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The Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

THE Plenum of the E.C.C.I. has to decide how far the decisions of the Sixth Congress have been justified by experience, to estimate the changes in the international situation since the congress, and indicate the immediate tasks of the C.P.s arising from those changes.

The "Rights," a considerable number of whom are already on the other side of the barricades, have in principle rejected the decisions of the Sixth Congress. The conciliators accepted those decisions in word, but have distorted their sense by considering only the stabilising factors of capitalism as characteristic of the third post-war period, and ignoring the accentuation of the antagonisms arising from the present phase of partial stabilisation, which, as the Sixth Congress declared, has the effect of more and more unsettling that stabilisation.

Events have shown that the characteristic feature of the third period is the accentuation of internal and international antagonisms, the tempo of which is continually increasing; thus completely unmasking the opportunism of the conciliators.

THE contradiction between the tremendous development of production possibilities and the constriction of markets was recognised by the Sixth Congress as the basic contradiction of the period. Since the congress this contradiction has developed. The U.S.A., which is still the most prosperous capitalist country, is being drawn more and more into the general world crisis of capitalism. There are four million unemployed in the U.S.A. to-day. In this country of industrial "prosperity" there was a continuous annual increase of labour-power from 1879 to the year 1914; that increase has now stopped and turned into an absolute decline in the number of industrial workers. During the period 1919 to 1929 there was an increase in labour-power for two years; the other eight show a reduction in the number of industrial workers. Beginning with the year 1919, American statistics show a decline by the process of the transference of workers from the sphere of production to the sphere of services, distribution and consumption.

At the same time, despite the known reserves in the South (the establishment of new

industrial centres, etc.), the U.S.A. is showing an unprecedented aggressiveness in the frantic struggle for markets and spheres for the investment of capital. The enormous capital and credit resources which cannot find a productive application in the U.S.A. are circulating in the realm of stock exchange speculation, a fact which has disorganised the credit machinery of the country which was recently the regulator of the money market of the world.

IN Germany, the most favourable economic period came to an end in 1927; since then the curve of German economy has shown a downward trend. In April, 1929, the number of persons unemployed reached the total of 1,800,000, which exceeded the previous year's total by 400,000. Summarising all the categories of unemployed and paupers, and including their families, we obtain the enormous figure of eight million persons without work and living on subsidies, unemployment pay, or charities. This constitutes one-seventh of the total population of Germany. As a result of this situation, as Comrade Thälmann said at the congress of the German C.P.: "Out of every hundred children born of proletarian parents, sixty-five die before they reach the age of fourteen, whereas only fifteen out of every hundred die in the case of the children of bourgeois parents." The final regulation of the reparations problem—the realisation of the Dawes Plan—which reduced the sum of debt in the normal reparation year from 2,500,000 to 2,050,000 marks, will temporarily continue the situation as a "normal" one, leaving the severe problem of markets open.

Fascist Poland, having experienced a favourable economic period (due to the help given to her by the Entente States with a view to using her in their war preparations), has now entered upon a period of economic crisis. The total deficit in the trading balance during the past two years is over 1.6 milliard zloties. The private discount rate has reached the enormous figure of 42 per cent. per annum; the percentage of unaccepted bills is rising, and a mass dismissal of workers is taking place, particularly in the textile industry.

In "prosperous" France the wages are lower

than in Germany and the movement in wages is considerably behind the increase in the cost of living; wages are now not more than three-quarters of the real wages of pre-war times. At the present time another strong attack is being made on the workers' standards by the introduction of a law to increase house rents to a tremendous extent.

In Britain, as in Germany, one-seventh of the population is unemployed. Including the families and paupers there are six million persons living on unemployment pay or relief. The Conservative Government suffered defeat because it failed to solve the problem of the decline of the basic industries and to alleviate the miseries of unemployment. The Labour Government which has followed it is spreading the illusion among the masses that it will realise a "constructive" programme. But when it is remembered that the Labour Party has long since struck the proposal of the capital levy as well as the nationalisation of the textile and coal-mining industries out of its programme, it becomes evident that under the guise of a "constructive" programme the Labour Government will carry through capitalist rationalisation in Britain by the same methods as are employed by other bourgeois governments, *i.e.*, solely at the expense of the working class. And those social works which the Labour Government is so lavishly promising to introduce for the purpose of relieving unemployment, cannot compensate for the growth in the cost of living owing to further deflation and the reduction of workers in the basic spheres of industry. This reduction is largely due to the introduction of capitalist rationalisation by the fusion of and the selection of enterprises and the intensification of labour, a process which will become even more intensive as time passes. MacDonald feeds the workers with sanctimonious sermons, but the workers will not find their hunger satisfied by them.

THE Sixth Congress of the Comintern noted that the intensification of international antagonisms was taking three main courses: that between Britain and the U.S.A., that between the imperialist Powers and the colonies, and first and foremost, that between the capitalist world and the U.S.S.R.

Since the Sixth Congress, each of these antagonisms has developed in intensity. The economic struggle between Britain and the U.S.A., leading to the struggle for hegemony throughout the whole world, brings ever clearer to our eyes the prospect of war between these two imperialist Powers, a war for which both sides are making intensified preparations. This struggle is formally concentrated around three issues: naval armaments; sea rights (the right to carry on commerce in war-time, or the freedom of the seas); and pacifist rivalry (the question of the basis on which the "legality" or illegality of war shall be recognised,—whether on the basis of the American Kellogg Pact or on that of the League of Nations statutes). The accentuation of the antagonisms between the U.S.A. and Britain led to the revival of the Entente through the Anglo-French agreement, which was chiefly directed against the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.

The coming to power of a Labour Government in Britain has created the semblance of a change in this situation. The MacDonald Government is now undertaking a pacifist manœuvre directed towards a *rapprochement* between Britain and the U.S.A. It is quite obvious that this manœuvre has only one object—that of deluding the masses. Inasmuch as MacDonald's Government does not even hide the fact that its foreign policy will maintain the link of continuity with the policy of the late Conservative Government, inasmuch as it intends energetically to insist on maintaining all Britain's imperialist positions just as much as the Conservative, only by more flexible methods. The intensification of the antagonism between Britain and the U.S.A. is inevitable, and the latter has clearly demonstrated this in reacting to the victory of the Labour Party by laying down new cruisers. Consequently it is highly probable that the organ of the Italian militant Fascists, the *Tevere*, will prove to be correct when, in writing of the forthcoming negotiations between MacDonald and Hoover on the freedom of the sea, it stated: "We are profoundly convinced that the negotiations with America will evoke a strong reaction in the Labour Party. Then we shall see in what European port MacDonald will seek refuge on his return trip from America. Recently MacDonald prophesied

what would happen within ten years' time. But we would like to hear his view as to what is going to happen within ten months, when all his good intentions are burst like a toy air-balloon."

THE accentuation of the antagonisms between the imperialist Powers and the colonies has recently been already revealed. The general strike in Bombay indicates the beginning of a revolutionary rise in India, and the harsh repression of that movement to which the Conservative Government resorted is continued with the same ardour by the MacDonald Government, which is rejecting even the most moderate demands of the Indian national bourgeoisie, and from which even the Swarajists have therefore nothing to expect. The trial of Budhakeswar Dutt and Bhagat Singh had hardly ended when under a Labour Government the trial of thirty-one active workers in the left-wing workers' movement was begun at Meerut; the prisoners being accused of being connected with the Comintern, of the organisation of a Workers' and Peasants' Party, and of attempting to overthrow the sovereignty of the British King over India. In Egypt British imperialism is supporting the régime of dictatorship, in Morocco civil war has again broken out between the Moroccans and the French occupants, in Tripoli a fight is going on between the Italians and the native tribes, and so on.

