.) served as the main subject of discussions among the workers. This was a result of our weak initiative and insufficient mass preparation. The choice of the moment for the declaration of the strike followed the same line, it was declared immediately after the publication of the arbitration award. The employers who had expected the strike to be declared just then appointed at the last moment free shifts during these days in the biggest mines. Thus, these mines were excluded from the strike.

Altogether about 20,000 workers struck in the Ruhr and about 10,000 in the other regions (Upper Silesia, Waldenburg), the strike lasting only a few days. The Government issued a decision to reduce the workers' contributions to

insurance by  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. so that the wage cut amounted to  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.

A most important factor responsible for the weak extent of the strike was the insufficient organisation of a united front with the Reformist workers and influence of the Reformist trade union.

"The workers of 60 mines discussed in the morning (of the day when the strike was declared) in the wash-rooms the question of the strike. Under the influence of the Reformist factory committee members they went down into the mines." (Sefkov at the Plenum of the All-German Committee in October, 1931).

This fact strikingly reveals that the members of the Party and of the Red Trade-Union Opposition during the preparatory period did not raise within the Reformist trade unions the question of the strike before the Reformist workers, before the lower Reformist functionaries, that no attempt was made to break through to them, that previously the question was not put point blank to the Reformist factory committees and to the lower Reformist trade union organisations of what they would do in case of a wage cut and a declaration of a strike against it. This not having been done the Reformist workers and functionaries had to decide at the last moment whether they were to go against their own union together with the Red Opposition or they were to submit to the decisions of the union. It was clear that to convince them at the very last minute, without preliminary systematic work with them, that it was necessary to go against their leadership, was a difficult task.

During the strike the Party organisations and the Red Opposition committed left-sectarian and right-opportunist mistakes. In a number of mines the attempt was made to replace the mass preparation by leading into the strike only the advanced workers, the members of the Party and of the Red Union.

A grave error and an expression of dismay and political disorientation during the strike was the communication sent to the Ruhr leadership of the German Federation of Trade Unions, — on the third day of the strike when it was already on the point of collapse, — proposing a joint struggle.

Another serious right-opportunist mistake was the direction issued by the leadership of the Red Trade-Union Opposition to all the Red shop committees to send to Brüning resolutions of protest against the wage cut.

All this represents an attempt to replace the real political initiative, the leadership and mass work by top machinations and the decreeing of strikes (calling out only the union members, etc.),

this being a result of the weak connection existing between the organisation and the factories, of the lack, for a number of months following the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I., of every-day work of protecting the interests of the workers.

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All the weaknesses in the work of the Party, Red Trade Union and Revolutionary Trade-Union Opposition of the Ruhr were revealed in the most concentrated form in the January movement of 1932 opposed to the emergency decree of the Brüning Government, which provided for a 10-15 per cent. wage-cut for all the workers.

The preparation for the movement against the emergency decree was preceded by two important Plenums of the All-German Committee of the Red Trade Union Opposition in September and at the end of October, 1931. In September, the C.C. of the C.P. of Germany published the resolution of its Politbureau dealing with the weaknesses of the Party in the organisation of the economic struggle. This resolution and the decisions of the Plenums of the All-German Committee (the resolution of the October Plenum of the Red Trade-Union Opposition) subjected to just criticism the weaknesses in the organisation of the united front from below, in the preparation of the strikes, in the work at the factories and within the Reformist trade unions. They contained essentially correct suggestions as to the measures necessary to overcome these weaknesses. The regional leadership of the Party organisation and of the Red Trade-Union Opposition of the Ruhr fully endorsed these decisions. Here it is necessary to state that when a concrete case arose necessitating clear self-criticism on the part of the Party organisation and the Red Trade-Union Opposition regarding the estimation of the October strike, this self-criticism was entirely insufficient. The resolution of the regional committee of the Party on the lessons of the October strike, while pointing out a number of important defects, estimated the strike as a "success" and a step forwards. The experience of the January movement of 1932 in the Ruhr shows that the lessons of the October strike, the instructions of the R.I.L.U. and the decisions of the leadership of the C.P. of Germany and of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the Ruhr had not been assimilated and carried out.

In the first place it is necessary to note that the emergency decree aroused tremendous indignation among the workers of the Ruhr. In a letter to the C.C. of the C.P. of Germany dated December 29 the Ruhr Regional Committee wrote:

"The strike movement against the emergency decree in the mining industry will have greater

proportions than the first independent strike after the Fifth Congress held in January, 1931."

This was based firstly upon the very militant sentiments of the workers and secondly upon the efficient preparation for the strike. The former was true. That the workers' sentiments were highly militant is shown also by the report of the instructor of the C.C. and by the statement of Comrade Dahlen who happened to be in the Ruhr Province at that time, that:

"In January and October, 1931, Husemann was still able to put up against us in the Ruhr fighting corps, the workers affiliated to the Reformist trade unions marched solidly, sometimes armed and protected by the police, to the mines.

". . . In the January (1932) movement the masses of members of the free trade unions refused to do this . . ." (Stenographic Report of the Plenum of the All-German Committee, March, 1932).

Even judging by the Social-Democratic Press it is possible to note that moreover, even among the Reformist workers strike sentiments prevailed ("Bergbauindustriezeitung"), and it was precisely because of this that the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy resorted to a series of fraudulent manoeuvres. These militant sentiments, however, are far from tantamount to a readiness to respond immediately to the first strike call. The struggle had to be organised, prepared, it had to have perfectly clear slogans, mass work had to be conducted. None of this took place in the Ruhr. The assertion made in the letter of December, 29, about good preparation was a baseless phrase founded upon the hope that the militant sentiments would "of themselves" take the form of a strike movement.

The policy itself in the organisation of the January movement in the Ruhr was unclear. It consisted of the slogan of a mass political strike unconnected with the programme of partial economic demands. For this reason the factory demands which did exist during the October strike even if in a small number, were nearly totally absent.

"In the Ruhr district the mistake consisted in that the factory demands were completely overlooked, the political strike alone being advanced to the forefront as the slogan of action." (Stenogram of the Plenum of the Red Trade-Union Opposition, held in March, 1932).

The Press ("Ruhrecho," "Grubenarbeiter") and the meetings dealt only with a strike against Brüning. In the agitation conducted during this movement there was a great deal of talk and "strong expressions": "To crush," "To smash," "An unprecedented proletarian storm is develop-

ing," "A wave of labour anger is sweeping the Ruhr," etc. And in the shops the situation was as follows: 40 preparatory committees were supposed to have existed, but in reality there were only 22 and not one of them conducted systematic preparations for the struggle. The factory demands were not advanced, the workers in the shops were not prepared for the struggle. The entire mass preparation actually resolved itself into active agitation for a strike by the groups of unemployed who congregated before the shops, distributed leaflets, etc., and to active work on the part of a few union functionaries.

Having failed to submit the question before the workers, to see to the organisation of committees of struggle at the workers' meetings, the Central Strike Committee decreed the beginning of the strike.

"The Central Strike Committee decided in accordance with a previous resolution to begin the strike on Monday, January 4, all along the line. Upon the publication of this decision it was necessary to strain every ounce of energy for action. The shops which did not go on strike on Monday had to be brought out by the workers already on strike on January 5 and 6." (Announcement of the Central Strike Committee of January 3, 1932).

In order to give the workers courage the strike committee published in its bulletin on the previous day (December 26 and in No. 4) the statement that:

"On January 2, a great political mass strike begins in the Ruhr, in Berlin and in the decisive plants throughout Germany.

"... It is already clear that things will develop into a great political mass strike."

Thus, the attempt was made to replace clear slogans and mass work by phrases and orders.

