

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

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The End of the Trotskyist Opposition

THE decisions of the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the question of the Opposition, both with regard to principles and to organisation, mean the complete and final liquidation, objective and personal, of Trotskyism as a policy, although only partly legalised, in the ruling party of the country of proletarian dictatorship. The Opposition, which collected in the Party under Trotsky's banner, has already been completely defeated in its ideas by the Congress. Because of its tactics of despair and insanity, it suffered such a serious defeat that it entered the decisive struggle in a state of complete collapse. The alliance of Trotsky and Zinoviev, unprincipled both politically and in the matter of ideas, was itself the beginning of ideologic bankruptcy and effected a rapid propagandist shipwreck.

THAT Zinoviev and Kamenev hid themselves behind the banner of Trotskyism, which in three years of Party discussion they had themselves to a large extent attacked and torn, does not make it a good Leninist standard, but only enables the goods covered by that flag to appear more disgusting. The more impudent this united Opposition became in their propaganda against the Party, the more they exhausted their arguments; and the month of November witnessed the edifying spectacle of those who had demanded discussion, rushing, before that discussion had taken place, along the streets of Moscow and Leningrad, among the petty bourgeois spectators, in order, under their protection, to revile the most gigantic demonstration that this earth has ever witnessed. In respect of organisation, it was less the malicious dialectic of historical development than the actual character of the two leading groups of the Opposition that caused them to break apart just at the moment when they had succeeded in the illegal organisation of a second party.

Trotsky on the one hand and Zinoviev on the other succeeded in establishing between them the illegal second party, which was important from their point of view. At the same time they had also prepared for themselves within that party third and fourth parties, which, in a sense, were doubly illegal.

IN this manner they showed what they would have made of Lenin's Party if they had succeeded in winning the desired victory over the "Stalinist machine." Disorganised internally, and deserted in vast numbers by those who in these last weeks realised their error and recognised where they were being led, the Opposition, with great pain and trouble, brought forward a common declaration on December 3rd. But this last shabby remnant of a rotten solidarity vanished under the blows of the first Congress debate like spray before the wind. In the further development of the affair, the two groups of the Opposition went along different roads, and they disappeared in the sea of political death, not together, but one after the other, a death from which there is no possibility of their re-emergence as an opposition, as one or more groups, and from which as persons they can only slowly arise after a complete liberation from all the shackles of this oppositional interlude; a new life which must be earned by new work.

IF there is still need of a strengthening of the trust of the mass of the Party membership and the non-Party persons by whom this Congress was supported, that will be found in the fact that this Congress, which put an inglorious but richly deserved end to Trotskyism and thereby finished the long troubles and weakness of the Party, was one which was among the most fruitful in work. The discussions on the report of the Control Commission and the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection were the basis for a great deal of useful self-criticism in which no other party and no regime in the world could afford to indulge, and which finally contradicts the foolish petty bourgeois-democratic legend that the dictatorship and the existence of only **one** party and its press means the suspension of all criticism and control. The discussion on the Five Years' Economic Plan opposed to the anarchy of world capitalism, a picture of which was given by Bukharin in his report on the work of the delegation of the C.P.S.U. at the Executive of the Communist International, the growing systematic economy of constructive socialism, and the discussion on work in the villages unfolded the whole problem of the gradual drawing in of the peasant economy into the

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socialist economic plan and the transforming of agriculture from a private to a socialist economic basis. The socialist constructive work of the proletarian revolution was openly displayed to the whole world in full action. In connection with the reports of Stalin and Bukharin, a thorough discussion arose on all problems of the proletarian revolution, the destruction of the capitalist, and construction of the Socialist order of society. There were no insolent fanfares of triumph, there were no words of blind intoxication, but a relentless examination of all the weaknesses, mistakes and inadequacies.

NOTHING was more significant of the complete ideological bankruptcy of the Opposition than the fact that they took no part in this objective debate. It was here that their representatives should have proved the hopeless bureaucratisation of the whole Party, Soviet and economic machine, and should have made positive proposals for saving the revolution from this ruin. It was here that they should have proved how incorrect was the evaluation of the international position by the Party and by the Comintern, and what is the correct analysis of the world situation, and of what exactly the stagnation of the whole Comintern consists. It was here that they should have given the reasons for their pessimism with regard to the economic development of the Soviet Union, and given proof of "Kulakisation." To all these important questions the spokesmen of the Opposition had not one word to contribute; they made no attempt to justify in speech their platform and their theses, much less did they give any reason for the confused agitational verbiage of their illegal publications. It is true that the language in which they were accustomed to harangue the discontented, unproletarian and non-party elements, in order to stir them up against the Party, could not be used at the Congress, where an entirely different manner was necessary; and because of that they did not dare to make any attack. The Opposition silently acknowledged that they had already deprived themselves of the right to conduct a discussion within the Party, within the boundaries of its organisation and of Leninist argument. They had forgotten the language of the Party to which they had already become strangers.

Had not the leaders of the Opposition, long before the Party Congress, ceased to call the Party by its correct name? It was no accident that in the last internal discussions in which they participated before the Party Congress, they never referred to the Party as the Party, that in their remarks there never was a Communist Party mentioned, but only a Stalinist fraction and a Stalinist machine. That was no mere external matter, and no mere polemical slip of the tongue, but the external expression of an internal estrangement, ideologically miles away from the Party and from Leninism.

BESIDES this position of the leaders of the Opposition, the Party Congress had also to point out their personal failure and their personal liquidation. The incapacity to come to terms objectively with the Party, the impossibility of using the language of the last month of open struggle against the Party before the Party Congress, had to lead to that disgusting game

of lying, in which the spokesmen of the Opposition in their speeches and writings were so deeply entangled, that the Party Congress did not defeat them in battle, which would have left them at least a shred of honour, but practically shook them off in disgust. The same Oppositionists who had already firmly organised the second party, still called their completely hostile actions, their attacks against the legality of the Party and the Soviet Power—"Fractional Activity"—a word which has long become obsolete with regard to them and which, in these circumstances, has a ridiculously harmless sound. The same people who in their most recent announcements no longer recognised or referred to the Party as such now protested, with the most innocent air in the world, that no differences of principle separate them from the Party! It must sound like an insult when persons, for whom some months past there has not been a Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but only a "Kulakised regime of Stalin," refer to the same organisation for which they have so openly expressed their contempt, as "our Party" and as "the organisation of the advance guard of the proletariat," as they do so refer in their most recent collective declaration of December 3rd. And what did they do after the unanimous decision of the Congress, which characterised their opinions as un-Leninist, as Menshevik? Even then, when they were divided among themselves, they did not give up their ideas. The group led by Kamenev declared in its statement of December 10th, that it adhered to the idea so characterised by the Congress, and, after the Party Congress had declared that propaganda of these opinions and adherence to the Opposition were incompatible with membership of the Party, had the insolence to suggest that instead of each Communist yielding individually to the decisions of the Party, they should collectively declare their submission.

The effect of this complacent readiness to dissolve the fraction could only appear as a repulsively grotesque effort unbended to give the impression of negotiations between two powerful groups, since the Party had itself already decided this matter.

THE Trotskyist group added to everything else, in their declaration of the same date, the unheard-of provocation, of announcing the continued propagation of their views and of placing conditions on the recognition of the Party Congress decision which prohibited such propaganda. They declared that they would only recognise this decision as binding on them when they themselves are "convinced of the incorrectness of their ideas, of the incompatibility with the programme of the Party." Otherwise this prohibition is a "prohibition from fulfilling the most elementary duties in relation to the Party and to the working class." And after the decision concerning their exclusion from the Party, this group had the impudence to maintain, in their declaration of December 18th, that their exclusion was decided only because of their opinions, and that without them (without, that is, Radek and company), the Party would be unable to carry out its tasks. That was a provocation to which the Party Congress could only react by disregarding it altogether. It showed that this section of the Opposition has lost even the most elementary capacity to judge the matter and to find its own level. The Zinoviev group finally understood, on the last day of the Congress, that only the

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road of complete capitulation remained open to them, but the recognition and declaration of this came too late to have any effect at all on the situation. The unity of this group, manifested in a common declaration even at that late hour, showed that even these bankrupts had not yet grasped the fact that they could no longer exist as a group. It could only make it more regrettable that people, who were for many years members, yes, even leaders of the Bolshevist Party, had so completely lost all understanding of the methods of the Party and the capacity to find their way back to the Party. They will recapture this capacity, if at all, only very slowly.

THE liquidation of the Trotskyist Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was a wearisome process. It was not a rapid and radical operation. The Leninist leadership of the Party was following the correct course in doing that. It allowed the ulcer of Trotskyism in the Party to become ripe and so its final separation at this Party Congress occurred not violently and suddenly, but to a certain extent by means of self-withdrawal. This Party Congress no longer evinced any surprise; its actions and decisions with regard to the Opposition had long ago lost their sensational character, the whole affair seemed to be a matter of course. The debate on the Opposition and the resolution were like the removal of an obstacle, which lay in the way of the full development of the practical work of the Party. Trotskyism is a phenomenon of the last remnants of Menshevism in the C.P.S.U. That does not, of course, mean that its roots have also been exterminated. So long as there exist in the Soviet Union a bourgeoisie, a petty bourgeoisie, and sections of workers influenced by them, so long will a petty bourgeois ideology be scattered about here and there in the Party. But it no longer has any rallying point. With the settlement of the leaders of the Trotskyist Opposition, those commanding figures, still petty-bourgeois Menshevist in their personal character, have disappeared; whose vacillations and uncertainties, whose un-Bolshevistic personal ambition and desire for power could form rallying points for anti-Leninist opinions.

THE exclusion of Trotskyism from the C.P.S.U. must, of course, also result in the end of Trotskyism in the Comintern. There should no longer be any room in the Comintern and in its sections for the ideas which were branded by the Party Congress of the C.P.S.U. as Menshevist. The approaching grave crisis in the capitalist world, and the serious struggles which will result, in addition to the threatened war danger, will mean that decisions of serious consequence will have to be made by the Communist Parties. And because, in consequence of that, important discussions on all questions of tactics and principles will be necessary, an end must be made of all fractional activities, of all un-Communist elements, so that these essential analyses will be of use to the Parties. All sections of the Comintern will welcome the resolution passed by the Russian Party Congress on the report of comrade Bukharin, in which it says:

“The extraordinary complexity of the questions which confront the international proletariat demands absolute ideological unity and iron organi-

sational compactness in the ranks of the Comintern. . . . This Opposition [the Trotskyist] cannot be endured in the ranks of the Comintern. Our task is now to clear the Comintern completely of all anti-Communist elements which gather around the Trotskyist Opposition.”

This cleansing from Trotskyism is the prerequisite for a further Bolshevisation of the Comintern and for the freeing of its sections from all other un-Communist elements. The resolution of the Congress clearly states:

“In the last two years the Bolshevisation of the sections of the Comintern under the systematic leadership of the Executive Committee has, in spite of a few opportunist mistakes, made noteworthy progress. The Party Congress is convinced that the leadership of the Comintern ensures the further Bolshevisation of its ranks and their education in the spirit of Leninism. In this respect the Congress considers it particularly important to overcome all parliamentary illusions and traditions, to maintain the decisive struggle against opportunist deviations, and to strengthen and develop as much as possible work among the masses and in the trade unions.”

THERE must be a thorough clearing up of the question of the Trotskyist Opposition in all sections of the Comintern, in so far as this has not already taken place—and that is the case in many sections, particularly after the August Plenum of the Russian Central Committee, when many things were neglected which were only partially made up for after the rousing events of November. The Party membership should not only be informed as thoroughly as possible about the Russian Party Congress, but whole organisations must also decide their attitude to its decisions. No responsible Party officer should be allowed to leave the Party in doubt as to his position in this matter. Doubt and indecision in the membership of the Party must be wiped out by thorough explanations. All those comrades, particularly the proletarian elements in the Parties, who are at bottom quite sound, and only affected by Trotskyism in its pseudo-left variation, must have their doubts overcome and their way back to the ranks of Leninism made as easy as possible. But there can no longer be any place in the Comintern for those who persist in the ideas of Trotskyism, even though they are disguised as “Left,” and who only cease their propaganda as a temporary precaution. The leaders of Trotskyism in Russia may, after their exclusion from the Comintern, continue to occupy themselves as international rag-pickers, gathering together all the waste cleared out of the Comintern. They will finally land all together in the barns of the Second International.

*The Weekly Paper for All
Communists*

WORKERS' LIFE

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N.W.1

The Situation in Ireland

Seamus Collins

The International Importance of Ireland

BEFORE we try to analyse the present situation in Ireland and the Irish revolutionary forces of to-day, it is necessary to say a few words on the importance of Ireland internationally and especially on the importance of Ireland within the so-called British Commonwealth.

From 700 years of struggle against British imperialism in Ireland, we know that always, when Great Britain was involved in war, Ireland's sympathy was with the enemies of Great Britain and also that the enemies of Great Britain always tried to utilise Ireland against England. Besides this we know that revolutions in other countries always find a great response in Ireland. It is said of the Irish struggle for national freedom that each generation of the Irish people has seen one armed insurrection against British imperialism. All these insurrections in some way have been connected with or inspired by simultaneous risings abroad.

Another fact of international importance is that British misrule and suppression in Ireland through centuries has forced millions and millions of Irishmen to emigrate from their native land. All over the British Commonwealth and in the U.S.A. you will find the Irish race scattered. In Great Britain there are four million inhabitants of Irish birth or of Irish extraction, in the U.S.A. 20 millions, as well as a great number in Australia and Canada. In English towns (as, for instance, Liverpool and Manchester), the number of Irish people amounts to a considerable percentage of the total population. The largest Irish daily newspaper is published in the U.S.A. The Irish national associations in the U.S.A. and in Australia are the main financial resources for the fight of the Irish Republican Parties against British imperialism.

In this connection it may be worth while to mention the difference in the international position of Ireland to-day and during the last world war. During the world war the Republican forces proclaimed neutrality but were anxious to get help from Germany and the U.S.A. against Great Britain. During the last few months an interesting discussion has taken place between the Republican newspaper "The Nation" and the official organ of the Labour Party "The Irishman" on the war problem. The "Nation" declares that in case of a war between Great Britain and the U.S.A. Ireland should not fight against the U.S.A. The leader of the Labour Party, Mr. Johnson, on the other hand, declares that it would be impossible for Ireland to maintain neutrality, because Ireland, through Article 7 of the Irish Free State Constitution, is obliged to participate in war on the side of Great Britain. The U.S.A. at all events realises the tremendous importance, politically and strategically, of Ireland, and it is the only country which up to this date has placed a diplomatic ambassador in the Irish Free State. A war between Great Britain and the U.S.A. will certainly be the signal of a tremendous revival of the Republican movement in Ireland.

It is not sure that a war between Great Britain and the Soviet Union will have the same effect. First of all we must remember that one of the greatest enemies of Bolshevism, the Roman Catholic Church, completely controls not only the bourgeoisie, but also the souls of the workers and poor peasants. Besides this, we have to admit that the revolutionary working class movement is in a very weak state. Ireland is perhaps the only European country where not a single Communist book or pamphlet has been published since the revolution in 1917.