But the antagonism which has shown the greatest intensification is that between the capitalist world and the U.S.S.R. The work of surrounding and of preparing for war on the U.S.S.R. is being carried on with extraordinary persistence. The enormous five-year plan for developing Socialist construction in the Soviet Republic is now being successfully realised owing to the enthusiasm of the proletariat and the firmness of the leadership, and despite the great economic difficulties and despite the vacillations and waverings of the unstable right-wing elements in the party. And this fact is inciting the world bourgeoisie to accelerate the beginning of the war on the U.S.S.R. and to reduce the period of "breathing-space." This is testified to by Britain's provocation policy in Afghanistan, and by a number of new military agreements—

the Polish-Roumanian, the Roumanian-Hungarian, and so on—the coming to power of the Polish adventurist “generals’ government,” and many other symptoms. The Anglo-French agreement also was of considerable service to this preparation. Finally, the realisation of the Young Plan, the agreement with Germany on the reparations question—concluded with the direct participation of German social-democracy—represents Germany’s latest step in the direction of a “western orientation,” a new step towards Germany’s inclusion in an anti-Soviet bloc, although, of course, this does not exclude the possibility of Germany manœuvring in regard to the U.S.S.R. in the immediate future.

THE advent of a Labour Government in Britain creates the semblance of a change of the situation in this sphere also. But it is only a semblance. Not only the working masses, but considerable sections of bourgeois business circles have declared in favour of renewal of relations with the U.S.S.R., doing so in the interests of British industry, which has great need of markets. The leader of the Liberal Party, Lloyd George, has also expressed his expectation that the Labour Government will immediately correct the profound mistake of the Arcos raid and will restore diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. The slogan of restoration of relations with the U.S.S.R. was one of the Labour Party’s chief slogans in the struggle with the Conservatives during the election. The official programme of the Labour Party, adopted at the last congress, spoke of an immediate renewal of relations. And the official election programme of the Labour Party, published on May Day and signed by MacDonald, Henderson and Clynes, also said the same thing. Despite all this, on coming to power MacDonald began to delay his decision on the question: and apparently MacDonald will consider the question of relations with U.S.S.R. jointly with Hoover during his visit to Washington. According to the statement of the London correspondent of the *New York Evening Post*, MacDonald wants to take the position of intermediary between the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist world, counting on having influence with

Russian Communism and on making it more moderate in doing so. It rather looks as though the old fox MacDonald was from the very beginning intending to use the question of recognition of the U.S.S.R. in order to forge a united front between Britain and the U.S.A. with a view to economic pressure on the Soviet Republic. It was never any secret to us that he would shamelessly trick his electorate. We shall not attempt to guess the result of the discussions between MacDonald and Hoover, but one thing is clear: no matter what their result and how the question of renewal of relations with the U.S.S.R. is decided, the “pacifist” Labour Government, retaining the link of continuity with the Conservative Government, will openly or secretly prepare for war on the U.S.S.R. As we know from experience, the presence of a diplomatic representative in Moscow not only will not hinder, but may even in certain regards be of advantage to this “benevolent” task.

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THE Sixth Congress of the Comintern spoke of a leftward trend of the working class. Since then that leftward movement has made swift strides, although the process is not proceeding at an equal rate in all countries and in all the sections of the working class. The parliamentary elections in France, Germany and Poland in the spring of 1928 all indicated this leftward trend. Then the great wave of strike movements which spread all over Europe, America and India witnessed to the same process. Not a year has passed since the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and the Fourth Congress of the Profintern, but during that period the working class of Germany has passed through a series of large economic struggles. In Poland there has been the general strike of 100,000 Lodz workers, in France mass economic conflicts are breaking out everywhere (amounting to not less than 100 strike conflicts monthly over the last few months). In Austria we have had strikes for the first time against rationalisation, in the U.S.A. an elemental strike movement has developed (especially in the Southern States). Particularly noteworthy are the innumerable sectional strikes since the beginning of 1929 in Britain, where the depression

in the strike movement since the defeat of the working class in 1926 has been at its greatest; and also a number of strikes of agricultural workers in Europe (Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, France) which acquired a sharply political character. Finally, the peculiarity of the present phase of development consists in the circumstance that this intensified strike struggle has passed to the colonial and semi-colonial countries also (the strike of 140,000 textile workers in Bombay, the general strike of the banana plantation workers in Columbia), acquiring dimensions and ruthless forms hitherto unknown in those countries. All this witnesses to the fact that the leftward movement of the working class is being accelerated and is acquiring an international character.

IT is characteristic of the present strike movement that the unorganised workers are displaying great activity. This is a sure sign of a growth of the prerequisites for a revolutionary situation. It was this activity of the unorganised workers which enabled the Polish comrades in Lodz and the German comrades in the Ruhr to head the strike movement and to break through the united front of the State machinery—the employers and reformist unions—despite the sabotage of the “Rights” and the conciliators in their ranks. The extraordinary activity of the unorganised masses also enabled our parties in Germany and Poland to take a step forward in strike tactics by comparison with the instruction laid down at the Fourth Congress of the Profintern (the organisation of strike committees elected directly by all the workers in the factories). A strong increase in the activity of the unorganised workers enabled our German comrades to obtain a number of great victories over Social-Democracy in the largest factories during the election of the factory committees, and this despite the fact that the campaign was not sufficiently prepared. Our party’s successes in the elections to the factory committees have aroused the strongest alarm among the bourgeoisie and especially the Social-Democrats. The *Rhenische-Westphalische Zeitung* of 11th April wrote: “Today a stronger hand is being stretched out to the throat of the State and is unconditionally

declaring to the whole world: ‘at the decisive moment we shall transform the Lein factory into a centre of the proletarian insurrection.’” The *German Foundry Works Newspaper*, which is the leading organ of German heavy industry, wrote: “Consequently we are here confronted with an extremely serious problem. Yes, we are not afraid to say yes: the most serious problem in Germany. Here we have a party which almost from day to day is growing stronger in regard to adherents and achieved successes, a party which is consciously and proudly placing itself outside the fatherland, outside co-operation in the work of satisfying its needs and of its restoration, a party which is consciously and proudly declaring itself the servant and instrument of a foreign Power and whose aim is the overthrow of the State system in favour of a foreign Power. . . .”

“Moscow sees its sole salvation in the transformation of Germany into a country of proletarian dictatorship, into a Communist and Bolshevik State of Soviets. Such is the problem. The German State is through Moscow’s activities put in a position in which it must defend itself against this terrible, menacing danger. It must apply itself to this problem and must resolve it”

The growth of a militant mood among the proletariat found clear expression on May Day, when despite the threat of armed suppression a workers’ demonstration 200,000 strong flocked on to the streets of Berlin and defended itself from the hounds of Zoergiebel by erecting barricades in Neukölln and in Wedding; and when in Paris 80 per cent. of the metal workers, 100 per cent. of the builders and woodworkers, and 45 per cent. of the chemists struck work. It is characteristic of the latest phase of the growth of the workers’ movement that in certain countries not only industrial workers, but also employees in the State enterprises and the peasants are beginning to participate. In the Western Ukraine an extensive strike movement of agricultural labourers developed, intense in its struggle and taking the form of a political movement. In June there was an enormous strike of 30,000 agricultural workers in Czecho-Slovakia, against which the whole police and military machinery was directed. During the May Day

demonstrations in Poland some thirty thousand peasants participated, and in more than a score of towns they demonstrated with their own red banners, joining with the workers in their resistance to the attacks of the fascist police. At the present time there is a strike of the postal workers in France, and at a protest meeting of ten thousand State employees a resolution was adopted to consolidate the united front and to struggle against the State as an employer. And in France also on May 23rd there was a demonstration of reservists, singing the "International" and shouting "Hurrah for the Soviets!" On May 20th there was a similar demonstration of 800 reservists in Bourg St. Maurice, who approached the military division to which they had been assigned, singing the "International," and obtained the release of six arrested reservists. There is not a directly revolutionary situation in Europe as yet, but we see that all the prerequisites for such a situation are developing.