In a number of enterprises only the members of the Party and Red Union went on strike. A large number of Red factory committee members opportunistically retreated before the task of calling the workers on strike. The members of the Red shop committees of two pits refused to address the workers in the morning of the day of the strike declaration. In another pit a number of members of the Red shop committees arrived an hour or two late after the workers had already gone to work. The police terror in January was even more ruthless than in the October strike when the police occupied not only a number of mines but also the wash-rooms in which the miners usually meet in the Ruhr. The entire Ruhr was under martial law. It is characteristic of the way the workers reacted to the police terror that in two mines in which most of the workers had already decided to work, this

decision was immediately reversed as soon as the wash-rooms were occupied by the police. The workers of these mines (Westerhold and Bergmannsglück) drove the police out and went on strike. The total number of mines which responded to the strike call in the Ruhr in January was six while the number of strikers was approximately 3,000.

The executive committees of the Reformist and Christian Trade Unions came out against the strike and called upon their members "to go to work solidly and not to be provoked by the Communist terror and putschism." The Reformist trade-union bureaucracy again vigorously came out against the strike with the argument that it was necessary to avoid splitting the forces of the workers, that partial strikes would not lead anywhere. In this matter they were vigorously assisted by the "left" Social-Fascist Party of Seidewitz, the Brandlerites and the Trozskists who maintained in unison that it was necessary to prepare for a general strike and to avoid dissipating the forces. Further, the Social-Democratic Party and the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy conducted a campaign for "lower prices," and urged that the emergency decree would bring a series of improvements to the workers (lower rents). The Ruhr newspapers of the Social-Democratic Party reported the emergency decree under the same caption as the "Vorwärts": "A reduction of wages, prices and rent." The press of the Communist Party, Red Trade-Union and unemployed committees somewhat vigorously exposed this manoeuvre, convincingly arguing that the wages were cut much more drastically than the prices and that the price of bread was even increasing. However, in this agitation as well, things did not pass without schematism (the "Ruhr-Echo": "Consumers' goods have not been cheapened"). The next manoeuvre of the Social-Democrats designed to dupe the workers was the introduction in the Reichstag of a Bill nationalising the mining industry. This manoeuvre was accompanied by extensive agitation of the Reformists among the miners, the organ of the Reformist union of miners ("Bergbauindustriezeitung") stressing particularly that this was an "international action" in which the Reformist International of Miners participated. The exposure of this manoeuvre by the Party and the Red Trade-Union Opposition was very weak. At first they failed altogether to react to this manoeuvre and later they devoted a few articles to it, some of which exposed rather vaguely the deceitful character of this manoeuvre (they did not contrast this manoeuvre with our conception of nationalisation and did not oppose the Reformist demagoguery by

concrete demands for the immediate improvement of the miners' conditions). A certain section of the workers were definitely influenced by the Reformist manoeuvres. However, the biggest rôle in the failure of the January movement in the Ruhr was played by the mistaken slogans and the entirely incorrect methods of preparation and leadership of the struggle on the part of the Party organisation and Red Trade-Union Opposition of the Ruhr Province. That even the Reformists had counted on the possibility of a broader movement in January, 1932, is shown by the following statement published in the Social-Fascist "Vorwärts" after the January movement of 1932:

"When one thinks of the fact that these days not only among the miners but in every industrial region destitution is rampant, that everywhere the wage cuts lead to the belts being tightened another notch, it appears miraculous that the spark of the Communist strike slogan did not cause a fire."

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The methods of regimentation which were revealed with special acuteness in the movement of January, 1932, were not accidental. The relations between the regional Party leadership and the trade-union organisation in the Ruhr cannot be regarded as correct, they must be rebuilt on the basis of the experience of the movement during the past year.

In the January movement of 1932 the Union was completely overshadowed. The instructor of the C.C. of the Party writes that "The consolidated Union of miners does not appear on the scene because it is not allowed to do so."

This applies not only to this strike, in the entire daily work the Party organisations of the Ruhr not only advanced and decided but carried into effect questions (elections of the lower union managements, etc.) which represent part and parcel of the work of the Union itself.

It is quite obvious that the methods of regimentation and petty guardianship do not make for a development of initiative by the union organisations and their conversion into truly mass organisations.

The weak connection with the factories revealed in all the strikes of the past period is due to the fact that the pit groups of the Union carry on their work outside the pits.

"There, in the Ruhr, our pit groups have slid all along the line into the position of territorial groups. . . . Not only are their meetings held in the villages but the agenda of these meetings essentially consists of questions unconnected with the mine." (Stenogram of the Plenum of the Red Trade-Union Opposition, held in March 1932).

This serves as a reflection of the fact that the groups do not engage in their basic task, that of the organisation of the everyday struggle for their demands.

Worst of all is the condition of the work within the Reformist and Christian miners' unions. The experience of all the three strikes of 1931/32 in the Ruhr shows that the progress and result of the strikes are mainly decided by the position of the workers organised in the Reformist union. And it was a grave error to have liquidated the Red opposition groups in the mines after the foundation of the Red Union of Miners. The leading comrades of the Red Trade-Union Opposition themselves admit that with the foundation of the Union:

"The regional committee of the Red Trade-Union Opposition issued a circular stating: 'All the groups of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the shops have ceased to exist, they must be transferred to the Red Union! . . . Already in February, 1931, there were no groups of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the pits. (Stenogram of the Plenum of the R.T.U.O., March, 1932).

It may be confidently stated that had active groups existed within the Reformist Miners' Union during the preparation for the October strike we would have been able to capture a number of union meetings called to disrupt the struggle. We would have been able to lead to the struggle most of the 60 mines in which the workers hesitated to join the strike and where the decisive word was uttered by the Reformist factory-committee members. During the January movement of 1932, when the Reformist workers were in a state of the greatest indignation, it became particularly apparent that the absence of work within the Reformist union facilitates the trade-union bureaucracy in all their manoeuvres.

In the Christian union work had never been conducted and the position remains unchanged to this day.

The Party and the Red Trade-Union Opposition almost completely ignored the activity of the Fascists during these strikes. During the January strike of 1931 the Fascist leadership organised shock detachments against the strikers; during the October strike the Regional Committee of the National Socialist Party openly agitated against the strike. The C.P. of Germany did not react to this in any way. During the January movement of 1932 the Ruhr newspaper of the National Socialists published articles in the spirit of the Berlin "Angriff" urging fighting readiness "for the great retribution" and, like the Social-Fascists, containing warnings, against the "dissipation of the forces." According to the report of Comrade Dahlem:

"The Krupp management carried out the following manoeuvre: on this day they put to work the so-called 'Nazi shift.' This is the shift among which the Nazis have the greatest influence." (Stenogram of the Plenum of the Red Trade-Union Opposition, March, 1932).

The Red Trade-Union Opposition and the Party did not react to this as well as to a number of similar factors despite the fact that they made possible an exposure of the demagoguery of the Fascists among those workers whom they are trying to influence.

After the movement of January, 1932, the Ruhr organisation criticised many of the mistakes, particularly the underestimation of the organisation in the shops, of the workers' struggle for their daily needs. However, here, opposite mistakes were made. Thus, the editorial of the "Ruhr-Echo" on partial strikes said:

"Only the sum of many factory battles can develop into a general struggle whose political importance will grow powerfully with each new fighting factory."

Here is revealed the non-appreciation of the

task of the organisation of the mass struggle for which the individual factory strikes represent the best preparation but which is not at all made up of the addition, of the "sum of the many factory battles."

This new mistake shows that the leading organs of the Party and of the Red Trade Union Opposition must help their Ruhr organisations both to correct their mistakes and to overcome the shortcomings in the concrete mass work.

The alteration of the methods of work, active work within the trade unions of the Reformist workers, a change of the approach to them, the overcoming of the view that "it is impossible to do anything with them anyway," courageous and concrete organisation of the united front with these workers and with the lower functionaries of the Reformist trade unions for joint struggle, an active struggle against the penetration of Fascists into the factories, a truly mass work in the defence of the interests of the workers in the factories—it is in this direction that the turn in the work of the Red Trade-Union Opposition must primarily be made.