The Present State of the Irish Republican Movement

It is impossible to compare Ireland with any other European country. The situation in Ireland is more like the situation in China, than in any other European country. As in China, so in Ireland you have a Northern and a Southern Government. The difference is that both the Irish Governments are tools in the hands of British imperialism. The Southern Government has been in power continuously for five years, since the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. The Irish Free State consists of 26 counties, mainly agricultural: Ulster consists of 6 counties, of a more industrial character. During these five years, two of the ministers of the Free State Government have been killed and one is supposed to have died of fear. The last killing took place on the 10th of July, 1927. The Cosgrave Government of the Free State has ruled by the gun, the police-baton, and the prison, just in the same way as the former British Governments in Ireland. And all the members of the Government know that as soon as they are out of office their lives will be in immediate danger. These former Republicans answered the opposition against the Treaty in 1921 with two years of terrible civil war. The killing of the Minister of Justice, Kevin O'Higgins last year was answered by three new coercion laws with the purpose of smashing the Republican parties and the illegal Republican army and establishing an uncontrolled dictatorship, more reckless than the rule of any British Government.

There are two main reasons for the existence of this Mussolinism in Ireland. First of all, the split and confusion in the ranks of the Republicans. The right wing of the Sinn Fein Party broke away in 1926 and formed a new Party, Fianna Fail, under the leadership of Mr. De Valera. After the general elections in June, 1927, the position in the Dail was such that the Republicans and Labour might have driven the Government out of office, but they did not do so. The Republicans maintained, as they had done for the last five years, the policy of abstention from the Free State Dail as the Sinn Fein Party did from the British House of Commons, without realising that a new situation makes a new tactic unavoidable.

At the very moment when the Government threatened to drive the Republicans out of public life into illegality through the Public Safety Act the Fianna

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Fail deputies entered the Dail, but as the die-hards of the Sinn Fein Party did not follow their example, the Cosgrave Government was saved by the famous vote, 71 against 71, through the absence of the Lord Mayor of Sligo, Mr. Jinks, of the National League.

The next step of the Government was the rushing of the new general elections which took place in September of last year, the result of which was a majority of six for the Government.

The Irish Labour Party

The second reason for the existence of the capitalist dictatorship in the Irish Free State, is the Irish Labour Party, under the leadership of Mr. Thomas Johnson and Mr. William O'Brien. If the Government, which was formed in 1922, after the signing of the Treaty, had been left alone, its fate would have been sealed rapidly. But the leaders of the Irish Labour Party immediately recognised the constitution and the sham government and thus made it possible for the tools of British imperialism in Ireland to maintain a sort of authority as a national government. After the killing of Mr. O'Higgins, Mr. Johnson offered Mr. Cosgrave to enter into a coalition government in order to save the State against the criminal Republican forces who were supposed to be responsible for the killing. These facts only are sufficient to prove that the leaders of the Irish Labour Party belong to the most yellow elements of the Yellow International. Mr. Johnson's offer was not accepted by the Cosgrave Government. But a few weeks later, after the entrance of the Fianna Fail deputies into the Dail, Mr. Johnson made an agreement with Fianna Fail and the Conservative National League, with the purpose of forming a Labour Government, the main task of which should be to save the State and not initiate any Labour legislation. Only the fatal absence of Mr. Jinks prevented Mr. Johnson from fulfilling this glorious task, as the Prime Minister of the Irish Free State.

The Irish Labour Party, which once stood for a socialist Irish Workers' Republic, to-day has exposed itself as an opportunist, anti-national, liberal-bourgeois party. Instead of socialism and class struggle they advocate collaboration with the capitalist class, politically and industrially. The Irish working class up to this day has had no representative in the Irish Free State Parliamentary institution.

The Reorganisation of the Irish Workers' League

A peculiar feature of Irish life is the tendency to splits and to factional fights in every movement. The people are divided into different camps geographically, in religion, and politically. No wonder that the left wing of the Labour movement is also split.

We have the so-called "Workers' Party of Ireland," under the leadership of such petty bourgeois elements as Mr. McCabe, Mrs. Despard and Madame MacBride. They publish a paper of their own, the "Workers' Republic." From the April, 1927, issue of this paper, you will see that they reprint the resolution of the E.C.C.I. on the Irish question of the 7th of January, 1927. In this resolution, the E.C.C.I. declares

that the Comintern only recognises the Irish Workers' League as the section of the Comintern in Ireland, demands the dissolution of the Workers' Party of Ireland and the transformation of the Irish Workers' League from a merely propaganda organisation to a real political party.

The Workers' Party of Ireland refused to accept this decision on the ground that the Irish Workers' League had not been in existence for the last two years. Accordingly they continued their activities as a "Communist" Party. Who are they? The Workers' Party of Ireland is a curious little crowd of a few dozen people without any political influence, and without any following among the masses of the workers.

On the other hand, we have to admit that the Irish Workers' League has shown regrettable lack of activity. Six months after the passing of the resolution of the E.C.C.I., almost nothing had been done in order to realise the decisions of the C.I. At the end of July, however, just at the moment when the Irish Trades Union Congress assembled in Dublin, the Irish Workers' League called a mass meeting in order to discuss the question of establishing a united front of all Labour forces against the new coercive Bills of the Free State Government. All trade union members and officials and all Labour deputies in the Dail were invited. The Government proclaimed the meeting but in spite of that it was held outside the Unity Hall, attended by thousands of workers. From this meeting a deputation was sent to the leader of the Fianna Fail party demanding him to call a conference of all anti-government parties and organisations in order to create a united front against the Government.

The conference suggested was called by De Valera, but, besides the Fianna Fail representatives, only the representatives of the Irish Workers' League and the Workers' Union of Ireland appeared, and the conference therefore was not able to start any work. De Valera, however, finally had found the opportunity which he had been longing for. He opened negotiations with the representatives of the Labour Party and the National League in order to form a parliamentary bloc against the Government. He succeeded, and the Fianna Fail deputies took the oath to the British King and entered the Dail. By this step, an end was put to five years of sterile abstention. A new stage of political development in Ireland started.

The anti-government bloc did not—as already mentioned—succeed in throwing the Government out of office, and as soon as Cosgrave had got the majority necessary for the dissolution of the Dail, the Government decided to rush the country into a new general election within three weeks, hoping that the miserable financial state of the other parties, the funds of which were exhausted through the general elections in June, would make it possible for the Government to gain a safe majority.

The First Electoral Campaign of the I.W.L.

The general election confronted the E.C. of the Irish Workers' League with the problem of fighting the election as a political party. The task was a difficult one as the League was without local organisations, without programme, a paper, finances or headquarters. The I.W.L., however, decided to take the field. The first step in that direction was the adoption of the programme

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and rules on the 31st of August. The principal programme was fixed in the following terms:

Aims. The establishment of a Workers' Republic in Ireland, based upon the public ownership of the land and industrial capital of the country.

Means. 1. The establishment of a workers' party based upon the principles of the class struggle, embracing the industrial workers, agricultural labourers and peasants of Ireland, in association with the revolutionary workers' parties of other countries.

2. The abolition of the parliamentary constitution of the Free State and of the Six Counties of Northern Ireland, and the substitution of a workers' constitution for the whole of Ireland which shall safeguard the lives, liberties and properties of the working class and working farmers.

3. Repudiation of the so-called National Debt, and of all payments, annual or otherwise, to the British Government.

4. Nationalisation of all industries, banks, transport and distributive services. The co-ordination of all resources towards the economic reconstruction of the country. Public ownership and control of all electrification schemes. Public ownership and control of all ports and the establishment of a national mercantile marine service.

5. Nationalisation of the land for the use of the agricultural workers and poor farmers in the general interest of the nation.

6. Demobilisation of the standing army of the Free State and the Special Constabulary of the Northern Government, and the replacement thereof by a workers' and peasants' army based on voluntary service.

7. State monopoly of foreign trade. Formation of alliances with other workers' republics.

On the clear national and Communist platform of this programme, three candidates were nominated: Jim Larkin in Dublin City North; John Lawlor in Dublin City South; and Jim Larkin, Jr., in Dublin County. A fortnight of exciting electoral campaign followed. The leaders of the official Labour Party were furious. On the day of the nomination of Jim Larkin, they tried to get him disqualified by the Sheriff as an undischarged bankrupt. During the campaign they tried to compromise him by publishing a poster with a copy of a forged birth attestation in order to prove that Larkin was not an Irishman but an Englishman born in Liverpool. After the elections they again tried to get him disqualified in order to prevent him from taking his seat in the Dail.

The result of the elections was better than anybody had expected. In the three constituencies, where the I.W.L. ran candidates, we got 12,500 votes, 3,500 more than the official Labour Party candidates in the same constituencies. The parliamentary leader of the Labour Party, Mr. Thomas Johnson, was defeated and comrade James Larkin elected with more than 7,000 votes.

The number of the Labour Party deputies dropped from 22 to 12, all their Dublin leaders being defeated. The capitalist and Republican press completely agreed in regretting the defeat of Mr. Johnson, the "respected and honoured statesman."

The Tactic of the I.W.L.

During the election campaign the "Workers' Republic," the organ of the margarine Communists of the "Workers' Party of Ireland" did not mention the nomination of the Irish Workers' League candidates or its programme by a single word. The paper advised the workers to vote No. 1, for the Labour Party traitors and No. 2, for Fianna Fail.

The Irish Workers' League regarded it as the most essential issue of the elections to create a united anti-imperialist front and accordingly advised the workers to vote No. 1 for the candidates of the I.W.L., and No. 2, Fianna Fail, considering the fact that the Labour Party was not a national anti-imperialist party.

Unfortunately, the British Communist Party advocated another tactic. In a political statement on the Irish elections it advised the Irish workers and peasants to vote No. 1, for the I.W.L., No. 2, for Labour and No. 3, for Fianna Fail. The British comrades published this advice without consulting the I.W.L. and the result was very unfortunate.

The official Labour Party, of course, used the position of the British comrades to prove the political stupidity of the I.W.L. And also the would-be Communists of the Workers' Party of Ireland used the opportunity to make an attack on the League. In an article in the October issue of the "Workers' Republic" they declared:

"The policy of the Communist International in every country in the world is to advocate and put into force the united front of Labour. In every country this policy is carried out except in Ireland. The weakness and treachery of the Labour leaders are everywhere exposed, nevertheless they are supported as the nominees of the organised workers at election time. The principle of all sections of Labour against the capitalist class is practised on each and every occasion except in Ireland. There is no country in the world where the policy of the united front is more correct and necessary than in Ireland. But because James Larkin is more concerned about denouncing the Labour leaders and anyone else who disagrees with him, than about fighting the Irish capitalist imperialists, there is no attempt at putting the united front policy into effect here."

This attack is certainly due to a mechanical transfer of the position of the British Communist Party towards the British Labour Party, to Ireland.

This difference of opinion of two sections of the C.I., however, is bound to make an unfavourable impression on the enemies of the C.I. Thus we see in the "Socialist Standard," the organ of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, another attack on the tactics of the I.W.L. in an article under the heading "More Communist Trickery." From this article we quote the conclusion:

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"If, therefore, any unfortunate Irish worker listened to his Communist advisers, he would have been told (1) by Larkin, to vote for him and for the capitalist Republicans, (De Valera), and to help smash Johnson; (2) by the Irish Workers' Party to vote for Larkin, for Johnson, for the National League, for De Valera, and lastly for the Cosgrave (Government) Party; (3) by Saklatvala and company, to vote for Larkin and the Labour candidates, although Larkin's party and the Labour Party are alleged by Larkin to be irreconcilable enemies, and although they themselves know the Irish Labour Party to be Liberal pure and simple.

"This is what they call practical policies!"

It is up to the C.I. to decide which tactic is the correct one. If the I.W.L. is wrong, we will correct our mistake, if we are right, the British comrades must openly do the same.*

The Relations between the British and Irish Sections of the C.I.

In this connection, a few remarks on the relations between the British Communist Party and the Irish Workers' League are necessary. It is clear that as the fate of the Irish working class and the British working class are closely dependent on each other, it is of great importance that the relations between the British Communist Party and the Irish Workers' League shall be harmonious. One of the first conditions is that the comrades in the British Party realise that the I.W.L. is the only section of the C.I. in Ireland, and that they definitely break off every connection with the petty bourgeois elements in the Workers' Party of Ireland.

What happened during the election campaign? According to an agreement which was very much appreciated by the Irish Workers' League, the British Party opened the "Workers' Life" for our propaganda because the I.W.L. was without a paper of its own. The "Sunday Worker" did the same and also sent a correspondent to Dublin but our surprise and disappointment was profound when we opened the next issue of the "Sunday Worker": the whole front page was filled up by interviews with two of the leaders of the Workers' Party, Mrs. Despard and Madame MacBride. One of these ladies told the correspondent the amusing news that there was going to be a split in the Fianna Fail Party and that half of its members would join the Workers' Party of Ireland, because they were dissatisfied with the Fianna Fail and wished for a Workers' Republic.

Before leaving this chapter, it may be useful to mention another fact. The I.W.L. regards it as a main political task to expose the traitorous character of the official Labour Party and tell the workers and peasants what the difference is between reformist and revolution-

ary policy. In Belfast comrade Saklatvala of the British Party recently made a speech which makes it difficult to carry on the propaganda of exposure by the I.W.L. Comrade Saklatvala at a public meeting in Belfast declared: that

"Communists and Socialists did not differ if they were honest with one another. They were all agreed—Communists, Socialists, Labourites and the Co-operative Party."

Things such as these are not improving the relations between the British and the Irish comrades. A change is bound to take place in the interest of the working class of the two countries and of the C.I.

The Task of the Future

The future of Ireland depends on the following questions; Shall Ireland remain as a Dominion under the British Empire; or shall the Republicans succeed by the help of the U.S.A. in securing for Ireland the position of a capitalist republic; or shall the workers and peasants succeed, with the support of the revolutionary workers, in realising the old dream of a Workers' Republic of Ireland?

The official Labour Party will never win the majority of the workers. It is a Liberal party linked up with British imperialism and unable to complete with the national Liberal party, the Fianna Fail.

To-day, Fianna Fail has the support of the majority of the workers and poor farmers, mainly because they have a clear national programme, but also because they promise work for the unemployed and release for the debt-bound poor peasants.

De Valera himself declares that he stands on the platform of James Connolly and Padraic Pearse: accordingly he should be out for a Workers' Republic. But as a good Roman Catholic, the utmost limit of his working class policy will be the so-called co-operative commonwealth, which means maintenance of private property and co-operation between capitalists and workers. During the election campaign he also declared that the standard of living was too high in Ireland, the people had to learn to use a "simpler, cheaper food!" The starving unemployed, the unhappy inhabitants of the Dublin slums and the poor peasants in the country certainly will not appreciate the kind of Workers' Republic which De Valera is out for.

If the Fianna Fail Party succeeds in defeating the present Government and takes over the rule of Ireland itself, they certainly will expose themselves as helpless petty bourgeois politicians incapable of leading the workers and peasants out of slavery and misery. Under these circumstances a revolutionary Workers' Party should have tremendous opportunities and would be able to rally the working masses, who now follow the Fianna Fail and the Republican army, and organise them for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishing of national freedom of Ireland.

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* The E.C.C.I. has already made a decision concerning the dispute about the tactics adopted during the Irish elections. This decision is to the effect that the conception of the Irish Workers' League has been endorsed as the only correct tactic under the existing conditions in Ireland.—The Editor.

Developments in the Political Situation in India

G. A. K. Luhani

(Continued from last issue.)