THE leftward movement of the working class is not proceeding at an equal pace. That leftward trend is particularly in evidence at the present moment in Germany. It is much more fluctuating in Britain. A strong depression set in among the worker masses in Britain after the defeat of the general strike and the miners' lockout. The strike wave fell lower than it had been at any time over the previous thirty years. A strike movement has recently shown signs of development. And it is noteworthy that here as on the continent the unorganised have been very active in the movement and that the strikes have occurred despite and against the will of the trade unions. But in general the rise of the movement of the British proletariat is proceeding not in a direct line but indirectly; the British working masses are moving forward, gropingly. The dissatisfaction of the working masses of Britain found expression in the recent election through the great defeat suffered by the Conservative Government. But the working masses who voted against the Conservatives could not bring themselves to vote for the Communists. The Communists, who put forward candidates in twenty-five out of over 600 constituencies, obtained only 56,000 votes, despite the fact

that the election meetings organised by the Communists were well attended by the workers, and despite the fact that the Communists were received sympathetically at those meetings. The immense majority of the workers did not vote for them because they were afraid of splitting the workers' vote and thus against their will allowing the Conservatives to return to office, and also because they wished once more to see whether, after receiving a considerable increase in seats and coming to power, the Labour Party would alleviate their situation.

Undoubtedly the Labour Party's victory will ultimately serve to clear the minds of the British working class and speed its revolutionary development. The Labour Government will speedily show the working class that it is impotent to realise even that extraordinarily modest liberal programme which the Labour Party put forward at the elections. Whilst MacDonald, finding himself at the helm of State, continues to lull the working masses with smooth talk of "industrial peace," the Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Associations have decided at a meeting in Manchester to follow the example of owners of the spinning mills and to propose to their members that they should insist on an immediate 12½ per cent. reduction of wages. Thus there is a threat of reduction in wages for 500,000 workers in the Lancashire textile industry, and that is merely the first move. The British working masses will speedily be convinced that the real objective task of the Labour Government consists in lightening the bourgeoisie's task of introducing capitalist rationalisation at the expense of the workers, so as to draw the imperialist cord still tighter around the necks of Britain's colonial slaves and with clever manoeuvres to close the ring of the anti-Soviet *bloc*. Some of the workers already realise this. It is a small but significant fact that the tiny British Communist Party was able to enrol six hundred new members into the party during the elections, when it was going against the current. It foreshadows that the coming to power of the Labour Party will assist our C.P. to transform itself into a mass party, if it carries out thoroughly the independent policy under the slogan of "class against class" which was laid down at the

Ninth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., and is not afraid for a certain period to sail against the current.

* * *

THE Sixth Congress of the Comintern recognised that during the past period Social-Democracy had acted in the rôle of the last reserve of the bourgeoisie, as a bourgeois "Labour Party." At the same time it recognised, despite the declarations of the conciliators, that the fascist methods adopted in the struggle with the revolutionary movement are to be found in a rudimentary form both in the practice of many Social-Democratic parties and in the practice of the reformist bureaucracy. Since then, international Social-Democracy has made another considerable step forward in this direction, being gradually transformed from a Social-Imperialist into a Social-Fascist party. In this regard also, events have absolutely confirmed the correctness of the policy of the Sixth Congress, and the shortsightedness and cowardice of the conciliators, who, afraid of "isolation" as the result of the introduction of the "class against class" tactics, maintained that the Social-Democracy had not suffered any change during the post-war years, that it remained the same as it had been in war-time and during the years immediately after the war, that the Social-Democrats serve the bourgeoisie with bourgeois democratic methods, and that those methods are fundamentally different from the fascist methods. The ridiculousness of these theories of the "Rights" and conciliators was shown, when fear of the growing wave of the workers' movement aroused the bourgeoisie in "democratic" Germany to raise the issue of the establishment of a dictatorship régime, and when the leaders of German Social-Democracy hastened to express their readiness to undertake the accomplishment of this task in order to deal with the growing revolutionary movement. Grzesinsky and Muller announced that when "the interests of the republic" require it they would put those interests "above the interests of party." That was not only a miserable but a profoundly false and hypocritical declaration. There is not the slightest contradiction between the interests of the bourgeois republic and the interests of the Social-Democratic

Democratic parties. When Zoergiebel gave the order to fire on the workers he did so not only as a police official of the republic, but, as he stated, with the knowledge and consent of the Social-Democratic party and the Reformist unions.

It is nothing new for the Social-Democrats to shoot down the workers and to support an imperialist war. Scheidemann's movements during the war and the sanguinary steps taken by the Noskes and Severings during the revolutionary crisis will never be erased from the memory of the proletariat. But the new factor is that the Social-Democrats are now shooting down the workers, not only at a moment of revolution which had overtaken them in confusion and plunged them into panic, but are themselves making planned preparations by provocation to give the workers a blood-bath in order to shatter the advance-guard of the working class and to forestall the revolution. That was the purport of Zoergiebel's manœuvres on May Day, and although the Social-Democrats were not successful in that manœuvre, although the bullets of the Zoergiebel police hounds only intensified the indignation of the workers and their sympathy for the Communists, the Zoergiebels have not in the least renounced their provocational plan. This is evident from the conference of Social-Democratic leaders which has been exposed in a letter written by a Social-Democratic worker to the Congress of the C.P. of Germany, showing that Zoergiebel has withdrawn the prohibition of demonstrations only in order to establish a more favourable situation for a further provocation.

Social-Democracy, which has closely fused with trust capital, is not merely conscientiously accomplishing the task of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, but is accomplishing it enthusiastically and proudly. The chairman of the Social-Democratic party, Wels, declared at the Magdeburg party day that if anyone has any right to "save the republic," to set up a dictatorship against the revolutionary working class, "that right belongs definitely and above all to social-democracy."

In this Social-Fascist company the most loathsome rôle of all is that played by the "left wing" Social-Democrats. In practice

they completely approve and support every shameful step taken by the right wing Social-Democratic leaders. But, seeing the growth of dissatisfaction among the Social-Democratic working masses, who are beginning to abandon that treacherous party in thousands, they seek all ways of making fools of these workers with "left wing" phrases, prostituting Marxism in the most unconscionable fashion, whilst swearing by its name. These "left wing" Social-Democrats are the most dangerous of all the enemies of the proletarian revolution.

* * *

A DIRECTLY revolutionary situation does not yet exist in Western Europe. But the prerequisites for that revolutionary situation are developing, and it is already evident that when that directly revolutionary situation arrives, the first fight in the civil war will, in a number of countries, be waged between the revolutionary proletariat, marching under the banner of the C.P., and the labour aristocracy and bourgeoisie, marching under the leadership of Social-Democracy; just as during the October revolution the first fights took place between the Bolsheviks on the one hand and the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries on the other. For Social-Democracy is now the advance-guard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. The success in those battles will depend on which side the working class takes, and the best preparation for this consists in winning here and now the decisive sections of the working class while the movement is developing. That task is possible now, for the objective situation is very favourable to the C.P.s. The achievement of this task is only possible in the process of a developing class struggle under the leadership of the C.P.s. But there must be an intelligent co-ordination of the construction of illegal machinery with the leadership of various open mass demonstrations—street processions, economic strikes developing into political strikes, and the breaking-down of the police and trade union legalism. Further, there must be an intelligent co-ordination of the initiative in every movement with the policy of the united front from below, with the tactics of drawing the mass reserves into the demonstrations of the advance-guard.

