

prises, the trade unions and among the unemployed from the standpoint of how the Party can build up and consolidate its position.

6. To strengthen and further consolidate the contacts with the masses by systematic work to build up and organise a network of worker correspondents (worker correspondent circles, permanent contacts between the editors and the worker correspondents, the organising of courses, "prompt answering of letters", and giving of advice, etc.).

Urgent Questions of the Work of the C.P. of South Africa.

(Letter from South Africa.)

By Johns.

By taking the path of organising and leading the mass struggle against imperialist slave oppression, and in the main having overcome the influence of the renegade groups of **Bunting**, our Party has grown into a big political force.

This is the tremendous significance of the change which has taken place in the Party in the last 2 or 3 years. But on this path, a number of mistakes have been discovered, arising from the limited experience of our Party and the newness of the path.

The situation in our Party is extremely serious. To a greater extent we begin to feel the danger of the Party being isolated from the masses of workers and toilers. The Party understands that if this isolation is not rapidly overcome, the Party will be converted into a small sectarian organisation estranged from the broad masses.

The isolation of the Party from the masses is expressed in the decrease in the membership of the Party from 4 or 5,000 to not more than 300 at the present time, and a reduction in the number of organised supporters of the Party. The trade unions in the African Federation of Trade Unions have greatly declined and have not yet emerged from the zone of decline. In the Red Aid and the Friends of Soviet Russia, almost only Party members remain.

There are comrades in the Party, among them even members of the leading organs of the Party, who have not seen the isolation of the Party from the masses, but on the contrary have even tried to count the loss of members and organised supporters as an advantage. One of them stated that "the fall of membership is the result of the steady campaign to raise the political level of the whole Party and also arises from sharp action against the Right wing which strongly existed inside the Party".

These comrades have also stated that this is not a loss, not an isolation, but a "process of cleansing the Party and forming real prerequisites for a genuine Bolshevik Party in South Africa".

These "Bolsheviks" have forgotten that a condition and prerequisite for the successful development of the Communist movement is ability on the part of the advanced Communist workers to strengthen and extend their contacts with the masses and not turn away from the masses to one side.

Our Party overcame the opportunist position and line of **Bunting** in its ranks, and under the slogan of the independent native republic, began to organise and rouse the masses for the struggle against Anglo-African imperialism.

The mass burning of passes in 1929, strikes in various parts of the country, the militant demonstrations of white and black workers in 1931, the mass resistance to the slave laws under the leadership of our Party, will pass into the history of the struggle of the toiling masses of Africa. In the process of this struggle our Party grew and strengthened, becoming a Party of black and white workers, an influential Party among the toiling masses of the country. During this period, the trade unions, the Red Aid and the Friends of Soviet Russia grew up and the circulation of the paper increased. We cannot call the fall of membership of the Party and the T.U.'s which took place in the last period a process of cleansing from opportunists. This is a libel on the past of the Party, on its revolutionary supporters. The Party has had a cleansing period—the period of struggle against the opportunist renegade views of the **Bunting** group. The rotten portion of the Party left the Party at that time together with Mr. **Bunting**.

The drop in the number of members of the Party and the Red trade unions is not a cleansing process but a divorce of the Party from the masses—such was the estimate of Communists. This separation must be overcome, and the reasons must be discovered which have caused it.

Of course this fact of the isolation of the Party from the masses must not conceal from the reader the successes of the Party, its ideological growth, its increased fighting powers, etc. The Party has got rid of the Right renegade group, carrying on a struggle against Right chauvinist opportunism in its ranks. This cleansing of its ranks from the right opportunists made it possible for the Party to move ahead.

The Party formed and trained a whole stratum of workers, native and white, who follow the Party, a stratum of proletarian revolutionaries.

The existence of this stratum makes itself felt in all the actions of the working class. This stratum of advanced workers is already so big and so strongly linked up with the masses that government persecution cannot destroy it. It should be counted as a tremendous historic achievement that there exist these thousands of advanced workers who are not Party members but who conduct the Party line among the masses.

Although the Party has now noted this isolation from the masses, this does not mean that the Party has no roots in the working class of South Africa. On the contrary, the mistakes of the Party and the distortions of its line, on the basis of converting it into a mass fighting proletarian Party, arose from its inexperience in leading the masses.

The essence of the position of the Party is that the unfavourable phenomena in the Party are the result of growth—difficulties of growth and maturing of a Communist movement which recognises its force and contacts with the masses. This is why the Party finds strength in itself to tell the workers openly of some of the mistakes which have partially led to isolation or may deepen it. Without giving way to panic, opposing everyone who tries to explain that the mistakes were made because the whole line of the Party was wrong and that we should not have been so energetic in the fight against the opportunists, the Party considers it an urgent task to point out its mistakes.

None of the members of the South African Party consider that circumstances in South Africa are unfavourable for the activity of the Party. On the contrary, all the decisions of the Party speak of the increasing suffering of the masses, the growth of the spontaneous resistances of the masses, strikes, etc.; this is the reason why the Government voted supplementary funds for the police and to replace the native police by white police. This is the reason for the unprecedented increase in the terror, but the terror is not against a broken revolutionary movement. No, the terror is trying to put a stop to the commencing upsurge of the revolutionary struggle of the masses.

The isolation of the Party from the masses did not take place because the masses had become less revolutionary while the Party remained in its old position. The Party has not learned sufficiently well that a struggle for the Party line means a constant attraction of new fighters for the Party line, for its slogans, an extension of the front of the struggle. Overcoming the opportunist tactics of the renegade **Bunting**, the Party took the path of mass revolutionary action against the imperialist slave system of South Africa. In the practice of the mass struggle the Party verified its slogans and its activity, and it was inevitable that this new and difficult path—but the only acceptable path for a revolutionary party—was marked with mistakes. These mistakes were not deliberate and can easily be put right. A guarantee for the rectification of the Party line is the fact that we already understand the causes which gave rise to the isolation. In the practice of the Party, mistakes have been found during the last year on such big key questions as:

1. The forms of the mass struggle and the slogan of the direct struggle of the masses for an independent native republic.
2. The united front of white and black workers, the work of the trade unions and in the trade unions.
3. The struggle against white chauvinism and national-reformism and their manifestations in the ranks of the Party, the trade unions and organisations near to the Party.

(To be continued.)