Character of the Political Issue

THE process of "de-colonisation" naturally introduces a change in the character of the political issue before the national movement in India, so far as the various social classes are concerned. The various social classes participating in the national movement must and do differ as to its ultimate issue. Capitalism is sufficiently developed in India for there to exist a certain differentiation in the ranks of the Indian bourgeoisie.

There are bourgeois elements who have not made up their mind as to whether they are for or against British imperialism. But the upper bourgeoisie has, however, definitely gone over to the side of British imperialism. It means that they have come to a tacit agreement as to the joint exploitation of the masses of India, although it does not, however, mean that there does not exist any contradiction of interests between them.

There is a certain duality in the present policy of the imperial government: on the one hand to develop India capitalistically, and on the other hand, to retain control of the process in its own hands. In other words the policy is to give the widest possible elbow room to Indian capital to develop itself, but within the framework of the British Empire. Practically it means in the actual circumstances, an inevitable strengthening of the native capitalist class on the one hand, and an equally inevitable brake on its development on the other hand. From this springs the fundamental contradiction.

On the other hand, to the other classes, now subject to a more intensified process of double exploitation, the issue of the national struggle is becoming more and more synonymous with the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism, while for the bourgeoisie the issue is one which evidently admits of solution by way of accommodation and compromise with the imperialist interests. We thus find the political characteristics of the present situation in India to be (a) active negotiation between the Indian bourgeoisie and the imperial government in view of the Royal Commission on Constitutional Reform; (b) the consequent reformist degeneration of the national movement under the leadership of the bourgeois political parties; (c) a move towards leadership of the national revolutionary struggle by the proletariat, and (d) the increasing revolutionisation of the petty bourgeois, intellectual, proletarian and peasant masses.

The Indian National Congress

To illustrate these general lines of development in Indian politics, we shall make a rapid survey first of all of the activities of the Indian National Congress during

the period under review. This body which meets ordinarily once a year is not the highest organ of any one party, but of the whole national movement, as it has developed up till now since 1880. As such, it has become a federation of the various nationalist parties, with the exception of the parties of the extreme Right or reactionary groups.

From 1921 onwards, the Congress has gradually moved towards the Right. At its session of 1925, at Cawnpur, it still retained some vestige of the earlier revolution orientation of 1919-20 when the masses were ready to change from "non-co-operation" with to active resistance against the imperial government. The Cawnpur programme did not formally discard the policy of mass action as the final means for the realisation of the aim of the national struggle, though the aim itself of the national struggle, so far as the Congress was concerned, had by then become tacitly synonymous with "Dominion Status."

The last plenary session of the Congress was held at Gauhati in December, 1926, and its decisions govern the policy and general line of work during the present year. These decisions constitute a further climb-down from the verbally revolutionary position of the Cawnpur programme and in fact a preparation for the full-blooded reformism of the Congress leadership during the present period. In the principal resolution adopted at Gauhati, there was talk of "a determined resistance to every activity, governmental or otherwise, that may impede the nation's progress towards Swaraj (self-government)". It was also resolved that the Congress Party (formerly the Swaraj Party) in the Legislatures should "refuse to accept ministership or other offices in the gift of the Government" and "oppose the formation of ministries by other parties until in the opinion of the Congress or the All-India Congress Committee, a satisfactory response is made by the Government to the national demand." But, on the other hand, the principle of co-operation with the imperial government was admitted in as much as the Congress Party was authorised to "move (in the Legislatures) resolutions and introduce and support measures and bills which are necessary for the healthy growth of national life and the advancement of the economic, agricultural, industrial and commercial interests of the country. . . ."

The president of the Gauhati session, Srinivas Lyengar, in his scheme of future Swaraj demanded "control over the army and the navy" as the furthest encroachment he could think of in the position of the imperial government; but he specifically left the control over "foreign relations with other countries" in its hands. At the same time the Congress rejected by a heavy majority a resolution demanding "the complete independence of India," though the resolution had had the support of two provincial organisations of the Congress, and was pressed by the Left rank and file.

The Right Wing of the Congress—organised as the

Situation in India—continued

"Responsivist Party"—had no difficulty in interpreting the Congress decisions as being a mandate for their own policy of closer co-operation with the imperial government on the basis and character of the latter's "response" (hence the name of the Party—"Responsivist"). The imperialists themselves noted that—

"sooner or later the Swaraj (Congress) Party will have to come into line with the Responsive Co-operators, the Independents, Moderates and others who want to work the Constitution, and although the journey of the Party from non-co-operation to co-operation may take some time and will be camouflaged as much as possible, nevertheless it must in the end be accomplished."
—(The "Round Table," March, 1927.)

To leave no doubt at all, Srinivas Lyengar himself admitted at the close of the legislative session at Delhi early this year that the Gauhati programme

"so far from sanctioning any extreme policy of obstruction or non-co-operation, commanded the members to co-operate with the Government in all matters of national improvement."

The sort of "improvement" of the "nation" which the Congress president had in mind was simply the advancement of the Indian bourgeoisie, as is amply shown by the legislative activities of the Congress Party.

Even the less ambiguous part of the Gauhati programme was very soon very flagrantly flouted in the province of Madras. In Madras, as it happened, it was possible for the Congress Party to offer "determined resistance" to the Government, because alone among the Provinces, Madras had returned a clear majority to the Local Legislative Council in the General Elections at the end of 1926. For some time, the temptation was very strong for some of the more opportunist leaders of the Madras Congress Party to "accept ministership or other offices in the gift of the Government," but the categorical prohibition of the Gauhati programme stood in the way. What the Party actually did flatly contradicted another and, no less important, part of the Gauhati programme. Instead of "opposing the formation of ministries by other parties," it allowed the frankly reformist Independent Party to take ministerial office, though there had been no "response," "satisfactory," or otherwise, "made by the Government to the national demand." There is a still more significant side of the Madras episode. At the May Plenum held at Bombay, of the All-India Congress Committee, the official leadership of the Congress seemed for a moment to bend its head before the storm of protest of the rank and file over the Madras "betrayal," only immediately afterwards to retrieve its position by passing a resolution in the Working Committee, completely exonerating the Madras Congressists and giving their action the official approval of the Congress. The Working Committee proceeded further to modify the Gauhati programme to suit the Madras experience.

In the Central Legislative Assembly at Delhi, the Congress Party, disposing of a substantial voting strength of 40 in a membership of 145, did not purposely press the "National Demand"—as was implied by the Gauhati programme and as was indeed the prac-

tice with the defunct Swaraj Party. This was for two reasons. In the first place, on account of the actual state of conflict between the Hindu and the Moslem, there was no agreement possible for the "National Demand." In the second place, it was intended to leave the door open for informal negotiations with the imperial government in view of the Royal Commission for the revision of the Constitution. The imperial government on its side has been watching with "relief" and "joy" the progressive detachment of the Congress from the masses. It has, however, demanded through the mouth of Lord Birkenhead still less "intransigence" and more consistent signs of "co-operation" before the demand for an extension of Swaraj in the direction of Dominion Status could be entertained.

The political significance of the May Plenum of the A.I.C.C. lay in the barely-concealed readiness of the Right leadership of the Congress to fall into line with the requisitions of the imperial government. The resolutions voted at the Bombay meeting were indeed meant to be a gesture of rapprochement such as Lord Birkenhead had been insisting upon.

The principal resolution was widely advertised as having solved the problem of the chronic antagonism between the Hindu and the Moslem which expresses itself in a series of bloody riots throughout India. What the resolution actually occupied itself with was "the future scheme of constitution"; in other words, the Royal Commission on Constitutional Reform. The resolution made certain concessions to the reactionary Moslem bourgeoisie in the matter of franchise and representation, with a view to secure their support for the proposals of constitutional revision which the Congress intends to put forward as "the national demand." In the very next resolution, the A.I.C.C. called upon its working committee "to frame a Swaraj constitution for India . . . with a view to its adoption to the Congress at its next session" (in December, 1927).

The intention is clear in spite of the dementi of the Congress leaders—a dementi which they were forced to make in face of the indignation of the Left rank and file.

Indian Bourgeoisie and British Imperialism

The policy of compromise with imperialism which the Indian bourgeoisie is following was concretely illustrated in the activities of its political parties in the legislatures. If the task of British imperialism in the present period has been to consolidate its financial control over the whole economy of India, it has indeed succeeded very well with the active help and the connivance of the various bourgeois parties. The Finance Bill of the Government of India was passed. In return for protection for the Indian steel industry, the principle of "imperial preference" was accepted by the Legislative Assembly. On the question of protection of the Indian textile industry, after a great deal of agitation and threats on both sides, a compromise has recently been reached. The question of the Federal Reserve Bank for India is being still discussed between the representatives of the imperial government and those of Indian capital, Indian representation on the directorate of the Bank remaining as the only contentious point.

A reformist bourgeoisie seeking an alliance with

Situation in India—continued

imperialism on the basis of class interest is bound to play an objectively counter-revolutionary role in the development of the national revolutionary struggle under the stress of the action of the exploited masses. It is evident that the upper strata of the bourgeoisie are prepared to play such a role. Already they closely identify themselves with the imperial government in the name of "law and order" whenever the industrial action of the proletariat and the discontent of the peasantry threaten their vested interest. But more recent evidences show that the Indian bourgeoisie, in logical development of its class affiliation, may not confine its counter-revolutionary role within India; it may extend its alliance with imperialist reaction on an international scale.

The occasion for an anticipatory expression of this tendency is furnished by the latest phase of the international situation. The Conservative Government in England is taking a leading part in preparing war against the U.S.S.R. on an international scale. The many-millioned rank and file of the national movement in India would unmistakably be on the side of the U.S.S.R., when the Anglo-Soviet conflict breaks out as military intervention. Their sense of solidarity with the U.S.S.R. is at once a provocation and an embarrassment for the war policy of British imperialism. But, by the side of this, we have a not inconsiderable section of the Indian bourgeoisie which has with ominous and instinctive haste seized upon the occasion of the British pre-occupation of war against the U.S.S.R. for a further development of its bargaining policy with British imperialism.

In the issue for July 7, 1927 of "The People" (of Lahore) the organ of the reactionary bourgeoisie in North India and edited by Lajpat Rai, a well-known Nationalist leader, we read:

"If Afghanistan makes a common cause with Russia in a conflict against Britain, it will not be easy for the British to cope with the situation The best way to defend India is to arm the people of India to undertake the work of national defence. Will the British authorities change their military and administrative policy towards India in such a way, that the people may genuinely feel that it would be to their advantage to make a common cause with Great Britain in case of an Anglo-Russian conflict on the Indian frontier?"

The underlying train of thought in the foregoing quotation is not an accidental outburst confined to one journal. It is more elaborately developed in a long article entitled "Anglo-Russian Contest—Where does India Stand?" published in "Forward" of Calcutta (1-7-27), one of the official organs of the Congress. The writer of the article, a widely-read Indian journalist examines the British "bid for German and Japanese support" for war against the U.S.S.R., and comes to the following conclusion:

"It is very doubtful that a Russo-British conflict can be averted in the future; and in that crisis, Britain will have to depend upon India for the very existence of the Empire. British statesmen may well analyse for themselves, if it would be to the best interest of India to sacrifice her

man-power, economic interests just to serve Great Britain. It may be well for the Indian statesmen to enquire from British statesmen if the latter are willing to pay the price of Indian support in international politics. The least consideration that any self-respecting Indian statesmen can demand is that the humiliating conclusion of the last Imperial Conference, in which India has been placed inferior to all the so-called White dominions, be wiped out by immediate granting of full dominion status to India. Are the Indian statesmen aware of the potentiality of securing this concession, if they are united enough to make an effective demand, through vigorous participation in world politics?"

"Forward" itself, in its earlier comments on the Anglo-Soviet conflict, did not seem to be aware of this aspect of the question, condemned the British policy of war and hailed the U.S.S.R. as the hope of the oppressed peoples of the East. Now, however, it strikes another tune, evidently inspired by the writer of the quoted article. In its editorial comments, in its issues of the 5th and 9th July, 1927, it says:

"A fraudulent constitution is certainly not best calculated to inspire that patriotism in Indian hearts so essential for making them feel that attack by Russia or any other Power on the British Empire in India is an attack on their own Motherland.

"The best solution of the Russian problem does not lie in the policy of 'offensive forward spring' No wonder, the problem of the defence of India is becoming more and more complicated. As long as the problem of defence of India is, in its last analysis, found to be synonymous only with the safeguarding of the commercial interests of Britain in India and the perpetuation of the bureaucratic system of rule, the mercenary troops will be the only pillar of the British Empire."

"Left" Nationalism of the Petty Bourgeoisie and Intelligentsia

As against this sinister tendency of the bourgeoisie,—"born and brought up in the lap of British imperialism"—to rush headlong to counter-revolution, we have, within the official national movement, the lower middle class, the petty bourgeoisie, and the intelligentsia who are seeing their economic situation worsening in the wake of the Congress policy of more and more open compromise with British capitalist interests. They form the vast majority of the rank and file of the Congress. Their discontent with the Congress leadership has driven them to form a Left wing. Within the Congress they are the partisans of the policy of "complete independence," and consequently the policy of war à outrance against British imperialism. Their evolution as a political force is recent. But they have been able already on several occasions to arrest a too rapid overwhelming of the Congress by the representatives of the bourgeois interests. At the time of the Gauhati Congress, they achieved a political expression, denied to them on the Congress platform, by assembling in a "Political Sufferers' Conference" where they put before the country a clearer formulation of the revolutionary

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character of the national struggle. In the Provincial Congress organisations, their influence is considerable. During the last months at the provincial conferences of congress local committees, namely, at Kerala and East Godavari in the province of Madras, they have repeated their demand for "complete independence," and for the old Gandhist formula of "civil disobedience." In Bengal they have been particularly strong, but their organisation has been greatly weakened since 1924 by the operation of the "Bengal Ordinance Act" under which the most prominent of the leaders to the number of about 140 are in prison in conditions of indescribable brutality.

The discontent of the Left wing has found a more concrete and a characteristic expression in the "republican movement" at Nagpur in the central provinces. Starting with the slogan of "Release the Bengal Prisoners," the City Congress Committee of Nagpur revived the method of 1920-21 in offering "civil disobedience" to the local authorities of the imperial government. The particular law which they "disobeyed" was characteristically chosen. It was the "Arms Act" under which the carrying of arms by Indians is prohibited. A considerable number of volunteers would march through the streets of Nagpur carrying swords and defying the police to arrest them. A "republican army" was finally formed with the slogan of freeing India from British control. The movement had begun to receive a large amount of mass support and to spread to other centres, when the government authorities arrested the leaders and momentarily succeeded in putting a stop to it. At the May Plenum of the A.I.C.C., the Left wing proposed a resolution committing the Congress to the support of the Nagpur republicans. The resolution was shelved and the A.I.C.C. very hastily washed its hands of the Nagpur affair by appointing a commission of enquiry.