But, above all, in order to achieve this task the C.P.s must tighten up and reconstruct their own ranks.

* * *

TAKING into account the development of large class struggles and the proximity of the war danger, and seeing how the unstable elements in the party were taking fright at these revolutionary prospects, the Sixth Congress of the Comintern recognised that the greatest danger at the present time is the right-wing danger and the conciliatory attitude to that danger. As a result of this decision, it issued the slogan of a ruthless struggle with the "Rights" and conciliators. On this issue, the events of the last few months have completely justified the Sixth Congress's estimate of the situation and its slogan. Immediately after the Sixth Congress an internal party crisis developed in Germany, and then in Czecho-Slovakia, on the basis of a struggle with the "Rights" and conciliators. Immediately after the Sixth Congress there developed the struggle with the right-wing danger in the C.P.S.U., and subsequently in all the sections of the Comintern. In all these cases a timely struggle with the "Rights" strengthened the parties extraordinarily, increased their fighting powers and aided them within a brief time to achieve great successes. This has application particularly to the German C.P. and the C.P.S.U., and then to the French C.P., the last congress of which foreshadowed a considerable advance in its bolshevisation. The experience during the period which has elapsed since the Sixth Congress shows that in order to prepare for the coming class battles the openly opportunist right-wing elements, who have concentrated into a faction, must be thrown out of the ranks of the Comintern; that the conciliatory elements must be subjected to an iron party discipline if they wish to remain in the ranks of the Comintern, that they must be presented with an ultimatum to subject themselves to the decisions of the central party organs and must carry those decisions into force; that the central leadership of the C.P.s must be homogeneous in composition, and that the party cadres must be freshened by the attraction of new elements tempered in battles and free from

Social-Democratic traditions. The most important sections of the Comintern have already set out along this road.

Such is the situation in which the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. meets, such are the changes which have occurred since the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. The two tasks which it will have to decide upon—the

strategy of the economic struggle, and the methods of struggle against imperialist war (in particular the celebration of the International Red Day)—will be discussed in the spirit of the resolutions passed by the Sixth Congress, and as a result of a careful estimate of the changes which have taken place in the world situation since that congress.

After the General Election

By J. T. Murphy

THE Baldwin Government is no more. The defeat of the Baldwin Government is not only the outstanding result of the election; it was the supreme issue in the minds of the workers during the election. Those who do not recognise this fact will fail entirely to understand both the manœuvres of the bourgeoisie and the comparative smallness of the vote given to the Communist Party by the workers.

The Baldwin Government had proved itself to the great mass of workers to be an anti-working class government through and through. It had defeated the workers in the General Strike. The rôle of the Labour Party as an ally of the Baldwin Government in defeating the General Strike has not been made as clear to the workers as the enmity of Baldwin. The direct blows of the Baldwin Government were more obvious than the betrayals of so-called friends. But the Baldwin Government did more. It persecuted the miners for seven long months. It put through the Trade Union Bill which fettered the unions. It passed the Miners' Eight-Hour Act. It pushed through the Blanesburgh legislation against the unemployed workers. It broke diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. It became hated as no other British Government had been hated for generations.

As the Baldwin term of office began to draw to a close the workers began to recover from the blows of 1926. New mass activities began to appear. Unemployed miners marched from Wales to London and aroused public attention. Women in thousands demonstrated on International Women's Day. The anniversary of the outbreak of war saw bigger demon-

strations than ever. May Day, under Communist leadership, outstripped the sabotage of the Labour Party. The bye-elections told heavily against Tories and Liberals in favour of the Labour Party. Strikes made their appearance in spite of the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy opposition. The masses were on the move. Especially was this manifest early in 1929, when the Unemployed Marchers tramped from one end of the country to the other in face of the opposition of the Government, the trade union bureaucracy and the Labour Party.

It was this mass movement which set the bourgeoisie thinking furiously. It was this which made them consider how to circumvent its expression in the field of Parliamentaryism. The Tory leaders realised that a new situation had to be faced. They knew that their tremendous majority would decrease, but estimated that they would keep a working majority over the other parties. This, however, they did not consider possible without a strategic manœuvre calculated to weaken the concentration of the masses behind the Labour Party. Of the Labour Party leaders the bourgeoisie have no fear—indeed have no reason for fear. But the mass awakening of the working class to political consciousness they do fear.

The problem before the bourgeoisie was, therefore, a threefold problem. First, to prevent the direction of the class movement towards the Communist Party; second, to secure the return of the Tory Party by dividing the opposition to itself between the Liberal and Labour parties; third, to guarantee that in the event of defeat the succeeding govern-

ment could only work on the basis of a coalition policy. The Tories, therefore, conducted a campaign of "Safety First," describing the Labour Party and its programme as revolutionary Socialist, Communistic, etc. This had the effect of strengthening the illusion of the workers, that the Labour Party is a workers' party, and increased the difficulties of the Communist Party, which conducted its campaign as a class party, showing the Labour Party as the third capitalist party. At the same time the Liberal Party, under the leadership of Lloyd George, seized upon the unemployment question as the central question in the minds of the masses and put forward a programme so much like that of the Labour Party that both Liberals and Labour leaders claimed parentage of it. Then leading Conservative papers like the *Daily Express* and *Evening Standard* openly fostered Lloyd George's campaign and directed a critical fire against the Government.

In the bye-elections held two months before the General Election the Liberals swept forward and it became obvious that they would queer the pitch in the General Election and prevent a decisive majority of any one Party over the other two. The line of the Labour Party in the face of this strategy of the other parties is equally significant. MacDonald and his colleagues were also aware of the mass hatred of the Baldwin Government amongst the workers. It was on this they built their campaign. They did not bring their programme, *Labour and the Nation*, into the foreground. Their election addresses and speeches were all directed against the record of Baldwin, whilst their promises were couched in exceedingly "moderate" terms. They did not discuss specific plans, but fanned the hatred of the Baldwin Government and pleaded, "Give Labour a chance." In constituencies where they were sure that the appearance of Communist candidates did not jeopardise their chance of election, they ignored the Communist campaign, calculating that the anti-capitalist character of our message would increase the hatred of Baldwin without deflecting many votes from the Labour Party. But in constituencies where we had a mass following there was a united front of press and platform against the "real danger"

—the party of revolution. Here the Labour Party mobilised the press, religion, constitutionalism, intimidation against local trade union officials, etc., etc., and made it perfectly clear that so far as future elections are concerned the Communist Party will have very few victories on a "minority vote." Tories, Liberals and Labour will vote as one against the Communists and not divide their ranks when the Communists look like winning.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ELECTION FIGURES

Now let us examine the results:

	Votes.	Seats.
Conservative ...	8,600,000	259
Labour ...	8,300,000	289
Liberal ...	5,200,000	59
Independent ...	350,000	8
Communist ...	50,618	0

It is clear from these figures that had there been proportional representation the distribution of seats would have been much different and the full effect of the Liberal campaign would have been more manifest. The Liberal Party is now paying the penalty for the electoral system it has helped to maintain for generations. It is squealing hard about it now and preparing to make "electoral reform" one of its principal planks during the present Parliament if it manages to prevent a distribution of its parliamentary forces between the Labour Party and the Tory Party.

But the most important feature of the situation is the voting in the industrial and urban districts. The Labour Party increased its vote by 3,000,000. In Lancashire it increased its representation from 19 to 36. In Yorkshire from 24 to 46, securing a majority in all the big towns of the West Riding District, which is industrial. In Wales its number of representatives rose from 16 to 25, and in Scotland from 26 to 37. It also swept the industrial belt of the Midlands and the North-East Coast. This is overwhelming evidence of the nature of the Labour Party vote. It was based upon the industrial workers.