## ANGLO-AMERICAN NAVAL RIVALRY AND THE STRATEGICAL SITUATION IN THE FAR EAST

By A. IVANOV.

**A**MONG the different aspects of Anglo-American antagonisms, which, as is well known, constitute the most important antagonisms within the imperialist camp, the struggle of the two largest capitalist countries for naval supremacy, and their rivalry in the sphere of armaments occupy an important place. Anglo-American naval rivalry is by no means the least of the important factors which must be taken into consideration in appraising the strategical situation in the Far East, which is a matter of extreme interest at the present time.

Of course, naval rivalry is not the principal factor that determines Anglo-American antagonisms.\* On the contrary, it is the result of far deeper causes, of the economic factors which lie at the root of these antagonisms. It is the expression of the growing antagonism of the two greatest powers and of their preparations for an armed conflict. However, in so far as it determines the relations of armed forces, it is worth while investigating this point more closely. In its contemporary aspect, Anglo-American rivalry commenced at the time of the world war. After

the war it passed through several stages. On the whole, Anglo-American naval rivalry can be characterised, in line with the general development of Anglo-American relations, as American imperialism's attack on British imperialism's positions, on the one hand, and the latter's stubborn defence of her positions, on the other. In this struggle, England has had to make several concessions; but it would be a mistake to describe this as the complete surrender of her positions by British imperialism. She is desperately trying to retain them, and is slowly retreating to positions prepared beforehand, determined to cling to these positions of sea power as long as possible and play for time in order, at the next stage of naval rivalry to strike out on a new basis and to retain her maritime supremacy in one form or another. In examining the roots of Anglo-American naval rivalry we come face to face with the historical problems of the "freedom of the seas." The essence of this problem is that while in all past wars England's strongest weapon against her enemies was the naval blockade, it was extremely important for America to maintain unhampered commercial intercourse with the belligerent

\* See No. 7, "Communist International."



countries. On this basis arose the so-called doctrine of the "freedom of the seas," i.e., the right of neutral countries to trade with countries at war. We shall not go into the details of the past history of this question; but merely point out that, during the world war, the conflict between England and the United States, on this question, nearly caused a rupture between the two powers, owing to the fact that the British navy enforced a close blockade of the Central Powers. It is true that eventually, for a number of reasons, America was drawn into the war on the side of England and against Germany, but the problem of the antagonisms around the question of the freedom of the seas was not solved in the least.

After America failed to secure recognition of the freedom of the right to trade with belligerent countries, she decided to build a fleet every bit as powerful as that of England. In 1916, the United States Congress adopted an extensive programme of naval construction which was mainly a programme of battleship construction. The aim of this programme was to make the United States battle fleet "second to none." Immediately the programme was adopted by Congress the United States naval authorities began to carry it through with the utmost energy. When the United States entered the war against Germany and the fighting resources of England and America were united for the time being, America stopped building battleships, partly for strategical considerations and partly as a result of the pressure of England. She concentrated on building vessels that were then extremely necessary in the fight against the German submarine menace, viz., small, fast vessels, and chiefly destroyers. (America built about 250 of them, which proves once again the potential possibilities of American ship-building.)

In spite of the fact that England and America had fought side by side against Germany, and in spite of their temporary agreement, the question of the freedom of the seas was bound to come up again immediately after the termination of the war in a more aggravated form than ever. At the Versailles Peace Conference the American delegation, represented by President Wilson, insisted on the recognition of the principle of the freedom of the seas, so that this principle could be included in the future peace treaty. The British delegation was absolutely opposed to this. Materials published since the war, particularly the memoirs of Colonel House, President Wilson's closest advisor as well as the memoirs of the late Chief of the British General Staff, Sir Henry Wilson, dealing with the peace conference, and other materials, strikingly reveal the strenu-

ous fight that was waged at the peace conference on the question of recognition of the principle of the freedom of the seas. On this question England remained adamant. She did not wish to renounce her most important, historical weapon ensuring British naval supremacy, by which she had secured the defeat of enemies who had threatened her world Colonial Empire in the past. Having met a rebuff to her claim for the freedom of the seas, America accepted the challenge, and in 1919 resumed the shipbuilding programme which she had stopped in 1916, on a large scale. Plans were made for building ten battleships, six cruisers, a large number of light vessels and submarines. This was a programme which, if carried out, would have assured America supremacy. Attempts on the part of England to come to an understanding with America to curtail American naval forces, failed. The visit of Sir Edward Grey, ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs to the United States, on a special mission in 1919 likewise proved unsuccessful.

After the war England enjoyed undivided supremacy in European waters. She had just settled accounts with her strongest rival, the German fleet, which went to the bottom off Scapa Flow. She had no rivals among the European powers, for the naval forces of France and Italy were insignificant compared with the British fleet which had grown to such monstrous dimensions. But across the Atlantic, a rival appeared on the horizon who possessed unlimited resources for building a navy not inferior to that of the British. In the very first years after the world war, naval rivalry between England and America broke out with exceptional force. This rivalry became still more acute as a consequence of the entry of a third party, Japan, who strove to seize the key positions in the Far East, to complete and consolidate the gains she acquired as a result of the imperialist war and who could not reconcile herself to an increase in America's naval power. Japan retaliated to America's 1919 programme with her programme of "8-8" (eight battleships and eight cruisers) which, if carried out, would make the Japanese navy a very dangerous rival to that of the United States. Thus, naval rivalry proceeded in a form of an imperialist triangle. The first compromise to be reached, which however, did not destroy the roots of this conflict—was the Washington agreement of 1922. Each of the imperialist powers had its own reasons for concluding the Washington agreement. England found it extremely difficult to maintain her navy at the size to which it had grown. She would not have been able to maintain a fleet of such dimensions and at the same time preserve its quality. After the world war the British Admir-

alty began to reduce the fleet by eliminating its obsolete units and retaining in commission only the most modern and most powerful units in all classes, of course. The process of reducing the dimensions of the British fleet went on very intensively. But there were reasons of a different kind which induced the United States to come to an agreement, while increasing the power of the vessels in her navy, the United States lacked a sufficient number of skilled cadres to man these vessels. It takes many years to train skilled men for the navy, and the process of training skilled men for the United States navy was a comparatively slow one. This is the principal reason why the United States agreed to suspend the creation of large naval forces to some extent. For all these reasons on February 6, 1922, the Washington agreement was concluded, which put a stop to rivalry in a single category of warships which at that time was regarded as the decisive category, viz., battleships. We emphasise at that time because since then there has been an extraordinarily rapid development in naval technique, which has brought about a re-estimation of values, as a consequence of which doubt has been thrown upon the utility of battleships. Briefly stated, the terms of the Washington Agreement were that the construction of new battleships was to cease for a period of ten years, a considerable proportion of existing battleships, mainly obsolete ones, were to be scrapped, and a ratio of battleships for England, America and Japan was established in the proportion of 5:5:3 respectively, which gave parity in battleships as between England and the United States and allowed Japan to have three-fifths of the number owned by England or the United States, respectively. This compromise, however, was accompanied by a number of reservations. Japan,—there are grounds for believing that in this she was inspired by England—insisted on being allowed to complete two modern fighting units; but these two ships were included in the ratio that was laid down for her. Arising out of this, America claimed the right to complete three units and this was agreed to. It was England, however, that gained most. At the time the war came to an end, England did not have a single battleship in construction and on these "legitimate" grounds claimed the right to lay down two new battleships, which was also agreed to. The construction of these two battleships, the *Rodney* and the *Nelson*, between 1922-1927, to a considerable extent nullified the parity established between the American and British fleets even in this category of ship. Although the number of battleships each country was to have was finally equalised at the London Conference in 1930 which gave each

of the two powers fifteen units, England now has more modern, newer and more powerfully armed battleships than her rival. Among these battleships there are two post-war units of a type which the United States navy completely lacks. Thus the compromise reached on the question of the construction of battleships resulted in a considerable gain for England who maintained her supremacy if not in quantity—in so far as parity was established between her and the United States in this respect—then at all events in quality.