The Nagpur revolt is a symptom that the Left wing is groping for a way out of the impasse in which the national movement has been brought by the bourgeois leadership. At the same time, the Nagpur revolt and other political essays of the Left wing show the defects of its mentality and organisation. On the one hand it is not yet free from the domination of the social-reactionary Gandhist ideology, on the other hand it carries with it the anarchical tradition of the terrorist past of some of its elements. The social classes comprising the Left wing are destined yet to play a considerable revolutionary role. But in its capacity for organisation and concerted political action, the Left wing has grievously failed. It has failed in some cases to rise above the feudal issues of the Hindu-Moslem religious conflict. The causes to which this failure is due can be eliminated by a closer contact with the masses and a more thorough and more intimate identification with the class interests of the industrial proletariat and the oppressed peasantry.

Industrial Proletariat and Peasantry

The most interesting fact of the present situation is that this approach to the masses is at long last taking place.

The 2½ million of industrial workers in India are not all organised in trade unions. The existing trade

unions cannot represent more than one-fourth of this number. The All-Indian Trade Union Congress which unites about 54 trade unions does not thus speak for all the organised workers. Moreover, the A.I.T.U.C. is under the leadership of the reformist bourgeoisie, as also most of the bigger unions. Furthermore, both the Indian capitalists and the British Government meet the industrial action of the organised workers with severe and bloody repression. In spite of these characteristic handicaps, the trade union movement in India registers continued progress, and the organised workers show a capacity for initiative far in advance of their backward condition, but quite in keeping with the intense degree of exploitation to which they are increasingly subjected. Small strikes are a permanent feature of the industrial life of the country. Larger strikes in the big industrial centres have been numerous. In the beginning of last year the strike of railwaymen on the Bengal-Nagpur railway brought out 20,000 men. The strike was declared at the initiative of the workers and was repressed by the armed forces of the British Government and the interested intervention of the bourgeoisie. The strike did not end to the satisfaction of the workers. But they showed, as usual in Indian strikes, great solidarity, endurance and courage. Most remarkable of all, at the end of the strike they took steps to remove from the trade union executive committee the leaders who had been lukewarm and betrayed their interests. In the more recent case of the strike of the oil workers in Madras, there was better organisation, and by the threat of a general strike in the city of Madras, the workers gained a complete victory.

These strikes and the still larger strikes during the last two or three years have given a practical training in class struggle to the young proletariat of India. That the industrial workers of India are already a big political factor is recognised by the Indian bourgeoisie, the British Government and even by the Second International, which latter has been trying, for some time past to form a Labour Party in India. The Indian capitalist class is genuinely alarmed at the growth of the Labour movement; it would have none of these "Western quarrels between capital and labour in our country." The nationalist press shows its repeated anxiety "to avoid a class struggle in this country." The President of the National Congress proclaims:

"There is perfect identity of feeling and interest between the national movement and labour. None need fear that in India the legitimate interests of labour will be sacrificed to capitalist interests; or that the Congress can neither reconcile them nor be just to both."

The peasant question is particularly acute in the "Native States," the territory comprising one-third of India under the direct rule of the feudal class. In some of these "States," agrarian discontent is chronic, and has to be repeatedly put down by armed forces. In British India a great part of the Hindu-Moslem riots are peasant risings against landlords and usurers. There is also sporadic but organised attempts of the peasants at non-payment of taxes.

A beginning has been made in the political organisation of these vast masses of peasants and industrial workers. The petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia are gravitating towards the exploited masses under the pressure of a community of misery. The advanced

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elements in the Left wing of the national movement are increasingly active in this direction. Out of the debris of the bourgeois-led national movement, there is arising a vast revolutionary coalition of social forces, in which the proletariat is destined to play the leading role and which can attain its objective only through the definite liquidation of imperial control.

In the three major provinces of Bengal, Bombay and Madras, and in the smaller area of Rajputana, "Workers' and Peasants' Parties" have come into existence with identical programmes. In the programme of the Bengal Party we read:

"The imperial government which is established in India is not based on the wishes of the masses of Great Britain. The unique purpose behind the maintenance of this imperialist government is to assist in the exploitation of the proletarian, peasant, and lower middle class masses of India for the benefit of the capitalist class of Great Britain. Consequently under a government maintained in the interests of the capitalist class, there can be no advancement of the proletariat, the peasantry and its lower middle class.

"The Indian National Congress, the parties included in it, and the Liberal and Independent and similar parties from time to time, no doubt, speak a word or two about the well-being of the masses. But in point of actual practice, they give no attention to the political, economic and social demands and needs of the peasants and the workers. On the contrary, the action of these parties proves that they are, as a matter of fact, the defenders of the interests of the foreign and native capitalist class. . . .

"There can be no final solution of the problem of the exploitation and subjection of the peasant, proletarian and middle class masses, unless they have in their hands full political power. The ultimate aim of the W.P.P. is to establish a Federated Republic in India, a republic in which the means of production, distribution and exchange would be in the possession of the masses and be used for social purposes. . . .

"Whereas, the only way in which the foregoing programme can be realised is the securing of complete national freedom of India from British imperialism:

"Therefore, the Bengal Workers' and Peasants' Party is not disinclined to co-operate with any other Party which accepts these opinions and is willing to work for the realisation of this programme."

As a sample of the political activities already shown by these parties, it may be mentioned that an attempt was made in the name of the Bombay Workers' and Peasants' Party to change the policy of the Indian National Congress and give it the character of a revolutionary mass organisation. The attempt did not succeed for the time being. But it is significant as the first attempt of the Left wing to capture the Congress apparatus. The resolution of the Bombay Party submitted to the May Plenum of the A.I.C.C. ran:

"The present Congress activity and programme are completely divorced from the everyday life of the masses, and in consequence the bulk of the population, the disenfranchised 98 per cent. have lost all interest in and sympathy for the Congress, which has become a feeble body. The present leadership of the Congress has tied itself and the Congress machinery to a programme of work which is of benefit only to an insignificant section of the people. The big capitalists and their allies, the intellectual and professional upper classes. As a consequence, on the one hand, Congress circles are divided by personal ends, and on the other, the masses are allowed and even encouraged to express their indignation against their hard lot in the form of communal fights.

"In the interest of the vast majority of the people it is urgently necessary to free the Congress from the narrow shackles of [bourgeois] class interests, and to yoke it to the task of attaining national freedom from the imperialist bondage, as a step towards complete emancipation of the masses from exploitation and oppression."

The resolution then proposes the following changes in the programme of the National Congress:

"The aim of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of complete national independence from imperialism, and the establishment of Swaraj based upon universal adult suffrage.

"It reiterates its faith in civil disobedience, i.e., direct action, as the only effective weapon that will ultimately free the people of India from their subject position, but realises that a great general awakening will have to be brought about before this weapon of direct action can be effectively used."

More particularly a Communist Party of India has come into legal existence. We quote the following from its programme of action within the National Congress:

"Whereas, in the opinion of the Communist Party of India, it is only the dynamic energies of the toiling masses that can bring Swaraj to India, and whereas the present bourgeois leadership in the Congress has proved itself to be gradually compromising with imperialism, and as such is directly in opposition to the interests of the masses, this party calls upon all its members to enrol themselves as members of the Indian National Congress, and form a strong Left wing in all its organs for the purpose of wresting them from the present alien control.

"This Party further calls upon the Communists to co-operate with the Radical Nationalists there, to formulate a common programme on the lines of the following minimum programme laid down by this Party:

"(a) Complete National Independence, and the establishment of a democratic republic based on universal adult suffrage; (b) abolition of landlordism; (c) reduction of land, rent and indirect taxation; higher incidence of graduated income tax; (d) modernisation of agriculture with State

Situation in India—continued

aid; (e) nationalisation of public utilities, industrialisation of the country with State aid; (f) eight-hour day and minimum wage."

Influence of "Colonial Environment"

In the increased activities of the Left wing in the national movement and the emergence of the mass parties of workers and peasants with revolutionary programmes, we certainly see the influence of the "colonial environment" at work, more particularly the Chinese revolution. But in the actual state of the national movement in India, the repercussion of the Chinese revolution could not have gone beyond a strengthening of the Left wing and the initiation of attempts at the political organisation of the workers and peasants. A

"sympathetic" revolutionary upheaval in India in response to the Chinese revolution was out of the question, so long as the national movement in India was led—as it has been led up till now—by the bourgeoisie. The upper strata of the Indian bourgeoisie stand in closer relation of class interest to imperialism than was the case in China. The Indian capitalists feel themselves strong enough not to call for the help of a revolutionary working class in their "domestic" quarrel with imperialism.

The organisational form in which the awakening revolutionary forces are to crystallise is the concrete core of the problem presented by the present situation in India. That form can only be based on the specific nature of the relations of the classes within India and the relation of the classes in India with British imperialism.

Contributions to a Programme of Action for Germany

By Heinrich Brandler

EDITORIAL NOTE

Some months ago the Editors of the "Communist International" received an article by comrade Brandler, "A Programme of Action" of the Comintern for Germany.

In view of the extraordinary importance of the questions raised by comrade Brandler (on the slogans of workers' control, of nationalisation, our relations with the Social-Democrats, etc.) the Editors print the article in its entirety, despite its length and the fact that its statistics are a little out of date.

At the same time we print the answer of the Politbureau of the German Communist Party, which also expresses the opinion of the E.C.C.I.

1. THE PRESENT POSITION OF GERMANY**(a) International Connections**

In an introduction to "The Civil War in France" Engels says:

"A clear survey of the economic history of a given period is never contemporary, but can only come afterwards, after a collection and sifting of the material. Statistics are a necessary expedient, and are always hobbling behind. For a current period of history one is therefore only too often compelled to treat this, the decisive factor, as a constant one, which both at the beginning of the period in question as well as for the entire period, is unchanged with regard to the economic conditions encountered: or one is obliged to take note only of those changes in the position which arise from the first events in question, and are therefore also clear to all. It is obvious that this unavoidable short-coming of the contemporary change in economic conditions, the actual basis of all the events investigated, is a source of error.

But all forms of a comprehensive survey of current history inevitably include sources of error, which, however, does not prevent anybody from writing current history."

What is correct in a judgment of the economic conditions during and immediately after the revolution of 1848, is doubly true of the greatly developed, rapidly changing conditions after the world war. But of course that has not prevented the Communists from writing current history, or, to a certain extent, from making it. But to-day, when stabilisation has reached a kind of balance, it is necessary for us to take notice of a number of important changes in the mechanism of capitalist economy which have been proceeding in the years since 1914, and which were not clear a few years ago; for only by doing this shall we be able to find the key to an understanding of the present situation.

The fundamental fact in the present economic and recently also the political development of the world in the years since 1914 is a tremendous growth in the means of capitalist production beyond all the present marketing possibilities. On one hand old industries have developed in the older capitalist countries, and new ones have arisen, while on the other hand industrialisation has to a considerable extent taken place in the colonies. Already the existing possibilities of production in the greatest and most highly-developed capitalist countries (America, England, France, Germany) are too great for all the present markets. The result is that machinery and an army of unemployed amounting to millions is constantly out of action. *Only a great extension of markets is capable of freeing world capitalism for any considerable period from this vicious circle.*

A relative widening of the market for one capitalist State at the cost of the competing other States, which is possible, merely transfers the contradiction from one country into the others, and accumulates still more in-

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flammable matter. An absolute extension of markets by the opening up of China, Russia and other still undeveloped countries is out of the question because of the war of capitalism against the Russian and the Chinese revolutions, against the movement for liberation of the oppressed peoples, because, in short, of the most important upheavals which threaten capitalist domination. The additions of the undeveloped countries to the "normal" markets to-day, even if one admits that for the present China would go along the road of capitalist development, would not suffice to abolish the general characteristic of the epoch as one of the declining developments of capitalism.

The Problem of Markets

The purchasing power of the peasant masses of China is to-day still negligible (about four dollars a year); about 300 million dollars among 70 million peasant families. (The number is, of course, only a rough calculation, and would change with the economic development of China.) The development of a native Chinese capitalism in China would, of course, create a new market for capital goods, a new sphere of investment for capital export, but it would also create a new competitor which will make itself felt and emancipate itself at an increasing rate. As for commercial relations between the capitalist world and the Soviet Union, an extension of the possibilities of trade would be made for a few countries if capitalism would quietly accept the fact of the Socialist construction of Soviet economy, and propose conditions which would correspond to the interests of Socialist economy in Russia. But even in these favourable circumstances the extension of the market would not be sufficient to exhaust the productive capacity of the most important capitalist countries to the extent of making possible a new progressive era of an obsolete capitalism. The Socialist constructive economy in Russia, planned on the basis of the development of her own forces of production, must, after the import of necessary capital goods and raw materials, lead in a relatively short time to a decrease of foreign imports.

No extension of the markets can keep pace to-day with the rapid increase of capitalist productive capacity by technical improvements (rationalisation, new inventions, etc.) which is forced on the capitalists by international competition, by the necessity to acquire space for themselves at any cost.

A certain degree of equilibrium in local and partial markets is of course possible if, for example, new cheap raw materials are found by new inventions, new methods of transport, new cheap processes of production are discovered. (As in Germany, the liquefaction of coal, electrification of the internal navigation, manufacture of artificial manures, etc.)

On the other hand, we must observe that the shrinking of the American market, which is necessarily of great importance in this matter, will have consequences of an international character, not the least in Germany, which is closely connected with American capitalism through loans.

These contradictions are intensified by the monopolistic organisation of capital, which to-day shows a higher degree of concentration than at any previous time. The

struggle for markets is at its sharpest under the domination of monopolies. In free competition technical improvements mean the abolition of backward concerns. With the power of monopolies, however, this is changed, and concerns which are closed down, instead of being wiped out, become sources of interest (bargaining for quotas). The consequence of that is the tendency of monopolies to a still greater exploitation, to a further increase of their surplus profits.

The Extension of Capitalist Contradictions

International cartels, far from alleviating the contradictions within capitalism, only serve to intensify and extend them over a greater area. Competition within cartels takes the form of a struggle for quotas; competition on the world market takes the form of a struggle of national groups organised within the cartels.

These factors drive capitalism necessarily into preparations for a new military conflict. These preparations proceed along two lines. On the one hand, in the formation of opposing imperialist coalitions; on the other hand, in attempts, made above all by England, to create a sort of holy alliance against the Soviet Union. The attempts are not sharply divided from each other, but are closely interwoven. The present period is one of experiment, of tentative measures on the part of large opposing interests, around which new coalitions of Powers can be grouped.

The so-called "ultra-imperialism" is a social-democratic discovery. This theory has been deliberately spread by the social-democrats, in order to divert the attention of the masses from the actual position to the fanciful image of a peaceful capitalism free from contradictions. Temporary alliances of the imperialist Powers for the fight against the proletarian revolution in Russia and the national revolution, above all in China, are, however, quite possible. Bukharin rightly referred to the example of the crushing of the Boxer rebellion in 1900 by the Great Powers. Such temporary alliances, for various objects of the imperialist robbers, do not in any way abolish the fundamental contradictions inside the camp of world imperialism. Such alliances existed before the war, and did not save it from the war, but were, on the contrary, stages in its development.

Since the end of the European war there has been an almost uninterrupted series of colonial wars. (Greco-Turkish War, Morocco, Syria, etc.)