This fact is made still clearer by an examination of the rural voting. The Labour Party captured no seats in the rural districts. It captured seats in country towns, it is true, but even with the Greater London constitu-

encies thrown in it obtained five seats as against 51 Conservatives and one Liberal in Southern England, while in West England it obtained 9 seats, as against 30 Conservatives, 9 Liberals and 1 Independent. In the administrative counties (excluding the boroughs) of Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Oxford, Surrey, Bedford, Suffolk, Hereford, Berkshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire, Wiltshire, Somerset, Hampshire, Herefordshire and Gloucester the Labour candidate was at the bottom of the poll or absent altogether. This, of course, was no fault of the Labour Party, but it sets in high relief the social basis of the support of the various parties. The Labour Party's roots are still in the industrial masses. It was the proletariat who were roused by the years of struggle and their vote was not a positive vote in affirmation of the Labour Party programme, but an *anti-Baldwin vote*, in so far as the workers felt they had no other means of expressing their dissatisfaction than voting for the Labour Party, with the hope of an alternative Government.

The Labour Party had a number of strong cards in their hands and they played them most astutely. The first was undoubtedly the anti-working class record of the Baldwin Government. The second was the defeat of the General Strike. This they turned to account to discredit the weapon of direct action. Our Party had to reap the consequences of an insufficient exposure of the Labour Party as the ally of Baldwin in defeating the General Strike. The third was the slogan "Give Labour a chance," on the ground that the last Labour Government was "in office and not in power."

These factors played so great a rôle (and especially the first) that the Labour Party had no need to expound its policy and programme, but only to play up to the traditional feelings of loyalty to "their own party," "their own unions" and to hammer Baldwin and Lloyd George on their records.

Nothing revealed these things more clearly, and especially the class character of the workers' action, than the reception of our Party's campaign. Instead of a fierce antagonism there was most sympathetic reception of the Party message in every constituency we

contested. Many thousands expressed their agreement with all the criticism we levelled against the Labour Party, but refused to translate their agreement into positive support. They still felt that "it may alleviate our conditions a little. In any case a Labour Government can't be worse than Baldwin."

One can therefore sum up the significance of the voting of the workers as follows. It was essentially an anti-Baldwin vote representing an extensive awakening of the working class to political consciousness, diverted by the manoeuvres of the three capitalist parties to the support of Empire and rationalisation and war preparations under the banner of social pacifism. This is the outstanding achievement of the bourgeois forces in the election and complementary to its successful harnessing of the trade union bureaucracy to Mondism since the General Strike of 1926. What the bourgeoisie succeeded in doing during the war of 1914-18, viz., the mobilisation of the social forces and their apparatus behind a coalition policy of the capitalist parties for the prosecution of the war and its imperialist aims, they have now succeeded in doing for the next war with imperialist aims. The critical position of British imperialism in the general crisis of capitalism is the obvious foundation of this development. It needs, as never before, a social mobilisation to face what the capitalist class realises to be a life and death struggle, to save itself from social revolution and its world rival, American imperialism. The universal approbation of the capitalist press to the new "Labour Government" that proclaims itself as a "national government" and the recognition that it will not interfere with what is fundamentally agreed upon by the Tories and the Liberals is an open testimony to the rôle of the Labour Party as the rallying force for the mobilisation of the workers for the principal imperial and war tasks of British capitalism. Once these outstanding features of the situation are realised, then the significance and importance of the Communist Party's campaign in the election is enhanced enormously.

THE NEW LINE JUSTIFIED

It is questionable whether there is a single member of the Communist Party who now

doubts the correctness of the new line of the Party. Even those leaders who held out for voting Labour in the constituencies where we had not candidates now recognise that to have taken any other course than that we pursued, of complete opposition to the Labour Party on all fronts, would have been utterly fatal to the Party. The general realisation of the Party is that we ought to have adopted the new line much earlier. It is now more clear than ever that the General Strike was the decisive turning point in the history of the British working class movement, that from that time onwards our Party could no longer maintain its old policy of treating the Labour Party as a "wrong-headed fellow traveller," that it had become entirely an enemy party which we had to fight with all our might. Had this been realised by all of us earlier, and the Party been more steeled to its new tasks, we would undoubtedly have fared better in the election.

The Party's vote of 50,600 was 50 per cent. less than most of us anticipated, due to the fact that we were estimating on the basis of the sympathetic hearing and attention with which our campaign was received by the workers. We underestimated the magnitude of the task of transforming the anti-Baldwinism of the masses into a Communist appreciation of the unity of MacDonaldism with Baldwinism. Nevertheless, the Party did great work in that direction, and created a widespread scepticism in the ranks of those who voted for the Labour Party.

An analysis of the voting in the constituencies where we had candidates shows important features. In Dundee, where the Communist Party had over a period of years run an independent candidate, the Party secured 6,160 votes. In Greenock, West Fife, and Dunfermline Burghs, where there had been intense struggles of the unemployed and the Miners' Union struggle against the reformists, the votes were on a similar level. In South Wales and Battersea, where the Communist candidates were put forward by disaffiliated Trades Council and Labour Parties, the voting was—Horner, 5,789; Saklatvala, 6,554. In the constituencies where the Party fought either without the support such bodies or where they had declined considerably, the vot-

ing ranged from 300 to 1,600. In most of these latter the candidates were making their first appearance as such and the Party was making its initial effort. In many of them there was no Party organisation existing when the campaign was initiated. Under these circumstances we can draw the conclusion that the Party has gained in the areas where it has been leading mass struggles over a period, where it has appeared as an independent force the longest, and where it has succeeded in retaining organised sympathetic forces around it. These places, namely, Bethnal Green, Battersea, Rhondda and Bothwell, have not yet passed through the stage of the complete disintegration of the disaffiliated Labour organisation with the development of the new line of the Party. It may be that they will not suffer the same fate as other disaffiliated bodies. Much depends on the intensification of the struggle of the workers in these areas and the manner in which the Party now faces the task of organising sympathetic forces around the Party, which the election campaign in all constituencies revealed as a necessity. That there is a tremendous volume of sympathy for the Party has been obvious to everyone participating in the campaign. It will be transformed into membership of the Party and sympathetic organised support of the Party according to the soundness of our application of our united front policy in the struggles ahead of us. With these facts before us, we can say not only that the new line has been justified, but that it saved the Party from being buried in the swamp. It has hammered home the fact that our Party is built only through struggle and its capacity to harness and lead the forces of struggle against the workers' enemies. It has made clear that the workers' illusions are not removed easily, but by persistent daily campaigns of the Party related to their actual daily struggles.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

We are now faced with a new situation. No Party had a majority over both the other parties. MacDonald has formed a Government tied to a coalition policy. From the very outset it has proclaimed itself as a

“National Government,” closed down even all references to Socialism, set its face towards Hoover and turned its back on the workers. Its first references are not to the repeal of the Miners’ Eight-Hour Act, the repeal of the Trade Union Act, the prompt recognition of Soviet Russia, the quashing of the trial of the Indian workers’ leaders, etc., but to “friendship with Hoover,” the “League of Nations,” the “improvement of trade.” Its first negotiations are not with the workers’ organisations, but with the railway companies. It is an openly anti-working class Government. But the eyes of the workers are upon it. They are expecting some reward for the confidence they have registered in the Labour Party. At no time in the history of the working class has our Party been more necessary. At no time has it faced a period offering greater opportunities for development and winning the confidence of the workers.