The Washington compromise, which affected the construction of the largest and most costly vessels, did not eliminate Anglo-American rivalry; it continued to develop after the Washington Conference. The rivalry was merely transferred to other categories of ships. Rivalry became particularly keen in the construction of cruisers, i.e., the class of vessel that is intended for the purpose of paralysing the world commercial trading routes and for striking a decisive blow at the main lines of communication of the enemy. England very carefully maintained the supremacy of her cruiser fleet. The Washington Conference placed no restriction on the number of cruisers and submarines each country could have. England was able to manoeuvre successfully thanks to the position taken up by other powers, particularly France, who was opposed to any rates of tonnage being fixed, that would restrict the construction of light vessels, particularly cruisers and also submarines. In view of the fact that France's fleet of battleships was comparatively insignificant, she readily agreed to the ratio of 1.75:5 for battleships as between herself and England and America, particularly as this was only a quantitative ratio. Qualitatively, the French battleship fleet, until recently was quite insignificant. In Washington, France reserved to herself the right to unrestricted construction of light vessels and submarines. This served as a good pretext for England to retain a free hand in regard to building of cruisers in point of numbers, the British cruiser fleet after the Washington Conference exceeded that of the United States five times, but in spite of that, in subsequent years, the number of British cruisers was feverishly increased. In 1924—we will remind the reader that this was the year in which the first Labour Government was in power—the British Admiralty feverishly increased the construction of cruisers of the maximum tonnage permitted by the Washington Conference, which did not fix the number of cruisers to be built in the future, but merely fixed the maximum tonnage of each vessel (10,000 tons) and the calibre of its guns (10-inch). Cruisers of this tonnage and equipped

with such armament, known as "Washington Cruisers," are the largest of their class in dimensions and armament. After 1924, England still further increased her cruiser fleet which was already far superior to that of any other country. Sooner or later the fulfilment of this cruiser programme had to be taken by the United States as a challenge. The United States who had claimed the principle of building a navy "second to none," particularly in regard to the British navy, could not reconcile itself to the fact that England had agreed to this principle in words at Washington and that she was nullifying it in deeds. And so, after repeated warnings, America began to increase her cruiser fleet to an extent corresponding to her great potential resources. By this time America had partly solved the problems of manning her warships. This gave America the opportunity to revert to extensive naval construction. Before making use of that opportunity, America at the conference of the three powers in Geneva in 1927 attempted to extend the Washington proportion of 5:5:3 to the construction of light vessels. This attempt met with strong opposition from England. England reserved the right to construct an unlimited number of small cruisers. The significance of this question is great, because for America with her lack of naval bases,—which we shall show later,—it is of the utmost importance to build ships with a maximum radius of action, which means, ships of maximum tonnage. England, who has naval bases in every conceivable theatre of naval warfare, finds it more advantageous to construct light vessels. While England needs the maximum number of vessels, America needs the maximum power for each of her units. No compromise could be reached between England and America in Geneva, on this question. The British proposal to reduce the Washington limit was categorically rejected by America. On the other hand, America could not accept the proposal that England should have the right of unlimited construction of light vessels. As a result the conference of the three powers failed, and Anglo-American rivalry received still further impetus.

The American programme of 1927 followed soon after, which provided for the construction of light vessels with a view to levelling up with and even surpassing the British fleet. The programme provided for the construction of 25 cruisers of heavy tonnage, five airplane carriers, 32 submarines, etc. This was an extensive programme of naval construction intended to drive England from her position. In order to cut the ground from under the feet of the advocates of a big navy in the United States, England began to slow down somewhat the completion of her

own programme of naval construction, and tried to make a great deal of political capital out of this. As a result of this manoeuvre on the English side, that England was prepared to make concessions, and agree to an actual reduction, which England could comparatively well afford to do in view of her development, she was able to secure a reduction of the original American programme of 1924, from 25 to 15 cruisers, and the construction of other classes of vessels is temporarily postponed. But even in the form of the Wilbur\* programme which was passed by Congress in 1929, i.e., 15 very powerful cruisers, the programme was a menace to England. At that time England was completing the construction of 15 "Washington" cruisers, and America had eight cruisers, and was constructing 15 more. This meant that eventually America would have 23 units, or superiority over England, in the matter of heavy cruisers. America at that time was at the height of prosperity, and the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars for the shipbuilding programme did not present much difficulty. England, who was passing through financial difficulties, could not enter into rivalry on such a scale. Thus British imperialism was obliged to make some concessions to America. On the other hand, America came to the conclusion, that it will be impossible to fully carry out her plan of bringing her cruiser fleet up to the level of the English fleet and so made some minor concessions to England. That is the essence of the Anglo-American compromise reached as a result of MacDonal's sensational visit to America in the autumn of 1929 and definitely formulated at the London Conference in 1930. This compromise means, that whereas America had a slight superiority in the heavy cruisers category—of which she is greatly in need, because of her *extreme lack of naval bases*, i.e., 18 units as against 15 English—England retained her considerable superiority in the tonnage of light cruisers armed with six-inch guns and is thus able to have a larger number of light cruisers than America. But this temporary respite which was brought about by no means removed Anglo-American naval rivalry. Firstly, for America to attain the rate settled by the London Naval Agreement, it was necessary to develop by 1936, i.e., as long as the naval agreement remains in force, an extensive programme of naval construction, in the field of construction of cruisers as well as in the field of light vessels of other categories. Although England is not able to increase the number of her cruisers and light vessels in other categories she is quite able, however, to renovate the ships in these categories, because

\* Then United States Secretary for the Navy.

the majority of her cruisers, as well as her destroyers and submarines, were built during the war, and the London Agreement fixed an age limit beyond which these ships must be scrapped.

England has wide opportunities, therefore, of retaining her fleet of light vessels by replacing old vessels by new ones. Although the rivalry between England and America in the building of light vessels was regulated in so far as numbers are concerned, there is still plenty of room for it to become greatly intensified in regard to the quality of warships. This applies to a considerable extent also to battleships.

Although the Washington Agreement of 1922 established a ten-year respite in the building of battleships which was prolonged to 1936 by the London Agreement, England and America are evading this difficulty by modernising their existing battleships. It takes almost two years to modernise each ship, almost as much time as it takes to construct a new one. While refraining from building new battleships both England and America are in fact evading the Washington Agreement and are completely reconstructing their existing ships. We see, therefore, that both in regard to the construction of light vessels, and in modernisation of battleships, the rivalry between these two imperialist powers is as intense as ever, after both the Washington and the London "disarmament" conferences.

The third participant in imperialist rivalry in naval armaments, Japan, is, of course, clinging to the position she won at Washington and London. In London she secured a more favourable proportion of cruisers than was established for battleships at Washington—not 3:5 but 2:3 (for big cruisers) and 7:10 (for light cruisers) and parity with England and America in regard to submarines. From the point of view of quality the Japanese submarine fleet is second to none in the world. Thus Japan is taking an active part in the rivalry between the imperialist powers and is intensively increasing her armaments which will enable her to fight for the command of the Far East.

Anglo-American naval rivalry is further complicated by the position taken up by two other powers, namely, France and Italy. At the time of the Washington Conference the French navy was relatively insignificant. During the past ten years, however, the situation has radically changed. At the beginning of 1922, and particularly in 1924, France began furiously to build submarines and light vessels. First of all, taking advantage of the fact that the Washington Agreement placed no restriction on the building of submarines, she began to build an enormous submarine fleet. In the course of the last ten

years, she has built more than 100 of these ships, and thus created a submarine fleet greater in number than that of any other country. But France does not stop at this; she is creating a powerful surface fleet. She is intensively building cruisers of the Washington type and also light cruisers which officially are called destroyers, but which in fact are powerful fighting ships in so far as they have a large tonnage, powerful armaments and enormous speed. France built 30 cruisers of this type and this transformed her cruiser fleet into a first-class fleet and a sufficiently dangerous potential opponent even of England. In so far as France's principal naval forces are located in the Mediterranean Sea, the principal line of communication of the British Empire, this menace is particularly real. But that is not all. The matter is still further complicated by Franco-Italian naval rivalry. In view of the sharp antagonisms between Italy and France, Italy strives to make no concessions whatever to France. In the sphere of naval armaments she is definitely striving to rise to the level of France.