Considered as a whole, imperialism in the post-war period bears all the marks of a decaying form of society. What Rosa Luxemburg foresaw when she called imperialism a period of crises, conflicts and catastrophes, what Lenin meant when he characterised imperialism as the last phase of capitalism, has come true. The decline of capitalism is not, of course, to be understood as something for which a continuous and general decline in production is a necessary prerequisite, but in the sense that all its oppositions and contradictions, all its "inequalities" are driven to the surface: that the disproportion between conditions of production and distribution is greater than ever before, that industrial depression has become the normal condition of a number of capitalist countries, that millions are out of work, while the profits of the trusts attain to an extraordinarily high level, that

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the bourgeoisie will be able to find no other method of solution than a new war, than new world catastrophes. "An absolute development of the forces of production, which decreased the absolute number of workers, one, that is, which in fact enabled the nation to turn out its entire produce in a shorter space of time, would lead to revolution, because it would withdraw the majority of the population from employment. This again shows the specific limitations of capitalist production, and that it is not by any means an absolute form for the development of the forces of production and the production of wealth, but rather that at a certain point these will come into collision." (Marx: "Capital," Vol. III.)

The phenomena of stabilisation, that is, the reconstruction of world economy, dislocated by the war and by inflation, and the overcoming of most of the serious periods of trouble in the European post-war crisis (such as an absolute decline of production, etc.) only show up the fundamental contradictions more clearly. The momentary strengthening of the bourgeoisie is not to be denied, but this strengthening is only paving the way for a new revolution, is creating new and more extensive foundations for it.

The Communists do not deny any facts; they only point out how the mole of revolution burrows under the surface of a stabilised capitalism; they point out that the new problems unfolded by stabilisation, which are created by stabilisation, can only be solved by a revolution.

(b) Class Relations in Stabilised Germany**The Economic Position of Germany**

The particular features of the situation in Germany fit into this general picture. Industrial concentration in Germany has reached a pitch attained not even by the United States, the classic land of trusts. The most important industries are trustified or cartellised. Wholesale business is dominated and controlled by the trusts.

In retail trade the revival of business is accompanied by a powerful concentration. The technical transformation of German industry is prepared and partially carried out. German industry is beginning to apply a number of important inventions practically—in proof of that it is sufficient to point out that the liquefaction of coal, when it has reached the stage of mass production, will place Germany in the front rank of the countries producing mineral oil, the most highly-contested of raw materials to-day. The annual accumulation of capital in Germany is approaching the pre-war level. The phenomena of deflation (financial crises, bankruptcies) have been almost completely overcome. The power of the German banks at first under the influence of American capital and now also on the basis of capital accumulation in Germany itself, has made great progress, which has enabled them partly to regain their old position in industry. The economic strengthening of German capitalism is therefore incontestable.

But the problem of markets, the decisive question for German industry, is not solved. The end of the English coal dispute brought this question into still greater prominence. Just as in England, so also in Germany, more than a million unemployed drag on

from year to year. Production in Germany has in parts already exceeded the pre-war level, but has not reached the full present productive capacity. The burdens imposed by the Dawes plan have not so far inhibited development, but will in the future certainly lead to political and economic difficulties.

The Bourgeoisie and Squirearchy, Republic and Monarchy

The economic changes in the war and post-war period have brought about important changes in the ruling classes of Germany. The strengthening of the bourgeoisie, and above all of the trust magnates, has made them politically also the decisively dominant and ruling power in Germany. The Junkers were economically weakened by the war and the revolution, by inflation and deflation. A part of their property has passed into the hands of industrialists, who, of course, have no specifically agrarian interests. Capitalism has made the Junkers dependent on the artificial manure industry and on the banks. It is clear that the rulers of the trusts will no longer leave the occupation of government posts exclusively to the Junkers. The characteristic feature of the Wilhelm monarchy, however, was that although large industry was the most powerful, the Junkers were the governing class of Germany. The trust bourgeoisie is now ruling in the most direct form which is possible for them. That is the final, although not the only, basis for the consolidation of the bourgeois republic, for the bourgeoisie's more or less silent renunciation of Fascist or legitimist plans for the overthrow of the republican constitution.

The bourgeoisie has in the last few years acquired the taste for ruling, and has seen that the republic in which it rules directly is more comfortable than one in which the government is left exclusively in the hands of the narrow-minded Junkers, when the bourgeoisie would be dependent on the incalculable accidents of personal regiments, as was the case under the Wilhelm monarchy, when the bourgeoisie decided policy only in the last instance and indirectly as a consequence of their economic power. In the sphere of foreign politics the republic gives the bourgeoisie of Germany a much better opportunity of influencing public opinion in other countries than would be possible under a monarchy. Moreover, the result of the Referendum showed that not only the majority of the workers, but also large sections of the petty bourgeoisie reject any return to a monarchy. The bourgeoisie very quickly drew the lessons of the Referendum. (Dresden Industrial Conference.)

That does not, of course, mean that the bourgeoisie has given up all idea of a political alliance with the Junkers (the bourgeois bloc) in order to be able to carry out their "firebrand" policy the more relentlessly; but they will not in any circumstances allow the Junkers to play the leading or the decisive role in this alliance. The policy of the bourgeoisie is neither free from vacillation nor unified. The bourgeoisie will not simply renounce the means of influencing petty bourgeois masses which monarchist propaganda gives to them. In leading industrial positions there are many men, formerly active officers, who politically are very closely connected with all the Fascist and monarchist organisations. We have also to consider the political effects of opposing economic interests within trust capitalism. In the National Industrial Association the two strongest groups

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—chemicals and steel—are in opposition to each other; the masters of the steel trust, Fritz Thyssen, Rausch, Reichert, Vögler, closely connected with the German nationalists, the right wing of the Populist Party and the right wing of the Centrists, are fighting against Duisberg (chemical trust), Silverberg (brown coal) and Glöckner (outside the steel trust). Whereas some time ago the heavy chemical industry had the leadership of the National Association, recently, as a consequence of the market created by the British mining dispute, the influence of the steel trust has increased considerably.

The general tendency, however, of the consolidation of the bourgeois republic remains. There is no talk of the danger of an immediate monarchist restoration. Like Silverberg, the panegyrist of the great coalition, so Loebell, the political adviser of Hindenburg and the guiding spirit of the bourgeois bloc, comes out for the recognition of the republic. The bourgeoisie knows that the republic represents to-day the only possible basis for their home and foreign policy. The bourgeoisie is attempting therefore to strengthen the plutocratic character of the republic by legal regulations (limitation of the franchise, strengthening the position of the President, etc.).

The more the bourgeois republic is consolidated, so much the more is it revealed as the dictatorship of the trusts of the bourgeoisie. The formation of the bourgeois bloc was preceded by a disgusting display on the part of the industrial firebrands, who demanded a radical cutting down of social policy, and above all the legal abrogation of the eight-hour day. The policy of the bourgeoisie in the sphere of taxation was very striking. Previously Luther's system of taxation had been regulated from the point of view of obtaining the lion's share of the tax receipts from taxes which would fall on the income and commodities used by the broad masses. In addition to that the capitalists had succeeded in carrying through a further decrease in the property tax. On the other hand, they have used their dominant influence in the State to allow millions to flow into their pockets in the form of subsidies from State funds. (From the subsidies to the shipowners and the 700 million indemnification to the Ruhr industry up to the most recent loan to Krupp's.) Seldom has the State appeared so openly and shamelessly as capitalism's machine for plunder, as it does in Germany to-day. During the first years of the republic, when the bourgeoisie was still playing about with plans of a Fascist rebellion, when the petty bourgeois parties governed the republic and carried on a sham fight against the "right," illusions revived among the masses; but to-day, since the true character of bourgeois democracy, of the bourgeois republic becomes increasingly obvious as a capitalist dictatorship, new grounds for overcoming these illusions have emerged.

The Army and the Bureaucracy

The conflicts concerning the army show peculiar characteristics without, however, altering the general position. If the Reichswehr is to be reorganised into the future army of reawakening German imperialism, is it to be supplemented by the reactionary organisations

(the Steel Helmets, etc.), or by the republican (the National Standard)? That is the basis of the present struggle. The old military clique, who formed the backbone of the monarchy, have kept all their positions. They are still a great power in the State to-day. The interests of the military clique have, of course, their political effects also.

It must not, however, be forgotten that in spite of, and partly on account of, this struggle concerning military policy, important overtures have taken place between the Steel Helmets and the National Standard. (Expulsion of the "Revanche" section from the Stahlhelm, the speeches of Ehrhardt against the re-establishment of the monarchy, and the change of the "Jungdo," who in 1923 sided with Hitler, to the republic.) The monarchist circles are not in the least unified, but divided according to dynasties. The Bavarian monarchists are adherents of the Wittelsbachs, and are anxious for union with Catholic Austria under the crown of the Wittelsbachs, whose sphere of power they are attempting to spread over the whole of Germany and in opposition to the Hohenzollerns. The Bavarian National Party, which broke away from the Centre after the war, is the embodiment of this ideology. With all the agreement between the bourgeois and agrarian circles of the Centre and the reactionary efforts of the Bavarian Nationalist Party, there are still some obstacles and some friction, which are heightened among the Protestant circles of monarchists, standing for the Hohenzollerns, within the German Nationalist and Populist Parties. This friction among the monarchists strengthens the general tendency of the bourgeoisie towards a "reasonable republicanism."

In the years since the revolution a large number of new persons from among the social-democrats, the Christian trade unions, etc., have been drawn into the bureaucracy. For them the struggle for the republic is a defence of their positions against the old bureaucracy. Even here, however, there can be observed a tendency for the old elements to adapt themselves to the new situation, and to which they can adapt themselves the more easily because of the even more reactionary direction taken by the government. "Reasonable republicans" are to-day a very widely-dispersed type in Germany, corresponding to the "reasonable republicanism" of the ruling class.

The Peasantry

The harmful effects of inflation at first affected a small part of the peasant masses, those who possessed war bonds, and also those poor semi-proletarian elements of the peasant masses, those who possessed land so small that it did not suffice for their needs and who therefore had to buy agricultural products. But inflation created favourable conditions not only for the large and middle peasants, but also for a considerable section of the small peasants (working off mortgages by payments in devaluated currency, decrease in the burden of taxation almost to the point of complete disappearance, the formation of an inverted "scissors," *i.e.*, the relative lowering in the prices of industrial commodities in comparison with the prices of agricultural products).

The position changed with stabilisation. The peasantry have been partly satisfied—the upper sections of

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them—by protective tariffs. On the other hand, stabilisation, bringing with it the necessity to replace the industrial capital that was lost during inflation has brought with it a new indebtedness for the peasant masses. Credit conditions are extremely oppressive for the poorer peasantry. The increasing concentration of industry leads to a monopolising of the manufacture of agricultural machinery by the trusts, which makes the peasants completely dependent upon them. Since, however, in this case the monopolisation of industry is accompanied by technical progress (improvements in the tractor industry, in the agricultural machine industry, the projected production of latent and mixed manures) which to some extent leads to a lowering of prices, the peasants are not yet completely conscious of their subjection to the dictates of the trusts. The grain storage company for the financing of harvests, which this year could not yet expand, will lead in the coming year to a monopolisation of grain dealing under the domination of the artificial manure industry, and will make the farmers entirely dependent upon it. The effects of the policy of the trusts and their monopoly prices will in the future decisively influence the working peasant masses. What the peasant undoubtedly feels to-day is, besides the need for credit, which is caused by the policy of the large banks and the State Financial Institute, the burden of taxation, which has grown tremendously.

The Middle Classes of the Towns

Among the middle-classes of the towns there is proceeding a peculiar and sometimes uninterrupted process of radicalisation. The opposition of the German Nationalists to deflation, the demands of the ex-princes, have driven large sections of the petty bourgeoisie away from the monarchist idols. In their thousands they left the old parties whose passive and obedient voting herd they had been for decades. The new parties to which they adhered (the Party of economy, the Deflation Party) are just as reactionary in their policy as the old ones. This regrouping of the petty bourgeois masses is very important. In part they are coming nearer to the proletariat (as in the campaign against the ex-princes). The effects of rationalisation have been an important factor in the radicalisation of the middle classes, for it has made large numbers of officials and of commercial and office workers unemployed. The most lasting effect, and one which will become more and more strong, is exercised by the exploitation of the trusts, which, by their tariff policy, by their monopoly prices, are continually lowering the standard of living of the petty bourgeois masses, and which will continue to crush out the persons with a so-called "independent" means of livelihood. These effects are to be observed in all the bourgeois parties, and play an important part in the disintegration of the Centre. This, the strongest German petty bourgeois party, with an important working-class element, is faced by a serious crisis. On one hand there is the opposition of the Christian trade union workers against the leadership of the Party, which betrays the working class even more than the Social-Democratic Party; on the other hand there is the rebellious petty bourgeoisie, whose interests were also betrayed during the inflation, the deflation, the compromise on the question of the ex-princes, and on the question of rationalisa-

tion, just as were those of the petty bourgeois Mosel-Winzer, the electors and members of the Centre. Apart from this rebellion of the rank and file electors and members of this Party, there are also differences between the heavy industry and agrarian leaders of the Centre. All the Jesuitical arts of these party leaders can no longer cover this opposition.

The Working Class

Within the period of stabilisation new sections have arisen in the working class. Outside those who are working there are more than a million permanently unemployed, who must and do increasingly recognise that under the present conditions they have no chance whatever of obtaining work, that the present order of society can only guarantee them the existence of paupers. In the long run that can only work as a revolutionary factor. (Witness England, where similar conditions have changed the classic land of social peace into a gigantic battlefield of the class war.)

On the other hand, differentiation among the workers in industry has partly increased since stabilisation. This was consciously promoted by the employers, who re-established the differences in wages which had been wiped out during the period of inflation. Although rationalisation in its general tendencies helps to establish a level among the working class by wiping out the differences between skilled and unskilled work (Fordism) it would be false to speak of the disappearance of the aristocracy of labour. To a limited extent stabilisation has undoubtedly led to a certain renaissance of the labour aristocracy.

The increase of investments in the Savings Bank alone is sufficient to prove that. With the present social structure of Germany, with the far-reaching proletarianisation and penury of the middle classes, it must be recognised that a number of the better situated workers are in a position to save.

(The argument is often brought forward in our press that there is no possibility of a labour aristocracy in Germany because the German bourgeoisie has no colonies, and therefore possesses no colonial surplus profits with which to corrupt certain higher sections of the working class. As though in pre-war Germany the very meagre German colonies supplied all the surplus profits of the German bourgeoisie; and as though the German trusts to-day do not make surplus profits.)

The illusions which reconcile the mass of the workers to stabilisation will necessarily disappear. The social-democrats and the trade unions are spreading among the working class the idea that the consequences of stabilisation, mass unemployment, worsening of the conditions of labour, are only of a temporary nature, and merely serve to create the necessary conditions for a new capitalist boom which will wipe out all these evil consequences. These illusions have not yet been overcome, but the results of stabilisation and rationalisation must lead to the recognition by the working class that the methods of the social-democrats and the trade union bureaucracy have suffered shipwreck in the post-war period. The highly-praised achievements of the revolution have either disappeared or become insignificant. That is the source of the tentative and hesitating but undeniable movement to the left among the masses. The trade union bureaucracy is trying to awaken new illusions by a super-reformism of American extraction which

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they have recently been preaching (economic democracy, etc.). To prevent the approaching disillusionment of the workers the trade union bureaucracy has supplied this super-reformism which they preach with an adornment of radical phrases, such as participation by workers in the direction of production, etc.

Social-Democracy

That social-democracy, in spite of its continual betrayal of the interests of the working class, still has so many members and attracts about three times as many electors as the Communist Party of Germany, is not only and not in the first place a result of the mistakes of the C.P. of Germany but has objective causes.