The advent of the Labour Government does not mean the cessation of struggles. Not one iota of the contradictions of capitalism has been eliminated by its advent nor can be eliminated. Indeed the development of these contradictions have been and will be accentuated thereby. It is one thing for the capitalist parties to put across an election manoeuvre. It is another thing to eradicate social struggles in a society founded upon class war and anarchic competition. Already hundreds of thousands of workers in the cotton textile industry are being reminded who are the masters of the situation by the employers’ demand for a 12½ per cent. reduction in wages. The Miners’ Federation has had to break the silence of the Labour Party and demand the intentions of the Labour Government towards the repeal of the Miners’ Eight-Hour Act. By the end of this year nearly every coalfield is faced with the termination of the district agreements, and the miners want a national agreement and improvements of their conditions. The basis for an accentuation of the class war is deep and extensive.

Nor is this struggle limited to the slaves of Britain. At no time were the social forces of the colonies exploited by British imperialism in deeper ferment than to-day. At the moment the Labour Party forms the Government thirty-one Indian revolutionary workers’

leaders, Communists, trade unionists and nationalists, are on “trial.” We say “trial” with contempt. No jury. Thousands of miles away from the scenes of their activities. Prosecutor and magistrate the violent political opponents of the accused. The Labour Party has not said one word against this farce of “trial” on charges so fantastic that to breath is to be guilty of a “conspiracy to deprive the King Emperor of his power.” Will the Labour Government of 1929 add to its record in 1924 of the Cawnpore sentences of four years’ penal servitude, further savage sentences for men who dared to hold Socialist views and organise the workers in trade unions and political parties? It is our opinion that they will. But millions of workers are waiting to learn this fact.

It would be easy to extend the list of issues in which the fundamental questions of the class war are being forced into the foreground of the immediate future. In the short period of Labour Government in 1924 we saw the cleavage develop between the trade unions and the Labour Party. This Labour Government starts with an advantage which it did not possess in 1924. It has got the trade union bureaucracy more effectively tied up by Mondism than it had on that occasion. But the issues remain. The expectance of the workers, stimulated by the electoral successes, is greater. The struggles cannot be avoided. Who is to lead them? This is the question which we have to answer. The State and the trade union bureaucracy are as one for “industrial peace,” which means the defeat of the workers. We have therefore to answer that our Party is the only alternative leader. That is true, but in the period into which we have now entered, to become the actual leader means a much deeper appreciation of the meaning of the new line in relation to the trade unions and the mass struggle of the workers. It will be in the mass struggles that we shall get the full measure of our strength and influence among the workers, much more so than in the election. It is not appropriate here to develop a discussion on the trade union tactics, but the central task of our policy consists in the conquest of the unions, through the conquest of the masses, in getting to the masses in the factories.

This is essential from every point of view. Whether we consider the consolidation and development of the forces we have won in the elections, or the ways and means of fighting the Labour Government and the trade union bureaucracy, or combatting the sham lefts who will inevitably make their appearance once more, or the development of a real organised left movement around the Party, the direct approach of the Party to the masses is the key to sound policy. Nothing is more certain than that the Maxtons and Cooks, the Wheatleys, and the I.L.P. generally, will play the rôle of a parliamentary pseudo-left. It is possible that the Labour Government may make slight concessions to the workers, while continuing a fundamentally reactionary policy. The Labour Government and the Labour Party needs such a movement to hold to them the workers who become discontented. They need these pseudo-lefts to say to the workers, "We are with you, but you must remember how hard Mr. MacDonald works. Labour is in office and not in power; we must have patience, but we will ginger them up, etc. Join the I.L.P. and next time. . . ." These are the most dangerous elements, which foster the illusions which experience is breaking down. An incessant fight against these elements is our foremost task.

The election is over. The mass struggle goes on. The Labour Government has come. The development of the struggle for the Revolutionary Workers' Government goes on. This is not a Parliamentary objective, but a revolutionary objective. It is a product of the struggle of our class, to which election campaigns can contribute their quota, but only a quota. To think therefore that because the election campaign is ended our aim—the Revolutionary Workers' Government—drops out of the picture would be a mistake. On the contrary we must keep it well before us. Its programme remains as the only solution to the economic and social crises which dominate the period in which we live. The only class that can put the programme into life is the working class led by the Communist Party.

There is no pessimism in the ranks of the Party. There is, on the contrary, an enthusiasm generated by the conviction that the new line of the Party and the Communist International is right, and the consciousness that the Party has conducted a splendid campaign. It has come before the workers definitely as an independent force. It has got its message across better than ever before. The advent of the Labour Party to power is an extension of our opportunities. Let us quickly prepare to use them.

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The British Elections and the New Labour Government

By R. Palme Dutt

THE second Labour Government of MacDonald in 1929 enters into office under markedly different conditions from that of 1924. It is no longer a precarious experiment, based on a loose and still incompletely disciplined Labour Party and trade unions, and insecurely bridging the chasm of the class struggle until a temporary surrender to working class pressure leads to its hasty overthrow by the bourgeoisie. The MacDonald Labour Government is to-day a solidly formed capitalist government, aiming at a normal several years existence on a definite programme of legislation and administration fully acceptable to the older capitalist parties.

This marks a basic change of period, corresponding to the change from the "second" to the "third" period of post-war capitalism, as analysed at the Sixth Congress. The Labour Government of 1924 represented the second period, the period of rebuilding and endeavouring to stabilise world capitalist economy; its principal expression and work was the Dawes Settlement. The Labour Government of 1929 gathers up into itself in a concentrated form the character of the "third period—accentuation of contradictions in the capitalist stabilisation—the period of rationalisation and war preparations, and the new rôle of Social Democracy as an organic part of the reorganised and strengthened capitalist state. This change creates new conditions of the working class struggle against the MacDonald Government and capitalism; and an understanding of these new tasks of the working class struggle consequent on the advent to power of the Labour Party, requires in the first place an understanding and proper estimation of the transformation that has taken place.

I. FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND LABOUR GOVERNMENT

Behind the British political situation of the past nine years lies the prolonged economic

crisis, stagnation of heavy industry, decline on the world market and mass unemployment, which has continued unbroken since the winter of 1920. This economic crisis led to the fall of the Lloyd George Government in 1922; it dominated the General Elections of 1922, 1923, and 1924; it has more than ever dominated the present General Election, and constitutes the principal problem confronting the new Labour Government.

The economic crisis, and the accompanying capitalist offensive, has equally transformed social relations and the whole character of the British working class movement. It has produced a process of revolutionisation which has already led to gigantic struggles, and is still developing through new forms. Both the Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929 are by-products of this process of revolutionisation and economic and political instability, which, with the destruction of the old secure basis of reformism, has created new problems for British capitalism to maintain its hold on the working class in the period of decline. Increasingly the British bourgeoisie has to depend on the Labour Party as its main prop to maintain its power against the rising working class tide. But with each increasing use, the possibilities of this prop becomes increasingly exhausted and weakened. In this sense, the Labour Government of 1929, even more than that of 1924, despite all the apparent triumph and stabilisation of every force of reaction and capitalist control in the working class movement, represents a stage, and a big stage, in the process of the revolutionary development of the working class.

But between the Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929 lies a wealth of experience and development, which is summed up in a single dominating event—the General Strike of 1926. The General Strike is the central event of British internal history since the war, and the decisive turning point which closed one chapter and opened another. The difference

between the Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929 lies precisely in the difference of before and after the General Strike.

The process of revolutionisation is not a simple one. The British working class, moulded through three-quarters of a century to unconscious alliance with capitalists and concentration on small immediate gains, cannot in a night transform itself to meet the basic problems of the class struggle and working class power that are inevitably raised now that the old monopoly is gone. A long succession of trials and errors, defeats and disillusionments are the inevitable condition for shattering the old outlook and forms, and breaking the way forward to real change from the bottom and new revolutionary forms and leadership. In this way, periods of apparent reaction and depression, no less than of visible surging forward, have their necessary rôle in the process of revolutionary development, so long as the continual sharpening of issues, the process of differentiation, and the strengthening of revolutionary consciousness, goes all the time forward.