Since 1924 the Fascist government of Italy has been retaliating to every naval programme announced by France with a programme of its own at least equal to it, with the result that although the Italian fleet is not yet on a par with that of France it is, nevertheless, an imposing opponent of it and in certain categories (light cruiser, for example) is quite equal to that of France. The most recent naval programmes of Italy and particularly those of 1928, 1929 and 1930, exceed the programmes of France of the corresponding years, especially in regard to cruisers. In regard to submarines also Italy is trying to make up the leeway between herself and her rival (the Italian programme for 1930 alone provides for the construction of 22 vessels). Thus two first-class powers have grown up, each having a powerful submarine and light cruiser fleet. It is very important for England to preserve the principle of the "two powers standard" in European waters, i.e., the principle that the British fleet in European waters must be equal to the two next strongest fleets combined. Having recognised the principle of parity between her fleet and the American fleet, England more than ever clings to the principle of parity between her own fleet and the combined fleets of two other European Continental powers. This principle is important to England at the present time, because in the event of a conflict between her and America she must make secure her rear in Europe. Hence, the British Admiralty regards the naval construction of France and Italy, particularly that of France, as a threat to the interests of the British Empire.

At the London Naval Conference, French imperialism thwarted England's efforts to reach a compromise with America, which would have given British imperialism another respite, and would have enabled her to establish herself in her new positions and retain her naval supremacy. Since France and Italy did not adhere to the decisive part of the London Agreement which laid down the relation of forces of the three principal naval powers—England, America and Japan—in cruisers, destroyers and submarines, and since France and Italy refused to agree to any rates in these categories, there is the danger that the London Naval Agreement may break down, and that the compromise which, at least, for a time, retards the unrestricted development of Anglo-American rivalry and creates the appearance of a temporary truce, may collapse. We say the appearance of a temporary truce, because, as a matter of fact, the rivalry continued and continues to this day in spite of the Washington and London Agreements. It may turn out that the increased naval construction in European waters may cause England to resort to clause 21, the "safety" clause in the London Agreement which enables any signatory to increase the proportion of vessels in any category laid down by that agreement, in the event of a power not a signatory to the agreement threateningly increasing its forces. If England did that, it would nullify the London Agreement, and Anglo-American rivalry would develop to an intensity and scale that would undoubtedly reveal that both powers were preparing for a conflict, and would prevent the British and the American Admiralties and Governments from camouflaging their war preparations and concealing from the masses of the people the fact that they were increasing their armaments, to be able to occupy the most favourable position in the impending inevitable war.

This is the situation at the present time. A few words must still be said concerning the effect the world economic crises is having on the growth of the naval forces of England and America, after the London Conference. We must note the fact that notwithstanding her serious financial difficulties, England is continuing systematically and unswervingly to carry out her programme of renewing her fleet. It is precisely after the London Conference that she yearly adopts a fresh programme of constructing a definite number of new vessels. This programme is not an astonishing one, but in so far as it is regularly repeated the sum total of it is the intense increase of British naval forces. Every year three new cruisers, nine destroyers and three submarines are laid down. Meanwhile America is merely carrying out her original programme of building big

cruisers of the Washington type. She is striving to reach parity in this class of vessel with England as quickly as possible. The weakness of American naval construction is that it is sporadic and not sufficiently planned. This is to be explained by America's lack of experience in naval construction, by the shortage of man-power, etc. At each particular moment she concentrates on the building of a particular category of vessel, whereas England carries out her programme systematically and evenly and lays down all categories of vessels. In view of financial difficulties, and the difficulties in regard to man-power to which reference has been repeatedly made, the United States temporarily suspended the work of increasing her fleet after the London Conference. No new naval programmes have been passed by Congress during the past two years, nor has the United States laid down any new vessels in this period, but has limited herself to completing the cruisers laid down by the Wilbur programme. This is not due to any desire to maintain the London Agreement or to preserve the compromise reached with England, but is entirely due to the United States' financial difficulties resulting from the crisis (in the present fiscal year, 1931-1932, the budget deficit will in all probability exceed 50 per cent. of the Federal Budget). While the present "Disarmament" Conference is in session in Geneva, an extensive programme has been introduced in the United States Congress for the systematic increase of the navy not only during the period of operation of the London Agreement, but even after that. This programme provides for the construction of four airplane carriers, nine large new cruisers, 85 destroyers and 23 submarines. This programme has been passed by the naval committee of the House of Representatives but has not yet been discussed by Congress. The discussion of this programme has been postponed partly for diplomatic reasons, in so far as the Geneva Conference is in session, and partly for financial reasons. Now that the Presidential elections are pending, it will be difficult to secure the passage of such a huge programme of naval construction, requiring enormous expenditure (not less than 616 million dollars) through Congress, but there is no doubt that this programme will be passed after the Presidential elections.

It is necessary to emphasise still another factor in Anglo-American rivalry which partly explains the periodical compromises like the Washington compromise of 1922 and the London compromise of 1929-1930. This factor is the change that is taking place in naval technique. At the time of the last imperialist war battleships were generally regarded as the principal class of warship

which determined the naval power of the given country. The development of new instruments of warfare, particularly aviation and submarines, has thrown doubt on the value of battleships. This explains why, at the Washington Conference, America and England so readily agreed to stop the construction of huge, exceedingly vulnerable, giants; difficult to employ in modern warfare; and concentrate on the lighter type of vessels which can be more widely used in modern warfare—particularly cruisers. Further progress in naval technique has resulted in even the cruiser, particularly of the Washington type, being regarded as too vulnerable a target. This facilitated the compromise between England and America on the question of cruisers. On the other hand, it is the small vessel that is becoming the decisive factor in war, because they are less vulnerable targets for modern instruments of war, primarily for rapidly progressing aviation. This is causing the rivalry to be transferred to small, fast, less vulnerable vessels, but this does not alter the character or the degree of intensity of this rivalry; the problem of aviation is acquiring enormous significance in Anglo-American relationships. Hence, the establishment of new air lines and the fight for new air routes deserves to be carefully studied, because this is really a struggle for the most advantageous strategical positions in the coming conflict.

In the main, the deductions which can be drawn from the study of Anglo-American naval rivalry may be formulated as follows:

From the time of the imperialist war, America has been conducting an intensive attack upon England's position as a naval power, and has been striving to break her supremacy. England is stubbornly holding on to her positions, and when compelled to retreat from her first line of positions, she stubbornly clings to the next line until the subsequent line of retreat has been prepared, which is facilitated by the progress and evolution of naval technique. Hence, notwithstanding America's successes, her growth as a first-class power and her approaching parity with England, the latter still manages to retain her naval supremacy. England's important permanent advantages in this connection are, first, her possession of a first-class system of naval bases which enables her to throw her naval forces to any point that is threatened, whereas America lacks such bases. Second, England possesses large naval cadres, excellently trained man-power that can man any fleet, whereas for America the training of such cadres is a complicated problem which has been only partly solved. Of course, with the enormous material resources that America possesses, America can solve this prob-

lem in the end, and she is solving it, but she has not yet solved it. England's third advantage is that she possesses an enormous mercantile fleet which, on the one hand, provides a reserve of man-power for the navy to be used in the event of necessity, and on the other hand, provides a large number of auxiliary cruisers in time of war. This is yet another factor which enables England to make concessions to America with relative ease in regard to parity, in this or that category of warship. As the British writer Harris expresses it:

"If all war vessels were abolished to-morrow we would still remain the premier naval power because we could create any number of cruisers out of our mercantile fleet."\*

England retains these advantages, which enable her to cling to previously prepared positions in spite of periodical retreats on the question of the relative proportions between British and American naval forces. On the other hand America enjoys enormous advantages of another kind, viz., her overwhelming superiority in material resources. It is true that the world economic crisis may have hit America harder than it has hit England; nevertheless, America still enjoys the main advantage which enabled her, after the world war, to bring pressure to bear upon England, and compel her to retreat.