German social-democracy became a mass party, a movement embracing millions in a period of furious growth of capitalism.

The great historical contribution of social-democracy in its flourishing period was its creation of wide proletarian mass organisations, which popularised the imaginary world of socialism and defended the interests of the workers against the employers and the bourgeois State as effectively as possible. In the period of rapid capitalist growth the proletariat could not place the revolution, the seizure of power by the proletariat, before itself as an immediate and proximate object. The content of the proletarian class struggle of that period was the fight for greater freedom of movement for the workers and the struggle for an improvement in their conditions within the framework of capitalism. What revolutionary Marxism emphasised as against petty bourgeois opportunists was that the struggle for reforms is not the proper object, and is only profitable and in accord with the general interests of the working class when it does not serve to reconcile the workers to the existing regime, but, on the contrary, proves to them, in their daily petty struggles, the irreconcilability of bourgeois and proletarian class interests; in short, when the final object remains the banner and purpose of the struggle. In this sense the old Social-Democratic Party was a party of the class struggle.

The limited content of the class struggle of that time gave the petty bourgeois, opportunist elements and opinions within social-democracy a chance of growing up, and these found support in the ranks of the labour aristocracy, a section which was constantly growing. These tendencies therefore became more powerful because the orthodox wing itself had no concrete notion of the revolution. The Marxist teaching on the tactics of the revolution, which was based on the experiences of 1789 until the Commune, was not worked out any further. The objective circumstance that direct revolutionary action was impossible, and the subjective circumstance of ideological gaps even in orthodox Marxism explain how it was that a split among the social-democrats did not occur at the time when Bernstein separated himself from them, and why every breaking away from the social-democrats to the left was a break-away to the anarchists, as, for example, in the case of the youth section. Engels' repeated challenge for a break with the purely opportunist elements, Rosa Luxemburg's demand after Bernstein's exclusion, were not understood and not considered by the orthodox social-democrats.

The progressing development of imperialism changed the situation. Historically imperialism appeared as the declining phase of capitalism. The practical demonstration of the fact, that the progressive role of capitalism, taken as a whole, was past; and that society had grown ripe for socialism was afforded by the increasing hopelessness of the struggle for reforms and improvements within the structure of capitalism. The monopolisation of capital radically changed the character of the trade union struggle. While the number of social-democrat members of parliament grew greatly, it was increasingly demonstrated that practically nothing could be attained through parliament.

New methods of struggle, new fighting machinery had become necessary. The Russian Revolution of 1905 announced the outbreak of a new revolutionary epoch. The left wing radicals under the leadership of Rosa Luxemburg proceeded by an analysis of imperialism and demanded the organisation of revolutionary mass action, the utilisation of extra-parliamentary power. But Bebel, Kautsky and with them the majority of the Party, showed themselves incapable of recognising their new tasks. At a time when even Kautsky was compelled to maintain that objectively the conditions were ripe for socialism, they held on to their purely reformist activities. Incapable of understanding the true character of imperialism in their proposals for fighting it, they joined up on the side of the bourgeois pacifists. Kautsky's Centrism wished to strain Marxism in the Procrustean bed of an exclusively parliamentary, exclusively reformist activity. The party bureaucracy, which had grown up with the labour aristocracy, would have nothing to do with a revolutionary outlook. So the foundations for the betrayal of August 4th were laid. The catastrophe came, as though a public confession had to be made.

Social-democracy in the post-war period fulfilled the wish once expressed by Bernstein. It behaved as it had grown, as a petty bourgeois reformist party. Even the words "class struggle" and "socialism" disappeared from their propaganda. The scrap of talk about socialisation was decisively refuted by the machine guns of their own Party comrade, Noske. Large petty bourgeois masses, who flocked to the Social-Democratic Party immediately after the war did so not because there was any talk of socialism in the social-democratic programme, but because they saw in it the shield against Spartacus, against Communism, against the carrying out of socialism. But in spite of the fact that social-democracy stood with both its feet in the soil of the capitalist order, of the bourgeois State, in spite of the fact that it bloodily overthrew the revolutionary workers, it found a large following among the proletarian masses. In their friendship for imperialism the social-democrats seemed to large masses to be the bringer of peace, while the proletarian revolution threatened to bring about intervention and a new war. Their coalition policy was called defence of the republic, and the bourgeois republic seemed, to great masses of workers who had been drawn into the struggle for democratic rights, to be a worthy achievement. Finally, the socio-political reforms of the November revolution, which gave more freedom to the industrial workers, were a further inducement for making the ideology of a petty bourgeois policy of reform acceptable to the workers. At the best this policy could only succeed in the twilight of inflation. The period of

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inflation practically abolished unemployment; while real wages fell nominal wages rose unceasingly.

Social-democracy relied upon a broad stratum of newly-baked officials of the republic. That also reacted on it, and it grew deformed together with the State apparatus of the republic.

Social-democracy has grown into the bourgeois State, just as in the period before stabilisation it appeared as the representative of the general interests of capitalist society as against the group interests of individual sections of the bourgeois, and played the part of the broker between the German bourgeoisie and international finance capital.

The position was different after stabilisation. The fetish of social-democracy was deprived of its mass effect in the post-war period. The republic revealed itself as the government of the trust magnates; German foreign policy, with the revival of German imperialism, appeared less and less peaceful, the achievements in the sphere of social policy were destroyed.

In connection with that there arose a new differentiation among the social-democrats. A section, led by the Party and State bureaucracy, desired at any cost to forward a policy of coalition, so as not to lose their comfortable positions in the State service. If social-democracy wishes to carry through the "firebrand" programme of the trusts, as a responsible government party, it will have to surrender all its adherents among the masses. On the other hand, the working-class masses have been considerably sobered for reasons already mentioned, and this concerns the policy of coalition.

After the experiences of the policy of co-operation, of class conciliation, the idea of class struggle is gaining new ground. After the workers realised that the great battle cries of social-democracy, such as republic, peace, etc., have only served to make fools of the workers there awoke in them a longing for a new great object, which would ensure the liberation of the proletariat from the hell of capitalism. The workers are increasingly convinced that this object can only be the one with which social-democracy once grew great and which it then betrayed: socialism. That is the source of the newly-arisen interest in the work of socialist construction in Soviet Russia. The strengthening of the Centrist and left elements in the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, who pay lip-service to socialism and the class struggle, is a reflection of this feeling. The programme of the Centrist left is the more or less expressed rejection of the coalition government and the purely parliamentary opposition, and at the same time the rejection of revolutionary mass action. In the present situation, when the policy of coalition is becoming more and more difficult for the social-democrats, the left wing section of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany attains an increased importance. It reflects two things: one, the opposition of the masses to the coalition government, and, secondly, the attempt of a certain section of the party bureaucracy to stifle this opposition by a verbally radical policy. The formation of a separate Centrist party is not very probable to-day, for it is a characteristic feature of Centrism that it always goes hand-in-hand with open reformism, while continually grumbling at it. The possibility of the formation of a separate

Centrist party is not completely out of the question, and particularly in the event of an acute revolutionary crisis, when the pressure of the masses is exceptionally strong. (*Vide* the Independent Socialist Party of Germany.)

It is the task of Communism to accelerate the disintegration within the Social-Democratic Party, for that disintegration is one of the prerequisites for, and a phenomena of the revolutionising of the workers. A Centrist party is not an instrument of revolution, but an obstacle in its path. If the revolution is to triumph and to maintain itself, the Centrist parties must also disappear. But at certain moments the Centrist ideology can be a stage in the progress of the workers from reformism to Communism. The workers will remain at this transitional point the less time the more quickly we convince them by an objectively clear and practical policy, that the Centrists do not desire any effectual struggle against the reformists, that, in fact, they are incapable of carrying on an effective struggle against the bourgeoisie in the interests of the workers. That is why the Communists must criticise the attitude of the left from the standpoint of Communist principles and in connection with the actual needs of the class struggle; in order to urge the workers forward, and to detach them from their leaders and enrol them in the ranks of our fighting vanguard.

Trade Unions and Co-operatives

The trade unions and co-operatives are proletarian mass organisations with millions of members, which are controlled by the social-democratic bureaucracy and used against the interests of the masses of the membership and in the interests of the bourgeoisie. It follows from that that the principal task of the Communists is to cleanse these proletarian mass organisations from their social-democratic leadership, as the first preliminary to making these mass organisations, which arose originally as organs of the class struggle of the proletariat, again serve the purpose for which they were founded. With regard to the trade unions it is also necessary to transform the organisation of the bureaucratically-administered central and professional unions into democratic industrial unions, directed by the members and organised on the basis of the factories, for only so can they, in an age of national and international trusts, fulfil their fighting tasks without bureaucratic intervention. The way to win over the trade unions, to permeate them with the spirit of the revolutionary class struggle, is for all Communists to participate actively in the daily work of the trade unions, in the organisation of the self-administration of the trade unions on the basis of factories and the limitation of the official bureaucracy to the unavoidable minimum. Every struggle about wages and hours must be thoroughly prepared among the workers and by the workers themselves. The Communists must learn the lessons of the strategy and tactics of the trade union struggles in the pre-war period, when the unions, which were then still very small, often with fewer resources, were able to lead the still unorganised masses into the struggle without any bureaucratic guidance, a result which they achieved by the intense activity and fighting resolution of their members. The activity of the members in those years of storm and stress for the trade unions allowed no traitors to the interests of the members to be at the head of the organisation. The organ-

Contributions to a Programme—contd.

ised, active trade union work of the Communists will have the same result. The real history of the trade union and co-operative movement has, to the great advantage of the present ruling bureaucracy, been forgotten. The Communist Party must revive this source of fighting energy. Many mistakes, such as discouragement among the members, and the lack of trained officials, can be traced to ignorance about the experience of the past and the character of the trade union struggle. This ignorance and the lack of understanding about the limits of trade union, economic struggles and their connection with the political struggle, are responsible for the fact that the Communists do not always take up the correct position in opposition to the reformists. The conditions of the trade union struggle in the present epoch of monopolies and trusts are characterised by the increasing hopelessness of the purely trade union struggle, because of the concentration of the power of capital. Even before the war Marxist theory had developed the idea, that in trustified capitalist industry, and particularly in mining, the trade union struggle must be transformed into a political struggle if it is to have any results at all. That is even more true for Germany to-day, where the relative and absolute importance of monopolies has increased tremendously. The insufficiency of the old methods of trade union struggle has recently been most conclusively manifested in England. If the trade unions want to carry out their task of defending the workers' standard of living they must not be afraid of having political, revolutionary aims. If they do not wish to do so then they will have to go over more and more to the policy of avoiding any struggle, of conducting a policy of class collaboration in one form or another, in order to avoid coming into conflict with the bourgeoisie. In that lies the fundamental difference between the Communist and social-democratic conception of the task of trade unions.

The difference between the Communists and social-democrats does not consist in the fact that in any wage dispute the Communists demand a few pennies more than the social-democrats, but that they show that all the achievements of the minor struggles can be nullified by the bourgeoisie if the working class does not extend its fight to a struggle for political power, that the most important questions to-day, such as unemployment, can only be solved by such a course. The change of the economic into the political struggle, of the struggle of groups organised according to professions and industries into the unified class struggle, cannot come as a consequence of the simple addition of the wage struggles, of the totality of group and professional demands. The solution of uniting the separate wage struggles is therefore insufficient as a *general solution*; the change to a political mass struggle will follow from a political unification. Even within a limited sphere, uniting the separate wage struggles will only very infrequently be the correct method for carrying out a successful struggle about wages and hours of labour. The opposite method, that of a rapid succession of attacks by small but more powerful groups, has more often been successful for the workers in trade union struggles. If it is found impossible to extend a trade union into a political struggle the Communists, having exhausted all the possibilities offered by the trade unions, should not be afraid of break-

ing off the struggle. The Communists are also distinguished from the reformists in the matter of breaking off a struggle. The reformists strangle strikes, because they fear any struggle, and particularly do they fear the spreading of strikes. When Communists break off a trade union struggle they do so only after having faithfully attempted everything that might lead to success, by which they show the workers the further prospects of the struggle and strengthen them in their self-confidence.

It is difficult to use examples in the trade union struggle. To obtain success it is necessary to have a great capacity for manœuvre, and to employ all, even the smallest, contradictions in the enemy's camp. The Communists must therefore, until the movement has enough force to remove the system of arbitration, which was established in opposition to the workers' interests, utilise that system and conclude agreements.

The Conditions of Winning Over the Trade Unions

A fighting, resolute body of officials, well trained in trade union work and propaganda which enlighten the working masses as to the limits and possibilities of the economic struggle, and by their own example lead the way in carrying on the fight—these are the conditions essential for winning over the trade unions. The limitations of the possibilities of the purely economic struggle must be stressed as against both the bureaucratic frauds and the ultra-left prattlers who run away from the trade union struggle because it cannot take the place of the revolutionary struggle for power and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. For Communists, for real revolutionaries, the revolutionary work begins just when a well-conducted struggle concerning wages and hours is brought up sharp against its own limitations, when it is either carried on further as a political struggle, if the forces are sufficient for that, or, if the forces are insufficient, discontinued as a trade union struggle about wages and hours, with some success or compromise; to enable the recruitment of forces for greater struggles. These are the principal tasks of a practical fighting leadership, which will be learnt as quickly as the rate at which the Communist Party of Germany wins the masses to its side.

The most important task of the co-operatives is to supply the workers with good and cheap commodities, to eliminate the middleman and to carry on a political struggle as well for the cheapening of objects of mass consumption. The exclusion of trading profits, however, in a period of monopolistic price control which extends into commerce becomes a political struggle for economic and price-control against the trusts and the trading monopolies. Such fighting co-operatives can serve as schools for socialism, in so far as they show that the capitalist is unnecessary, and in so far as the workers are made familiar with the direction of concerns and with the functions of trade.

The co-operative bureaucracy is, however, more corrupt, more injurious for the transformation of the co-operatives into organisations of the class struggle of the revolutionary proletariat than the trade union bureaucracy. The co-operatives have a membership which, taken with their family dependents, is greatly in excess of that of the trade unions. The present consumers' co-operatives under the leadership of Kasch and

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Kaufmann of the central organisation are only like centralised petty private shops, with petty souls at the head. In the struggle against rising prices they are to-day completely inadequate, if not useless, as a reliable organ of the fighting proletariat, as a school for education and recruiting in the revolutionary struggle. To clean the Augean stables is a gigantic task, but a revolutionary task which promises great success for the conscious activity of the Communists, particularly in the rallying of women. It is a task which must certainly be accomplished, in clearing out the last remnants of class enmity from the working-class ranks and in creating the largest possible mass foundation for the decisive struggle for the leadership of the working class.

THE RE-BIRTH OF GERMAN IMPERIALISM**The Objects of the Foreign Policy of the Bourgeoisie**

The economic and political strengthening of the German bourgeoisie has led to a change in the position of Germany with regard to foreign policy which cannot but affect the internal position. While a few years ago the entire foreign policy of the German bourgeoisie consisted of crawling before the Entente and of saving what could be saved, and of finding support against the threatening revolution of the German workers, a policy which the bourgeoisie willingly left to the social-democratic and other petty bourgeois politicians to carry out, to-day the bourgeoisie is itself taking command of foreign policy in order to create a new imperialist world position for itself; the pacifist humbug is to-day only a means of propaganda for this policy, which is more suited to the exigencies of the time than the rattling sword which was the diplomatic method of the Wilhelm monarchy. Talk of class conciliation corresponds very well to the present period of tentative seeking for alliances, for only in alliance with other Great Powers can the German bourgeoisie hope to regain its longed-for place in the sun. It is evident that this policy cannot remain peaceful, and that Germany's participation in the game of the grouping of imperialist powers must inevitably draw Germany into preparations for war, and finally into war itself, if the proletarian revolution does not happen first.