It is this double process that has gone forward in the periods before and after the General Strike. Before the General Strike there was a visible surging forward of the mass movement. It swept the Labour Party forward to the issue of power; it swept the trade unions to direct struggle with the capitalist State; it carried the reformist leadership on the wave, unable to stem it, and awaiting only the moment to break it. The Labour Government was set up by the will of the bourgeoisie in 1924 to stem it. It failed; the strike movement went forward; the pressure of the working class led to the partial capitulation of the Labour Government on the two issues of the Soviet Treaty and the dropping of the Communist prosecution. The bourgeoisie hastily threw aside the Labour Government and set up the Baldwin Government to prepare the inevitable battle. The explosion came with the General Strike; the reformist leaders did their duty to capitalism and led the movement to betray it; the movement collapsed, and the world reaction of the Baldwin Government followed.

From this point there is a complete transformation. With the General Strike the mass

movement under the shackles of reformist leadership reaches its highest point; further, it cannot go, without breaking through those shackles and entering on the direct revolutionary path under new revolutionary leadership. From this point the entire forces of capitalism and the reformist leadership are concentrated on the supreme task of checking the further development of the movement and the emergence of the new revolutionary leadership. The Baldwin Government, by the Trade Union Act, sets a chain upon the workers' organisations from outside. The reformist leadership co-operates from within. The Labour Party is purged of revolutionary elements; the old Reformist-Socialist programme of *Labour and the New Social Order* is replaced by the Liberal-capitalist reconstruction programme of *Labour and the Nation*; discipline is established, and election from below wiped out where the results are unsatisfactory. The trade unions are taken through a similar process with the Mond negotiations and the official adoption of the policy of Industrial Peace and alliance with the employers, alongside a parallel campaign against the revolutionaries, and the beginning of the process of splitting. Throughout 1927 and 1928 the process went forward; strikes were brought down to a minimum; the capitalists rubbed their hands; the reformist leadership never felt so successful and securely in the saddle.

Does this mean that the process of revolutionary development has ended, and a reverse movement begun? Not at all. On the contrary, the very character of these extreme anti-revolutionary measures, unthinkable in the period of Liberal-capitalism and the old Labour movement, are the strongest evidence of the real forces and the complete transformation of the situation. The reformist leadership has been compelled to range itself completely and openly with capitalism. The process of revolutionisation goes forward, deeper down. The revolutionary elements, after a period of groping, find their response to the new situation in the New Line—the direct mass struggle against capitalism and reformism under revolutionary leadership.

By the beginning of 1929 the new alignment is clearly formed. The Baldwin Govern-

ment has done its work. Signs of a new approaching wave of struggle are already visible. The time has come for the Baldwin Government to step aside, and make way for a second Labour Government, again set up by the will of the bourgeoisie, and armed this time with the whole strengthened machine of repression, to stem the new advance of the workers. The second Labour Government is the logical continuation and the coping stone of the work of Baldwin.

2. THE LESSONS OF THE GENERAL ELECTION

As a result of this new alignment of forces, the General Election presents a striking contradiction. The intensity of hatred of the mass of the workers for the Baldwin régime and years of reaction led them to give their votes to the Labour Party as the apparent alternative. The Communist Party, fighting for the first time on a very small scale, with restricted means of propaganda and no daily paper, could not reach more than a tiny fraction of the workers; for the mass of the workers the only choice appeared as between the three dominant parties, and within this choice the vote for Labour meant an expression of maximum opposition to the existing régime. These votes for Labour were thus essentially votes against the existing régime rather than votes for the programme of MacDonald and Mondism. The mass of the workers did not realise that the Labour Party was already lost to them, and that in voting for MacDonald they were in reality voting for the continuance of Baldwin in another dress. This contradiction lies at the root of the election; it is the driving force to future development, and the justification of the Communist fight.

The wideness of interest in the issue of the election was shown in the relatively high proportion of the vote. In an electorate, increased for the first time to a basis approaching adult suffrage and numbering 28.5 millions, 22.6 millions voted, or 79.4 per cent. This is a high proportion for Parliamentarism, and only exceeded by the crisis election of 1924, when 80.6 per cent. took part; the figures for 1922 and 1923 were 75.4 and 74.1 per cent.

In striking contrast with this intensity of the fight below, was the open unreality of the sham fight above, between the leaders of the three dominant parties. For the mass of the workers in the great industrial centres and mining areas, who voted Labour with such overwhelming solidarity, their vote was for them a manifest act of class struggle, a direct blow at wealth and the ruling class. But for the leadership of the Labour Party, who went to "represent" them in Parliament, the position was different; for them the whole basis of their policy is expressed in social peace and class co-operation, in rationalisation and the maintenance of capitalism. From this arises a profound inner contradiction in the Labour "triumph."

The essential identity of programme of all three dominant parties was the subject of universal comment. Each party accused the other two of stealing its programme. Rationalisation or the reconstruction of industry to meet modern world competitive conditions and solve the unemployment crisis was the common theme. The differences concerned only secondary issues, the rôle of tariffs or "safeguarding," the rôle of the State and State credits in reconstructing industry, etc. Particularly close were the Liberal and Labour programmes, which both advocated a large measure of State assistance in reconstructing industry. Socialism, for practical purposes, did not figure in the election, outside the limited area of Communist propaganda. The essentials of imperial and foreign policy were "non-party" common ground of all three parties.

This thinly-veiled coalition of the three governing parties is symptomatic of the present stage of capitalist politics. Actually, such a leading Conservative politician and representative of the most reactionary possessing interests as Lord Hugh Cecil could write in the midst of the "contest" :—

"There is a good deal of unreality in the present political contest. . . . Is there any difference, going beyond method or degree of change, between the plans of official and respectable Labour and those of Conservatives or Liberals? . . . Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Baldwin wish to keep society as it

is, though with improvements about the method of which they differ."

There exists, he continues, a real issue—the issue of the class struggle or "advanced Socialism"; but on this issue "Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. MacDonald" are all "on the one side"; and

"The arrangement of parties is so constructed as to prevent this issue being fought, and to bring forward instead—the subordinate controversies about ways and means in achieving the common objects of all three official parties."

(Lord Hugh Cecil, "From the Conservative Point of View," *Sunday Express*, March 17th, 1929.)

In the same way, the leading imperialist organ, *The Round Table*, declares:

"The gradual approximation of party programmes to one another, the steady movement towards common-sense away from extremism, the unconscious but powerful forces of gradualism as opposed to revolution, all these are welcome indications that the old country is at last recovering from the shocks and ravages of war and settling down to the quieter controversies of peace. Parliamentary and constitutional government become possible when all parties accept the general structure of society. It is impracticable, as Lord Balfour once pointed out, when the citizens of a great nation disagree profoundly about fundamentals. And it may perhaps be said without exaggeration that Socialism is dead in all except the rank and file of the Socialist Party. The leaders have ceased to believe in it."

(*The Round Table*, June, 1929.)

The imperialist writer, in his self-satisfaction, fails to realise that he has here laid bare the contradiction which will destroy his complacency. But in both these typical quotations, it will be observed that the real pre-occupation behind this consciousness of coalition, which is hailed as an advance, is the pre-occupation with the revolutionary issue as the real dominating issue.

The sharpest expression of this identity of programmes was afforded in the actual formation of MacDonald's Cabinet by the adhesion of the Liberal leader, Jowitt. Within a week

of his election as a Liberal he had not only joined the Labour Party and the Labour Cabinet, but was able to declare in his letter to MacDonald in so doing:

"The policy which I advocated at the last election—a policy from which I do not wish to withdraw—comprised, etc."