Subject to the influence of these contradictory factors, the rivalry between England and America continues intensively. England, although weakened, continues to occupy the position of the premier naval power. America continues to attack energetically England's position. The rivalry between the two imperialist powers is proceeding at an accelerated and intensified rate, and is an important element in their preparations for the coming clash.

Anglo-American antagonisms are an extremely important element in the present strategical situation in the Far East. This situation, however, demands that careful allowance be made for the independent rôle in naval policy played by a third power, viz., imperialist Japan. From the military standpoint the Japanese navy undoubtedly commands the Far Eastern seas that wash the shores of China. The Japanese naval positions, which are extremely strong, have protected communications with the Asiatic Continent, and with China in particular, which serve Japan as a means for pursuing her policy of aggression against the Soviet Union. Hence, the maintenance of Japan's command of the Yellow and East China seas is the most important function of the Japanese navy. Japan's command of the seas, that wash the coast

\* Harris, *Naval Disarmament*.

of China, is secured by four powerful naval bases: Yokohama, Kure, Sasebo and Maidura. These bases represent a powerful strategical square which guarantees the domination of the Japanese fleet in East Asiatic waters.

Japan is sufficiently protected from any other fleet by its bases and its naval forces. In regard to the number of battleships, the Japanese navy is inferior to that of England and America (nine units to fifteen), but it is only slightly inferior in regard to heavy cruisers; in regard to light cruisers it is inferior only to that of England and considerably superior to that of United States (seventeen units to ten American). Finally, Japan's submarine fleet, in point of numbers, is second only to that of France, and in point of quality, is first in the world. Japan has 72 submarines, all of big tonnage, extraordinarily powerful, with a wide radius of action and excellently equipped for ocean operations. Her powerful fleet protects Japan from direct attacks by an enemy which lacks naval bases in close proximity to Japan. The situation in regard to the naval bases in the Pacific at the present time is as follows: At the Washington Conference Japan agreed to the proportion of 5-5-3 on the condition that America refrains from fortifying the Pacific Islands—the Philippines and Guam. The construction of naval bases on these islands would create a menace to Japan's command of the Eastern Asiatic waters. This demand was conceded by America, not only on diplomatic grounds, but largely because of strategical considerations. Even if America had intended to construct a naval base in the Philippines, she would find it difficult to retain that base in the process of construction, because that would be looked upon by Japan as a challenge, and it is more than doubtful whether the American fleet would have been able to prevent the islands from being seized by Japan. Being unable to construct bases on the Philippines and Guam—in the immediate vicinity of the Japanese islands and at a great distance away from the United States—America, after the Washington Conference, is striving to strengthen her position in the middle Pacific. She is constructing the powerful Pearl Harbour base on the Hawaii Islands, which may serve as the main base for the operations of the American fleet, and also near bases on Mayor Island, near San Francisco, and San Diego and San Pedro in California. The base equipped on the Hawaii Islands can serve the main forces of the United States navy. This guarantees the United States navy the command of the Eastern zone of the Pacific and renders active operations on the part of any opponent against the Pacific coast of America difficult. But these bases are

so remote from the Philippines and Guam that frontal operations by the American fleet in the western zone of the Pacific are rendered extremely difficult.

On the other hand, it is very difficult for Japan to carry on active operations against America. Thus, this strategic barrier between America and Japan, which modern technique has not yet been able to overcome, is an extremely important, although not a decisive factor, which must be taken into consideration in appraising the strategic situation in the Pacific.

America is striving to overcome the difficulty created by her lack of naval bases. Recently she has begun to establish a naval base at Dutch Harbour in Alaska. So far the base has been established there for light forces and hydroplanes. This base is much nearer to the Japanese Islands than to Hawaii. Nevertheless, the distance from Dutch Harbour to the most important points in Japan is too great to expect that, at the present stage of development of aviation, air attacks on a large scale against Japan can be undertaken. As long as the radius of an aeroplane carrying a useful load of bombs is restricted to a distance not exceeding 1,000 kilometres, it is inconceivable that they can do a great deal of damage. It will be a different thing when the technique of aviation will have considerably increased the radius of action of aeroplanes; then their rôle will be menacing.

Hence in the process of preparation for the Anglo-American war it is not only the development of naval forces that is of first-class significance, but also, and to an even greater degree, the progress of aviation. In the future, as future progress is made in naval and aviation technique, distances will be shortened. The tendencies are for economics and politics to overcome geography. Thus, as military technique develops, the possibility of a clash between Japan and America rapidly develops. At the present time, however, the strategic situation is still such that a conflict between America and Japan in single combat is improbable. On the other hand, war between these two countries is likely if a third country, England, participates in it. As has already been stated above, unlike America, England has a system of naval bases in every potential theatre of war. Hence, her forces may be thrown to any theatre of war; in particular the British navy has a number of intermediary bases on the route from the Mediterranean Sea to the Pacific. In the north there is the Suez Canal, Suez, Port Said, Port Sudan and Aden in the Red Sea; then comes Tricomali and Colombo in Ceylon, then a potential base in India itself, Bombay, and another in Rangoon,

Burma, and, finally, still further to the East, at the crossroads of the world's sea routes, there is being created a first-class naval base for a battleship fleet in Singapore. The significance of the construction of the Singapore base, which was decided on at the Imperial Conference in 1921, is very great. Against whom is this base directed? Apparently it is primarily directed against America. In the event of war, it will enable the British fleet to seize the Philippines. By this operation the American naval forces could be diverted to the Pacific. It should be borne in mind that England has a number of bases in the Atlantic which could be used against the United States in the event of war. As against America's five naval bases, England has nine. Thus British naval forces could be hurled against the Panama Canal and against America's vital centres in the Atlantic, i.e., New York, Boston, etc. England's naval operations in the Atlantic would be facilitated by acts of diversion against America's possessions in the Pacific. Singapore will enable England in the event of war to conduct extensive operations for the purpose of diverting the forces of the United States. If the necessity arose, however, this base could be used against Japan. As a matter of fact, it was the Dominions of Australia and New Zealand which insisted on the construction of the Singapore base, on the plea that they were threatened by the "yellow peril." The construction of the Singapore base, simultaneously with the construction of a base at Port Darwin in North Australia, creates a powerful barrier which protects those British possessions from attack by Japan. Thus the Singapore base may play an exceedingly important rôle in the future as a defensive base against Japan. Immediately, however, this base does not appear to be directed against Japan. Although the Japanese press expressed its dissatisfaction at the British constructing a base at Singapore, Japanese officers were allowed to examine the Singapore docks and batteries which would not have been the case if the base were being built against Japan. Hence, it must be surmised that immediately the Singapore base is directed against the United States. Generally speaking, in so far as this base will enable the British to throw their naval forces to the Pacific, it strengthens England's position in the fight against any potential enemy. Moreover, by strengthening its position in the Pacific, British imperialism obtains wide opportunities for bargaining with each of the conflicting sides in the Pacific, in the event of a Japano-American war, for example, because the opportunity to use the naval bases

of England as a third party, would be of decisive strategic advantage for the sake of which each of the two sides, America and Japan, would desire to keep in England's good graces and for which they would be willing to pay. By creating a first-class base in Singapore and having in addition an advance base of operations in Chinese waters in Hong-Kong, England possesses important *points d'appui* which gives her tremendous advantage, and in order to secure England's co-operation, or at least her friendly neutrality, both Japan and America would have to make definite concessions. We see that in the process of the conflict in the Far East the gaze of Washington, as the *Times* correspondent put it, was turned, not so much towards Shanghai, as towards London, because the opportunity to use Singapore and Hong-Kong would enable the American fleet to throw its main forces into Asiatic waters. The exceptional advantages which England's naval bases afford her are obvious. Although England scowled at the Japanese seizure of Shanghai (for it affects her interests in the Yangtse Valley), Anglo-American antagonisms, the world rivalry between England and America robbed England of any desire to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for her principal rival, and by not giving America the opportunity to use her bases for demonstrations against Japan, she upset all the calculations of American imperialism on being able to bring pressure upon Japan.