The foreign policy of the German bourgeoisie, since the question of reparations has for the present been settled by the Dawes Plan, is dominated by this object. The German bourgeoisie wants to win back the imperialist world position that it lost, to re-create an equal place for itself in the concert of Great Powers, in the choir of the great imperialist robbers, for only then can it dare to take up the struggle for new markets. That is the vital question for capitalist economy in Germany.

The bourgeoisie has undertaken a number of concrete tasks in order to attain this object. It is trying to get the Versailles Treaty revised, and, above all, to clear the Rhineland, to get the Saar district returned, the eastern frontier changed by winning back Danzig and the "corridor"; in fact, the re-establishment of the old German kingdom. The German bourgeoisie wishes to free itself completely from any military control in order to be able to create again a strong army and navy, without which in the long run an imperialist policy is impossible. The German bourgeoisie hopes to abolish the control measures which limit German sovereignty, and

in particular to obtain a revision of the conditions of payment set up by the Dawes Plan. The German bourgeoisie is demanding the return of the German colonies in order to create the basis for a new colonial empire. It is trying to win a strong position in the sphere of commercial policy in order to ensure the internal markets for the trusts and to create possibilities for dumping on the world market. The anti-dumping laws of a number of States stand in the way of this, but, on the other hand, the international cartels, in which Germany plays a prominent part, serve as a powerful commercial weapon for the German bourgeoisie.

The Methods of German Foreign Policy

The methods of German foreign policy are determined for the German bourgeoisie by the peculiarities of its position. It is under the Dawes Plan and under military control, it cannot yet count on a strong naval or military power as a support in its foreign policy. The German bourgeoisie has made a virtue of necessity, and drawn many lessons from its defeat in the war. Instead of the Wilhelm policy of the mailed fist, the German bourgeoisie has established a more modern diplomacy, adorned with pacifist phrases. The trust magnates' principal weapon in foreign policy, after the American example, is economic power. This policy is the more dangerous, the more peacefully it conducts itself; its exposure the more necessary, the more strongly it is supported by the social-democrats. Never before was the close spiritual relationship and connection between social pacifism and social imperialism so obvious as it is to-day. They are the two sides of the same false coin.

German foreign policy is attempting, partially with success, to utilise the opposition of interests among the other powers for itself. The German bourgeoisie found a strong support in American capital. America's interests went in two directions. Finance capital was concerned in assuring to itself the European, and, above all, the German capital market. For the farmers, the most important section of the American electorate, Central Europe was of tremendous importance as a market for foodstuffs. Both forces drove America to take up the case for the pacification of Germany, for the integrity of its borders, for an alleviation of its reparation obligations.

The exploitation of Anglo-French opposition has almost become a tradition in German foreign policy. Lately it has also attempted to exploit the opposition between France and Italy. (The Thoiry conversations are in opposition to the German-Italian treaty of arbitration.)

In its own way the German bourgeoisie is trying to exploit the opposition between Soviet Russia and the rest of the European States. It is making overtures to the Soviet Union not because it desires a serious *rapprochement* with Russia, but in order to have a tool in its hand for demanding concessions from the west European States. In the same way, employing its geographical position as a buffer State, it is trying to exert pressure on the Soviet Union to break down the barriers which the socialist State has erected against the intrusion of foreign capital.

The German trusts play an important part in clearing the way for German foreign policy. They deter-

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mine the direction of German foreign policy by their policy in the international cartels. Their economic power, on the basis of which they play a dominating part in the international cartels, is to-day the strongest card in the game of German world policy.

The regained financial power of Germany also serves the German bourgeoisie as a weapon in their foreign policy. It is enough to remember the proposals to re-buy the Saar mines and German participation in the Belgian stabilisation loan.

The German bourgeoisie has achieved some success in this foreign policy, and has made a few steps forward. The first zone of the Rhineland has been vacated, Locarno establishes guarantees for the present western frontier and so ensures the Rhineland against any attempt to separate it. Military control has been set up in the mild form of control by the League of Nations. The Dawes payments for the first years have been fixed in a form more convenient to Germany. Finally, Germany has a seat on the Council of the League of Nations, *i.e.*, it has at least obtained external recognition of its position as a Great Power.

At the present moment a certain stagnation has set in in German foreign policy; the further development of this policy now demands a closer association between Germany and other imperialist Powers. There are various currents inside the trust bourgeoisie itself. The formation of the continental iron cartel, in which the German steel trust is predominant, was the basis for Thoiry's conference, where an agreement was sought between France and Germany. By such an agreement with France the vacation of the Rhineland and the return of the Saar district was to be first of all accomplished. In the same way the struggle about production quotas for the different countries in the international iron and steel cartel was smoothed out, but such discord will be repeated, which, of course, will react politically. Thoiry is temporarily shelved.

The German chemical trust, which is closely connected with the British dye industry, shows a tendency towards an understanding with England. The Anglo-German Industrial Conference at Romsey, in which the leaders of the German chemical trust participated, was the first open effort in this direction. Hopeful negotiations for England's entry into the iron cartel are also in progress. It is well known that on its side England is trying to win over Germany and Italy to its anti-Russian policy under pledge of colonial mandates.

These different currents within the trust bourgeoisie played an important part in the last government crisis. The bourgeois bloc was finally rendered impossible by the breakdown of the Thoiry negotiations.

In all probability the period of "steering" will continue for a long time in German foreign policy, if only because, for example, in the case of a *rapprochement* with France. Germany does not want to renounce having its English cards in the background, in order to force greater concessions from France and *vice-versa* in the case of a *rapprochement* with England.

The Imperialist Character of German Foreign Policy

German foreign policy is decided by the trust bourgeoisie: its object is the re-establishment of Germany as an imperialist world Power. These facts deter-

mine the character of German foreign policy. Of course the reconstruction of German imperialism is not complete. So far we only have the process of its re-birth. It is, however, somewhat idle to discuss whether the general characteristics of the Leninist definition of imperialism apply to Germany or not. Lenin did not deal with the imperialism of an individual country, but with imperialism as a world phenomenon. Therefore the argument that Germany cannot conduct an imperialist policy because it imports capital is of no value. If Lenin had so dealt with the question he would not have been able to speak of Russia's imperialist policy during the world war, for Russia, as is well known, was a capital-importing land. But Lenin did not deal with the question mechanically, and therefore wrote:

"In Russia capitalist imperialism has entered into its most modern form in Tsarist policy in Persia, Manchuria and Mongolia, but on the whole Russia is still in the stage of military and feudalist imperialism." (Lenin: "Collected Works," German edition, Vol. XIII., p. 99.)

Lenin could see the basic factors of a phenomenon in all its actual complications and modifications. Since the capital markets in the epoch of imperialism must first be opened, an imperialist policy can be the *preliminary condition* for the export of capital. In any case the rapid growth of capital accumulation in Germany and the necessity of financing exports to an ever-increasing extent must compel the German bourgeoisie to export capital. The reparation payments are not made at the expense of capitalist accumulation, but at the cost of a lowering in the standard of life of the mass of workers.

Capitalist Germany has not completely regained its footing as an imperialist Power. The whole trend of German foreign policy shows that German imperialism is still making its way. That means, however, that sooner or later Germany will be faced by the danger of being drawn into an imperialist war. That is another important factor in the revolutionising of the broad masses. One of the most important psychological obstacles to revolution in Germany was that, until now, the masses feared war from a proletarian revolution, and saw the guarantee of peace in a bourgeois regime and in the bourgeois republic. But now the bourgeoisie is making it more and more obvious that it is the bourgeoisie itself which is responsible for the war danger.

(To be continued.)

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Comrade Brandler's "Programme of Action"

Reply of the Political Bureau of the C.C. of the C.P. of Germany

1. Introduction

COMRADE Brandler's article on the "Programme of Action" of the C.P. of Germany is of great interest to the Party and to the Comintern. Comrade Brandler is the chief representative of that policy which, in fundamental questions of tactics, is in sharp opposition to the great majority of the C.P. of Germany and the Comintern, and which since the Fifth World Congress has been repeatedly condemned by the Communist International as one of right wing opportunism. Since the years 1923-24, in which the most important struggle against the ideas represented by comrade Brandler took place, the C.P. of Germany has undergone many changes. Only insignificant fragments of the right wing, which comrade Brandler led, have remained, and there are now scarcely any comrades who openly defend the ideas formerly represented by comrade Brandler. On the other hand the Party itself, although at the cost of a grave crisis, has freed itself from the ultra-left "infantile disease" which was to some extent a reaction from the serious opportunist mistakes of the year 1923.

The period of acute struggle against the ideas of comrade Brandler is a thing of the past; not because the German Party or the Comintern took any steps to approach the political position which Brandler defended in 1923, but because Brandler himself made no attempt to carry his policy through, and therefore did not hinder the consolidation of the German Party.

It has been possible, because of this circumstance, to decide the question of drawing comrade Brandler into co-operation with the C.P. of Germany. But there is co-operation and co-operation. There is co-operation on the basis of a united common political policy, and there is co-operation which is based on the struggle for different policies, even though this struggle is carried on with complete loyalty (i.e., without exaggeration and without fractionalism).

The Party, which has in essentials overcome both right and left wing deviations, and has attained a much higher standard of political maturity than it had in the years 1923-24, must examine comrade Brandler's article not only from the standpoint of whether the Party can utilise comrade Brandler's proposals, but also from the standpoint of whether comrade Brandler has followed the development of the Party, and can co-operate on the basis of its political policy, or whether he is proposing a political policy which deviates from that of the Party.

Comrade Brandler, as he himself says at the end of his article, desires in his proposal for a Programme of Action for Germany, to give us a few suggestions for our practical work. But there is more in it than that. For whatever may be understood by the term "Programme of Action," it cannot in any case be exhausted

by a few suggestions; it must give a correct policy for the entire practical work of the Party. The Party Congress at Essen comprehensively stated in its decisions the tasks of the C.P. of Germany in the present situation. At the Congress, a group of comrades likewise proposed the formulation of a programme of action and supplementing the present slogans by the slogan of the control of production. The formulation of these proposals coincided with that of comrade Brandler. In answer to these comrades it was declared that all the practical immediate and daily slogans of the Party for the present situation should, taken in conjunction with the ultimate slogans, constitute the programme of action, Whoever demands an essentially different programme of action, obviously wishes to oppose to the present theory and practice of the Party something entirely different.

Even with regard to the present situation, a group of comrades base their demands for a programme of action on the contention that something is lacking in our Party, through which the daily struggle could be brought into a correct connection with the final aim. It is obviously the intention of comrade Brandler to fill such a supposed gap in our activity. "To connect immediate and final demands together, to develop the one out of the other"—that, according to his idea, should be the task of the Programme of Action.

If comrade Brandler believes that this connection between daily slogan and final aim is not correctly or not sufficiently established by our previous decisions, that this connection will not be correctly formulated except through his proposals, then he is asking more than he says he does; he does not merely wish to give a few suggestions for practical work, he wishes to give a **correct policy to the entire practical work of the Party.** The weaknesses and defects of our practical work, the necessity to overcome them, are incontestable. But that is not the point at issue here; the question is whether a change in the policy of the Party is necessary.

2. General Programme and Programme of Action

Comrade Brandler considers that a programme of action should deal exclusively with the struggle against the trust bourgeoisie. But the domination of monopoly capital characterises the whole epoch of the domination of imperialism, i.e., the last phase of capitalist development before the social revolution. To put forward a plan of campaign against imperialism is, however, the task of the general Communist programme, which must include the characterisation of the imperialist phase of capitalism and of the supersession of imperialism by Communism. A programme of action on the other hand should deal with the present situation of the proletarian struggle for freedom. A programme of action should serve to organise and precipitate action, and action, as

Brandler's Programme—continued

is well known, is possible only on the basis of particular demands and slogans corresponding to a definite, actual situation. A programme of action which is to serve for a whole phase of development up to the seizure of power, becomes in actual fact, if it is correct, a general programme. The connection demanded by comrade Brandler between immediate demands and ultimate objects, i.e., the carrying on of the daily struggle on the basis of ultimate aims, cannot be attained by ignoring the differences between a general programme and a programme of action, but only by the development of our propagandist slogans from the slogans of action contained in the programme of action, such propaganda slogans becoming slogans of action only in acute revolutionary situations.

What, on the other hand, does the programme of the Communist Party put forward, or what should it put forward? The programme "formulates the body of principles, objects and basic methods of struggle" of the Communists (for the principles and objects of Communism, as well as for the varied contents of these ideas, see Lenin's speech at the Third World Congress of the Comintern). The programme lays down in principle and in theory the historical world outlook of the Communists. The programme "formulates" the historical development of society from capitalism to Socialism. It enlightens the proletariat as well as all workers and oppressed peoples, as to their position in capitalist society and "shows them the way to victory over the bourgeoisie and to the construction of a Socialist society." Is the Communist programme a guide to action? Of course it is! Without that it would indeed have no meaning, and because of that the programme of every proletarian party must contain the basic tactical directions in harmony with the general principles of the Communist movement and the conditions of the transition period. The practical character of the programme was always pointed out by Lenin with particular emphasis.

Lenin declared:

"Our whole programme would indeed be nothing more than a wretched scrap of paper, if it were not in a position to help us in every chance situation and in all stages of our struggle. I have in mind help which is consistent with retaining the programme, and not with its discontinuance. In so far as our programme is the formulation of the historical development of society from capitalism to Socialism, it must also formulate in general outlines all the transitional phases of this historical development, i.e., it must always direct the proletariat to the policy corresponding to the circumstances, a policy conceived in the spirit of the approach to Socialism. It follows from that, that in general there should never come a time within the life of the proletariat when it is found necessary to abandon the programme, or when the programme abandons the proletariat.

"The practical conclusion follows that there should never be a time when the proletariat, having in the course of events, attained to power, should not be in a position, or should not be obliged to take certain measures for the realisation of its programme, as well as certain transitional measures of a Socialist nature. Behind the assertion that the Socialist programme may, at

any time in the political rule of the proletariat, prove to be completely useless, that it can give no guidance for its realisation, there is unconsciously another assertion concealed—that the Socialist programme is altogether unpracticable."

The Party programme is a guide to action, but a guide which is calculated on a whole historical epoch, the epoch of the change from capitalism to Communism, and not on months or years. The programme does not change, or more correctly, should not change, if the situation changes. Actually the Communist Party must have a programme for the whole time of its existence. In practice not one of the Communist Parties, not even that of the Soviet Union, satisfies this ideal requirement. The Bolsheviks, under Lenin's leadership in 1919, were compelled essentially to alter and supplement the old Party programme of 1903, in the drawing up of which Lenin, as well as Plekhanov (who in those times was still a consistent revolutionary), that is, two of the greatest representatives of revolutionary Marxism of that time, had taken part.