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England's way out of the situation created by Japan's aggression on the Asiatic Continent is to try and divert this aggression into channels desirable for herself. This is necessary for England for a twofold reason—through the medium of Japan to deliver a decisive blow at the Soviet Union, and in addition to distract Japan from Shanghai and Hong-Kong. Japan's north-westerly strivings would be extremely advantageous for England, because this would divert Japan from the southern section of the Chinese Sea and would remove, or at all events diminish, a possible Japanese threat to British maritime communications. England would undoubtedly take advantage of a Japanese blow against the Soviet Union in order to strengthen still further her strategic positions in the Pacific. This is the principal consideration that induces the British diplomats and militarists to strive to liquidate the Shanghai incident on the one hand, and to encourage Japan in her aggressive policy in Manchuria. This is an important factor which increases the danger of war against the Soviet Union and from this the necessary deductions should be drawn.



# REVOLUTIONARY UNDERGROUND WORK

*How Not to Prepare for Underground Conditions of Revolutionary Work.*

O. WEBER.

A CIRCULAR has come into our hands which, several months ago, was addressed by the Central Committee of the Young Communist League in a certain country, to its district committees. In this circular a number of methods of control were suggested to local organisations in preparation for going into strictly underground conditions in the event of war. Among others, the following suggestions were made to the district committees: (a) All district committees must prepare special addresses; (b) they must inform the Central Committee within eight days exactly where the district committees can be found when they go underground; (c) that they must submit to the Central Committee within eight days the names and addresses of the deputy district secretaries who are to take over the leadership of district committees in the event of the arrest or conscription of the present secretaries. There were a few other instructions of a similar character.

In regard to this document the following observations must be made.

The authors of a document must be congratulated for the zeal they show in preparing the Young Communist League organisations for underground work in the event of war breaking out; but they must be pulled up sharply for this circular. Such things must never be written. There is no guarantee that such a document will not fall into the hands of the police, and if it does, will give the clue by which the police will be able to discover and break up the illegal organisations which will have been built up on the lines of the circular. Instructions on concrete organisational questions regarding preparation for underground conditions must be given only verbally and only by absolutely tried and trustworthy people. Only in extreme cases should instructions be given in writing and these should contain only the most general instructions and should be written in such a manner as to give the police no clue as to whom to look for and where to find them if the instructions do fall into their hands. The worst proposal of all in this circular is that the names and addresses of the deputy leaders of the local Y.C.I. committees should be sent to the Central Committee. This would give the police direct information. At the very least it should have been specified that these names and addresses be given strictly orally and by a trusted comrade. Sending such information by post should have been

strictly forbidden under penalty of expulsion from the League. In the old days the Bolsheviks, it is true, did send secret addresses through the post. But it should be borne in mind that Russia is a much larger country than the one which we are now concerned with in connection with this circular. The vastness of the country made personal communication between Party organisations very difficult in Russia. Moreover, and this is very important to remember, the Russian Bolsheviks who carried on this work had had considerable experience in carrying on secret work; they knew how to use secret codes, invisible ink, etc., etc. Furthermore, they had a well-equipped, secret apparatus at their disposal.

A few remarks must be made concerning the so-called "deputy leaders" referred to by the authors in this unfortunate circular. Are such deputy leaders necessary? Obviously, in building up any kind of Party leadership (legal or illegal) that leadership must be so organised that in case a leading worker drops out, for whatever reason, another equally qualified member of the Party committee can take his place. To keep some of the best Party workers in reserve against the event of arrest of the Party leadership, as some illegal parties do, is an altogether different thing. When certain comrades are kept in reserve in this way, they are divorced from active Party work, they are put in "cold storage" as it were. Experience shows that this method of organisation is suitable only in two cases: (1) in times of big strikes and other great, mass revolutionary movements; but even in this case the method should not be applied to the Party committees but to the mass organs of struggle elected at such times. It is useful in such cases to have two or three emergency staffs for the militant committees, who, on the arrest of the first committee, can immediately take up its duties. (2) in time of war (imperialist war or civil war), when, in connection with impending military operations (or sudden mobilisation) it is necessary in good time to select several persons who shall give up regular Party work for a time and effectively conceal themselves in order that they may be available to carry on the Party work as soon as the Party organisation is disrupted by mobilisation or military operations. Incidentally, in preparing the Party organisations for imperialist wars, provision must be made for training working women and peasant women for work in

the leading Party and Y.C.L. organisations as well as for work in the illegal Party and Y.C.L. apparatus. In the course of the ordinary, everyday work of the legal parties, however, it is inexpedient to set aside special deputy leaders (let alone reserve committees or bureaux of committees). Why? Firstly, in view of the extreme shortage of leading workers in all Parties, it is very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to put tried and reliable, leading comrades out of action for a time. Secondly, even if it were possible to take a few leading workers from active work and put them into reserve, these comrades would become divorced from everyday Party work, would lose contact with it, and so would not be in the position to take over the duties of leadership when the contingency arose. Thirdly and finally, in case of a raid and the arrest of the members of the acting Party committee, these deputy leaders would inevitably have much difficulty in getting the necessary contacts with the illegal Party apparatus, with its cells and fractions working in the mass organisations under the leadership of the Party committees. Therefore, in the light of international experience, to ensure continuity in the work of the illegal Party committees, it is better in ordinary circumstances, instead of creating special reserves which would be kept in a state of inaction, to adopt the following organisational measures: (1) To remove immediately from active work all members of the Party committees (and particularly of Party Bureaux) who, it is believed, are being watched by the police, or who have been involved through the arrest of other comrades or through provocation. With all due precautions being taken, these comrades, whenever possible, should be sent to another town. (2) As a rule, work in the illegal Party apparatus should not be entrusted to the members of the Party committees but to special apparatus workers who must be effectively concealed and work under the guidance of the respective members of the Party committees as their direct assistants. (3) In case of the discovery and arrest of individual members of the illegal Party committee, these must be replaced at once by members appointed by the higher Party Committee as well as by co-opting members on the recommendation of the remaining committee members and particularly by active Party members nominated by the most important factory cells and fractions in important mass organisations. (4) Members of the Party committee (or members of the bureaux of Party committees) should not, as a rule, attend committee meetings or conferences or Party meetings all at the same time, so that in the event of the members attending the meetings being arrested,

the members remaining at liberty can quickly restore the organisation and maintain continuity in the Party leadership.

#### ORGANISATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF POLAND.

In February this year, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Party took place at which a detailed resolution on the organisational problems of the C.P. of Poland was adopted. This resolution is an important document for the C.P. of Poland and for the whole of the Communist International. The C.P. of Poland has many important successes to record in 1931 in regard to the organisational consolidation of the Party. These successes are reflected in the doubling of the membership of the Party in 1931 (an increase of 107 per cent.) and particularly in the leadership of the strike movement. The statistics of the strike movement in Poland, which have already been quoted in the pages of the "Communist International," show that in the first quarter of 1931, 25 per cent. of the spontaneous strikes and 45 per cent. of all strikes ended in defeat for the workers, whereas in the fourth quarter of 1931, only nine per cent. of the spontaneous strikes and five per cent. of all the strikes ended in defeat. These figures show that the C.P. of Poland is now very closely linked with the masses of the proletariat and that it has learned to commence strikes and to bring them to an end at the opportune moment. The resolution adopted at the plenum of the C.P. of Poland points out that while there have been achievements in regard to organisation, serious organisational weaknesses have become revealed in the Party which are expressed primarily in the continued weakness of the factory groups. These are very serious and very true statements in the resolution on organisation passed by the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland. The successful struggle against the capitalist offensive and against the war preparations of the imperialists can be organised only if the Party succeeds in establishing strong factory groups. The resolution of the February Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland enumerates the following reasons for the weakness of the factory groups in Poland: (1) The small number of factory groups and the tendency that is observed in the Party to deliberately restrict the membership of the factory groups to very small limits on the plea that it is necessary to maintain secrecy; (2) The factory groups are not sufficiently active, even during strikes. The resolution quotes cases when the driving force of strikes were the trade union departments of the respective Party committees, while the factory groups played hardly any rôle at

all; (3) The continuation within the Party of P.S.P. (Polish Socialist Party) and Bund (Jewish Social Democratic League) traditions regarding organisational questions (for example, the existence until recently, of separate Polish and Jewish groups, in spite of the repeated instructions of the Central Committee to dissolve such).

The resolution calls for a fight against this tendency in the Party to restrict the membership of the factory groups and points out that in order to maintain strictest secrecy, the factory groups should be organised according to shops, all shop groups to be subordinated to a leading Party body covering the whole factory. The resolution also calls for more detailed instruction to be given by the leading Party bodies to the factory groups. Both the proposals contained in the resolution on organisation passed by the Central Committee of C.P. of Poland are quite correct, but quite inadequate. We on our part would like to add the following:

Shop, shift and gang nuclei should be organised irrespective of the number of members in the factory nucleus. Party work in the factory should be commenced with the organisation of Party groups in the shops, shifts and gangs, in short in every unit of the factory where Party members are employed. Unless these Party groups are established it will be impossible to organise the work of the factory nucleus as a whole, as the instructions of the Comintern on work in the factories published in 1931 have already pointed out. In regard to the Party committees giving instructions to the factory nuclei we would add that these instructions must be serious and concrete to the highest degree. One of the principal reasons for the unsatisfactory nature of the work of factory nuclei is the bad internal organisation of the factory nucleus, one of the features of which is the absence of a proper division of labour among the members of the factory nucleus.

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland should have carefully discussed the instructions of the C.I. on work in the factories and should have adapted them to meet Polish conditions and at the same time should have suggested modifications for the internal structure of the factory nuclei. We would like to suggest the following plan for the division of labour within the factory nucleus: (1) The secretary of the factory nucleus. His functions should be to maintain contacts between the shop, shift and gang nuclei and with the individual comrades working in those shops where nuclei have not yet been established; maintain contacts with the Y.C.L. nucleus and with the respective Party committees; make arrangements for the meetings of the bureau

of the factory nucleus, for meetings of the active workers in the factory and for general factory nucleus meetings. (2) A treasurer. (3) The leader of the factory newspaper who should also act as organiser of the distribution of Party literature in the factory. (4) A comrade to maintain contacts with the fraction in the trade union whose members are employed in the given factory and also to act as organiser of the trade union work in the factory.

The question of the structure of the factory nucleus is closely linked up with the question of the structure and methods of work of the Party Committees which guide the activities of factory nuclei. The resolution on organisation passed by the February Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland calls the Party's attention to two serious organisational weaknesses in the lower Party committees: (1) They are set up in a haphazard fashion; (2) in setting up these Party committees and in their work, the principles of internal Party democracy are not sufficiently adhered to. While these two statements are absolutely correct they are not sufficiently concrete. Admittedly difficult as the conditions are in Poland in view of the police régime, the Party must nevertheless see to it that all the leading bodies are elected at Party meetings (or Party conferences). Experience has shown that this is possible in Poland. The director of the organisational department of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland reported to the Comintern that in 1931 the C.P. of Poland organised several regional conferences at which numerous factory nuclei were represented. At these conferences all the important questions of Party life were discussed and not a single one of these conferences were discovered by the police. These facts support the claim that the Party committees of the C.P. of Poland must be elected committees. It goes without saying, of course, that in each separate case the election of the Party committee must be very carefully prepared and all the rules of secrecy must be very strictly observed.

The membership of the Party committees must be such that the members themselves will be able to maintain good contacts with the important factory nuclei and Party fractions in the important mass organisations. Hence, in preparing for the election of Party committees, a very careful selection of the candidates put forward by the organisations operating on these important sectors of the class struggle must be made. Experience in revolutionary underground work has shown that one of the best forms of carrying through the election of illegal Party committees is the following: (1) The Party conference (or general meeting) elects a small com-

mittee of from three to five persons consisting of the most trustworthy comrades (including a member of the higher Party committee). This committee takes a vote of the members by secret ballot and counts the vote. The committee reports the result of the election only to the representative of the higher Party committee and to the successful candidates. Provision must be made for the event of members dropping out from the illegal Party committee, for whatever reason, in the interval between Party conferences. In that event, they must be replaced in the manner suggested above without waiting for the next Party conference to be held. In the event of it being impossible to convene a Party conference for the election of a Party committee, then it would be best to form the latter with the aid of a higher Party Committee which appoints several members to form a small, strictly secret core of the Party committee to which elected representatives of the important factory nuclei and Party fractions in the important mass organisations should be added to complete the required number of committee men. Finally, the February Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland should have discussed the question of the internal structure of the Party committees. The resolution vaguely recommends that the work of the departments be improved. But of which departments? We would like to suggest the following plan for the division of labour within the illegal Party committee.

(1) A secretary, to act also as Party organiser. His function should be to maintain contact with the nuclei and local organisations as well as with the higher Party bodies, and be responsible for preparing the agenda and proposals for the meetings of the bureau and of the plenum of the Party committee. In order to carry out these functions the secretary recruits a small body of active members to carry out the technical side of the work, for example: (a) a comrade to take charge of the records; (b) a comrade to write the correspondence, take charge of the secret code, etc. (c) a comrade to make arrangements for rooms for meetings, addresses for correspondence, etc.

(2) A treasurer, to act also as the organiser

of all the financial affairs of the Party committee. He, too, has a small body of helpers which may include non-proletarian elements—intellectuals, etc.

(3) One comrade must be in charge of the secret printing press and be responsible for the distribution of Party literature (legal, semi-legal and illegal).

(4) One comrade must be appointed to maintain contacts with the fractions in the various legal and semi-legal organisations (trade unions, co-operative societies, sports organisations, etc.) operating in the area of the given Party organisation. It should be the function of this comrade also to assist the illegal apparatus of the Party committee in taking advantage of the various legal and semi-legal opportunities.

(5) In those districts where military barracks are situated, a comrade must be appointed to lead a special apparatus for carrying on work among the soldiers (soldiers' nuclei, contact with these nuclei, special literature, etc.). The fact that a special apparatus has been set up for this work does not relieve the general Party apparatus of the task of conducting mass anti-militarist work.

(6) In connection with the development of the workers' and peasants' self-defence movement, in those districts where fair-sized factory and village workers' and peasants' defence corps already exist, a special instructor must be appointed as assistant to the secretary whose function shall be to lead this work. He must carry on this work in close co-operation with the corresponding nuclei as part of the work of strengthening the organisational positions of the Party in the factories and among the agricultural labourers and poor peasants in the villages.

This suggested plan must under no circumstances be adopted mechanically. The question of separating or combining various functions in Party work must be decided after carefully weighing up the personal qualities of the members of the Party committee, their ability to lead this or that branch of Party work. For the purpose of carrying out any special task the Party committee may establish special temporary groups and committees.