The programme of 1903 was the best which Marxism at that time was able to produce. In 1917, however, this programme proved itself to be hopelessly obsolete. There was nothing in it about the character of the new historical epoch—of imperialism and of the Soviets as the basic form of proletarian dictatorship—nor, in the circumstances of that time could it contain such matters—it contained no reference to a whole series of subordinate problems. In carrying out the New Economic Policy, the agenda included changes and additions to the programme of 1919, which was on the whole exceptionally correct, but contained no reference to that particular stage of the transition period. If even the programme of the Bolsheviks needed to be revised twice (revision not in the sense of reformist "revisionism," but in the sense of dealing more concretely with the conditions of the transition period and the methods of struggle of the working class), it is on the whole probable that the programme of the Comintern and its other sections will have to be re-written, added to and changed in its details more than once in the course of historical events. When, in spite of that, we say that the programme of the Communists should not change with changes in the temporary situation, we are not referring to the objective difficulties which inevitably arise in the working out of the programme and which express the limitations of our possibilities of knowledge, for it is not possible to foresee all the stages of the transition from capitalism to Communism. We have in mind the subjective purpose which Communists must place before themselves in working out the Party programme. The programme must direct the working class "to the policy corresponding to the circumstances, in the spirit of the approach to Socialism," **for the whole period of the struggle for a Communist society.** The programme must include "in general outlines all the transitional phases" of social development from capitalism to Communism. If that is not completely attained, it is only because the powers of human foresight are not sufficient for this, and not because the most perfect methods of knowledge, such as historical materialism is, cannot serve this purpose.

1. A Programme of Action

The "programme of action" is an entirely different

Brandler's Programme—continued

matter. The programme of action is a tactical platform, which should contain the temporary demands of the given situation. We have shown that the Party programme must give the proletariat the general "policy in the circumstances, in the spirit of the approach to Socialism." The programme of action is a particular case of the employment of this general policy at a given political moment, in a given concrete situation. The slogans and the tactics of the Party must change according to changes in the objective situation. That is one of the incontestable principles of the revolutionary struggle. This principle was expressed by Wilhelm Liebknecht, in his remark which has become a well-known proverb, that the tactics of the Party can be changed twenty-four times within twenty-four hours. In exactly the same manner the programme of action must be changed **in accordance with the changing situation**. Its basis is always the analysis and the consideration of the actual position. Comrade Brandler himself deems it necessary for the formulation of the "programme of action" to explain his ideas "in a coherent form, and above all with regard to the actual position." It is another question as to how far he is able to fulfil this task successfully. But in this respect he has put the problem correctly. This circumstance, however, exposes particularly clearly the general mistakes of comrade Brandler. In fact, the programme of the Comintern, as well as the programme of the separate sections, rests (or should rest) on a study of the entire epoch of the development from capitalism to Communism. The "programme of action" on the other hand, is based on the particularities of any given situation and arises from the peculiarity of the temporary, actual situation. The programme of the Communists is a general guide to action for the duration of the whole epoch of the proletarian revolution. The "programme of action" on the other hand is an immediate practical guide for the struggle in a given situation. Object, immediate purpose, starting point and contents are here heterogeneous. Does that mean that the "programme of action" is necessarily in contradiction to, or not in harmony with, the general programme? Of course, not. That does not follow by any means. A good "programme of action," that is, a tactical platform, is always needed by the Party. The tactics of the Party are decided not only by the objects and principles of the Communist movement, but also by the objective conditions of the given time. When the tactical tasks of the Party in a given situation are stated in a particular platform, there you have your "programme of action." Such programmes are necessary in certain situations. But we must protest against the confusion of programmes of action with the general Party programme. Comrade Brandler's mistakes consist in doing that. What comrade Brandler proposes to the German Party as a skeleton or sketch of a "programme of action" serves, in consequence of its confusion between programme and tactics, neither as a general programme, nor as a tactical platform of action. The chief cause of that is that comrade Brandler's "programme of action" is built on a false political basis. The methodological mistake on the question of a programme is connected with an incorrect political policy.

* * * * *

At the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern there was an interesting discussion, arising from the question of the programme, between comrades Bukharin and Thalheimer, on the so-called transition demands. This discussion has a direct bearing on the problem raised by comrade Brandler in his argument. We shall, therefore, go into it briefly.

Comrade Bukharin at the Fourth World Congress spoke against the inclusion of the transitional and incomplete demands in the programme of the Comintern:

"A few comrades maintain," said comrade Bukharin, "that tactical questions, as, for example, the United Front tactic, or the question of a Labour Government, must also be dealt with in the programme. Comrade Varga declared that those who protest against it betray cowardice of thought." (Radek, interrupting: "Quite so!"). "I, however, maintain that the desire to settle these questions once and for all is nothing but an expression of the opportunist tendencies of a few comrades. (Laughter.) Questions and slogans concerning the united front or a Labour Government rest on a fluctuating basis. This basis exists in a certain holding down of the working class movement. And then these comrades want to define systematically the condition of defence in which the proletariat finds itself, and so make the offensive impossible. We shall never allow (Radek: "Who are the we?"). By "we" I mean all the best elements of the Communist International (laughter and applause). We shall never allow such points to be included in the programme."

Purely tactical questions should be, according to comrade Bukharin's proposal, brought together in a special programme of action, which can be changed at any moment, even every two weeks. Comrade Thalheimer was against the exclusion of the transitional and partial demands from the general programme of the Comintern and from the programmes of the different countries. He insisted on the fact that the programme should not contain "concrete demands, worked out in every detail," but fundamental tactical directions, tactical principles . . . "from which all these individual concrete demands can be exactly and unequivocally deduced."

2. Immediate Demands

The exclusion of temporary demands from the programme, and the separation of tactics from objects and principles signifies—according to comrade Thalheimer's speech—a danger of opportunism. On this point he referred to the history of the Second International.

In this case comrade Thalheimer's objections to comrade Bukharin were absolutely correct. The Congress of the Comintern rejected comrade Bukharin's standpoint. In the resolution of the Fourth Congress which was passed after Lenin had intervened, the question of the programme was thus dealt with:

"The programmes of the national sections must clearly and definitely lay down the necessity of transitional demands, and corresponding reservations made in regard to the dependence of these demands on the actual circumstances of the time and place.

"In the general programme of the Comintern a theoretical basis for all transitional and partial demands must be given; **this Congress at the**

Brandler's Programme—continued

same time condemns decisively the tendency which sees opportunism in the inclusion of transitional demands in the programme, just as it condemns all attempts to ignore or to substitute for the fundamental revolutionary tasks partial demands."

While rejecting comrade Bukharin's point of view with regard to the question of transitional demands, the Congress did not identify itself completely with the ideas of comrade Thalheimer. Besides what has already been briefly summarised above, comrade Thalheimer declared at the Congress that:

"It appears to me that in this transition period, there are, besides the questions which vary from country to country, and from month to month, and even from week to week, a great number of important questions of a general character, which must certainly be defined in the Communist programme. . . . I should like to go into a few problems of the transition period, which in my opinion must certainly be included in the general programme. Among these I count the question of the control of production, of State capitalism, and of a correct policy on the taxation and financial policies of the individual parties. (Quite true!) These are the questions with which the Party has to deal daily. Their actual forms change (Bukharin: "Really!"). Yes, they change, but there must be a correct policy from which the suitable practical directions may be derived. Let us take, for example, the Erfurt programme, which contains the principles of a taxation policy, and is today already out of date."

These are the proposals of comrade Thalheimer, which were not accepted by the Fourth World Congress. The Congress considered that the inclusion of transitional demands in the programmes of the Communist Parties was possible, with the reservation "of the dependence of these demands on the actual circumstances of the time and place." Comrade Thalheimer on the other hand proposed to include in the general programme of the Comintern the demands regarding workers' control, the correct attitude with regard to financial policies, etc., **without any reservations**. He believed that these demands and these directions were common to all the Communist Parties and would preserve their strength for the whole time until the seizure of power by the proletariat. Throughout the whole of comrade Thalheimer's argument there runs like a red thread, the idea that the Communists, besides a general programme, must also have a **minimum programme** which should define the permanent demands of the Party in the period before the seizure of power. That comrade Thalheimer did propose that such a minimum programme should be accepted, is proved by his reference to the Erfurt programme, whose demands he considered insufficient and obsolete, while, however, accepting the **type** of these demands. The same is proved by comrade Thalheimer's actual words in the same speech at the Fourth Congress, which runs as follows:

"Now I will pass to that question . . . on which I differ so sharply from comrade Bukharin. It is the question of transitional demands, of partial demands and of the minimum programme."

In his polemic against Bukharin, comrade Thalheimer tried to appeal to Lenin's pamphlet which ap-

peared in the autumn of 1917 ("The Revision of the Party Programme"). In this pamphlet Lenin insisted on retaining the minimum programme until the supremacy of the bourgeoisie is overthrown. Comrade Thalheimer's reference to Lenin on this question is, however, ill-founded. After the victorious October rising, after the beginning of the European revolutions and after the formation of the Communist International, the international Communist movement was faced by a great number of fundamental problems of strategy and tactics which were completely different from those existing in 1917 before the October revolution. In order to understand Lenin's opinion as to whether the Communist Parties should retain the minimum programme, one has only to refer to the decisions of the Third World Congress of the Comintern, which were arrived at with Lenin's direct participation. In the resolution of the Third World Congress dealing with tactics—in the resolution which Lenin had to defend against the then "left" comrade Thalheimer, there is the following:

". . . Every demand of the masses must be made a starting point of revolutionary actions, which, by degrees, will unite together and form the mighty torrent of the social revolution.

"In this struggle the Communist Parties do not put forward any minimum programme which would, within the framework of capitalism, strengthen and improve capitalism's tottering structure. The destruction of capitalism is now as before, the principal task of the Communists. But in order to fulfil this task, the Communist Parties must advance demands which satisfy the urgent claims of the working class. The Communists must carry through these demands by mass struggle, irrespective of whether they are compatible with the existence of the capitalist order of society or not. . . .

"Instead of the minimum programme of the Centrists and Reformists, the Communist International proposes the struggle for the practical needs of the proletariat, for a system of demands which in their totality destroy the power of the bourgeoisie, organise the proletariat and state the stages in the struggle of the proletariat for a dictatorship."

The idea of a minimum programme was thus buried at the Third World Congress of the Comintern. We are, of course, far from asserting that comrade Thalheimer wished to burden the Comintern with a minimum programme which would strengthen and improve capitalism. We merely wish to point out that the very proposal for a minimum programme which comrade Thalheimer made at the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern, was false and could not in any circumstances be justified by reference to Lenin.

What is comrade Brandler's "Programme of Action"? In the article it says:

"Put briefly, the Party must have a programme of action that brings together in systematic coherence, the separate demands put forward by it. This programme of action is not to be a new edition of the Erfurt programme, as Maslov proposed in 1925. For reasons already mentioned, we cannot limit ourselves to a programme of reforms within the bourgeois States and within capitalism. On the other hand a programme of action cannot be merely a collection of ultimate aims. It is essentially the task of a programme of action to bind immediate and final demands together, to develop the one out of the other. A programme of action,

Brandler's Programme—continued

therefore, requires in addition to its immediate daily demands (wages, hours of work, etc.), a number of general rules, which can be understood by the mass of workers because of their daily needs and requirements, because of their actual mental ripeness, directions whose execution, however, means a revolutionary attack on the capitalist economic system and places the supremacy of the bourgeoisie in question. They are general rules of a temporary character, transitional demands, but not in the same way as the demands made in the Erfurt programme, which were to be realised within the bourgeois States: they are demands which, failing their execution, will, if taken up in the struggle, lead on to the final struggle and the ultimate objects."

The "programme of action," then, according to comrade Brandler, cannot be "merely a collection of ultimate aims." Nor can it be limited to the demands for reforms which are possible within capitalist society. It must bind together "the immediate daily demands and the final demands." How is such a connection to be made? By omitting from the "programme of action" **both the fundamental Communist principles and the practical daily and partial demands.** The "programme of action," according to comrade Brandler's own words, is based **neither on the general aims and principles of the Communist movement, nor on the particular concrete tactical momentary tasks, but on transitional demands of a general character.** What are these "general" transitional demands? Let us remember what comrade Thalheimer said at the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern about the control of production, State capitalism, and a guiding policy with regard to taxation and finance. He tried to show that even problems of the transition period are of a general character in all countries and in all times until the seizure of power. Comrade Thalheimer demanded their inclusion in the general programme of the Comintern. The World Congress, however, did not accept this. Now comrade Brandler includes these questions, and only these, in his "programme of action." The point must here be made that his programme of action is also calculated on the basis of **the whole period of the seizure of power by the working class.**

The Fourth World Congress of the Comintern condemned "all attempts to ignore the fundamental revolutionary tasks or to substitute these by partial demands." Comrade Brandler's programme of action is such an attempt. And now it is obvious that comrade Bukharin was not altogether wrong when he maintained at the Fourth Congress that "the desire to settle these questions once and for all (in a programme) is nothing but an expression of the opportunist tendencies of a few comrades."

3. Engels and the Programme

Comrade Brandler, who puts transitional demands in the place of the fundamental revolutionary tasks of the Communist movement, tries to support his ideas by appealing to Engels. He places the transitional demands of his programme on a level with the measures proposed by Engels and Marx in 1847. Comrade Brandler, however, overlooks one "trifle." Engels, in

the article quoted by comrade Brandler, speaks of revolutionary measures "**which the entire revolutionary proletariat, weapon in hand**" will defend, and for which it will struggle. Engels was dealing with measures for the gradual change of the whole mechanism of production, a change which can only be effected **after the seizure of political power by the working class**, or, as the "Communist Manifesto" puts it, after the "**rise of the proletariat to be the ruling class.**" The measures of which Engels spoke in the article quoted by comrade Brandler, were also formulated in the "Communist Manifesto," and in the "Programme of the Communists." They are—transitional measures, that cannot be disputed. But the proletariat "organised as the ruling class" must carry these measures into effect. How then can such transitional measures (which will complete the change from the first stage of the political rule of the working class to the complete abolition of class domination) be compared with "transitional demands" which the Party puts forward as "central" tasks before the overthrow of the capitalist ruling power?

How can these mistakes of comrade Brandler be explained? It seems to us that we must look for the explanation in the objective tendencies of the "programme of action" put forward by comrade Brandler, in its own internal logic. Brandler's programme of action is based entirely on transitional demands. It has no place either for final aims, nor for general principles, nor for the principal revolutionary slogans of the Communist movement. It is, therefore, no accident that comrade Brandler, in his introduction to the programme of action, speaks in a general manner of the necessity for associating final aims with daily demands, but in his programme does not make one attempt to connect his principal slogan "Control of production" with ultimate objects. It is obvious that with such a political attitude, the prospect of the revolutionary uprising is obliterated, that the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat loses its sharpness and that the boundaries which divide the bourgeois from the proletarian State are obliterated and disappear. A "programme of action" which merely defines a system of transitional demands, inevitably gives rise to opportunist tendencies. The opportunism exists in the fact that the task of a revolutionary seizure of power is thrust aside out of sight by a system of transitional demands, or is even abolished. That is the internal logic of the Brandler "Programme of Action" and this logic is most fully exposed by the quotation from Engels, which comrade Brandler believed was able to support his "programme of action."

(To be continued.)

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