Thus the transition from the Liberal to the Labour Party involves no change of programme whatever; and this statement was not challenged by MacDonald in his reply.

The results of the election showed:—Conservatives, 8,664,243 votes; Labour, 8,362,594; Liberals, 5,300,947; Communists (25 constituencies out of 615), 50,632. The allocation of seats, which bears little relation to the votes, showed: Labour, 289; Conservatives, 260; Liberals, 58.

The Labour Party thus emerged as the principal party of the capitalist state. But at the same time the Liberal "revival" of Lloyd George received a considerable partial success with over five million votes; and although these five million votes, which on a proportional basis should have received 141 seats, in fact only obtained 58, this nevertheless remains sufficient to give them the balancing position which was Lloyd George's strategic aim, and thus to ensure direct capitalist control at every point over the Labour Government.

The Labour vote was heavily predominant in the great industrial centres and mining areas in Scotland, Wales and the industrial north of England, and in London. The strategic strength of working class solidarity here shown is thus greater than the figures alone indicate. In view of the character of the bulk of the Labour constituencies, and of the size of the Liberal vote, the Labour vote, despite the concentration of the leadership on wooing the petty bourgeoisie, may be regarded as dominantly working class.

The Communist vote represented the beginning of the fight on a national plane against the three capitalist parties and the establishment of the Communist Party as the revolutionary alternative to the Labour Party. The smallness of the vote indicated the pioneering character of the fight. The actual measures of strength indicated by the vote is not easy to judge, since the undemocratic electoral sys-

tem prevented the contesting of more than 4 per cent. of the constituencies. A multiplication of the figure on the same basis for all constituencies would give a total of 1,200,000; but this must be considerably deducted from, to allow for the more favourable character of the constituencies contested. A more useful measure is the indication that the Communist vote reached 10 per cent. of the Labour vote in the twenty-five constituencies contested; and this may be regarded provisionally as a rough guide of the present relative electoral strength.

Does the smallness of the Communist vote indicate that the Communist fight at the present election was "premature" or "too much in advance of the masses"? Most certainly not; and to assert this is to fail to understand the whole reason of the Communist intervention. The reason of the Communist intervention did not depend in any degree on the numbers of vote that might be obtained, but on the necessity of the independent working class fight against the coalition of the three capitalist parties. Had this fight not been fought, had the complete unification of the three capitalist parties and the final passing of the Labour Party to capitalism been accepted without challenge, then the 1929 election would have represented a step backwards in the history of the working class. The Communist fight at the 1929 election marks instead the historical starting point of a new advance. By this fight the Communist Party is established in the consciousness of wide masses of workers all over the country, whether agreeing with it or not, as the challenger, as the revolutionary alternative to the Labour Party. The justification and correctness of the fight will become steadily more clear to them with the development of events. The Communist Party is now in a politically strong position to press forward the fight against the Labour Government, and gain strength from its exposure, instead of sharing in its discredit.

But the smallness of the vote undoubtedly shows, not that we ought not to have fought, but that we need to fight much harder, more sharply, to bring the issues more sharply before the masses, to break new ground and penetrate further. Exposure of the Labour Party and of the Labour Government will not

happen automatically, but depends on the sharpness and energy of our fight to carry it forward. The smallness of our vote reflects in part the penalty for previous vacillations, slowness and unclearness in the adoption and propaganda of the New Line (which only finally reached full acceptance at the Tenth Congress, eighteen weeks before the election); in the confusion of apparent support given, even after the adoption of the New Line, to the "left" heroes of the Labour Party of the Maxton-Cook type, who subsequently in the crisis of the election threw all the volume of their influence to the service of MacDonald and against the Communist Party and in the weaknesses in the whole question of our relations to the left wing workers and the winning of the left wing workers. The problem of our relations to the left wing workers and the methods of winning them becomes increasingly, under the conditions of the Labour Government, the central problem of the Party's advance.

3. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

The new MacDonald Labour Government was formed with the general approval of the bourgeoisie, by the practical assistance of both the Conservative and Liberal Parties, who hold the majority in the new Parliament, and amid the acclamations of the millionaire press and a rising share market in the City.

In 1924 there had been considerable previous discussion and dissension in bourgeois ranks as to the advisability of permitting the dubious experiment of a Labour Government. In 1929 there were no longer any doubts. The Labour Party was now fully accepted as a capitalist governing party. The Cabinet was composed of exclusively "safe" elements, without even the need of such a gesture to the "Left" as the inclusion of Wheatley had represented in 1924. "From a frankly Unionist point of view," declared the Conservative *Spectator*, "there could not be safer conditions than those which exist for Labour experiments." Mr. Lloyd George, speaking for the Liberal Party, whose support is the condition of the continuance of the Labour

Government, defined clearly the conditions of the continuance of that support:—

“Our main purpose must be to see that the Government carry out faithfully the mandate of the nation—a Liberal mandate. The mandate ends when the Government fails to pursue a Liberal policy. The very hour the Ministry decides to become a Socialist administration, its career ends.”

That these conditions are fully understood and accepted is sufficiently illustrated by the statement of the Scottish I.L.P. organ *Forward*, whose editor received a minor post in the Administration:—

“The mandate, so far as it runs, undoubtedly covers a large scale reduction in unemployment; it covers peace, pensions and housing. But it does not cover Socialism.”

(*Forward*, 15.6.29.)

The bargain with the Liberal Party does not need to be made; it already exists. The only alternative to Liberal support is for the Labour Government to play for Conservative support; between the two it will pursue faithfully the common ground of bourgeois policy.

What are the tasks to which the Labour Government is called by the bourgeoisie?

The first and most important is Industrial Peace—to keep the workers quiet and ensure a safe passage through the painful process of rationalisation. The very first message of MacDonald as Prime Minister, broadcast after receiving the seals of office, was to declare:—

“We have to work for peace in industry, in home affairs and also for peace abroad. . . We shall be inviting the representatives of both sides, employers and employed in essential industries, to confer with us in special work for the good of our people.”

Here the Melchett-Turner conferences have prepared the way; and Turner has been placed at the Secretaryship of Mines. On the eve of the election a Melchett-Turner Memorandum was issued, signed by the leading employers and trade union representatives, outlining a full programme of rationalisation with State aid. This programme was in effect a programme for the Labour Government. Five weeks before the election the Conference of the Trades Union Congress General Council, the Federation of British Industries and

the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations passed a unanimous resolution to set up a joint committee for “consultation and co-operation.” The troubles of the 1924 Labour Government with the trade unions are not to be repeated, so far as the machine can help it. The strikes of the new period will have to fight the united opposition of the Labour Government, the employers and the trade union bureaucracy.

Nevertheless, the path of the Labour Government in the economic field is not likely to be an easy one. It is true that it starts with certain advantages. It takes office in a period of slightly rising trade; it can make a show of small concessions in unemployment benefit and the like to conceal its true rôle; the conditions for a big rationalisation drive are ready prepared; the temporary effect of new construction work may for a period diminish the unemployment totals. But against these immediate advantages lie the basic issues of the situation; first, the fact that rationalisation, coming after the United States and Germany and less effectively, can never solve the problem of British loss of world trade, and consequent weakening financial position, but only intensify the world crisis; second, that rationalisation involves, not only in the long run a net increase in unemployment, but also heavy immediate displacement problems in the main industries; and, third, that rationalisation can in practice only be carried through at the expense of the workers and therefore raises the probability of big industrial conflicts. The precarious position of the gold standard, the sharpening world gold crisis, and the compulsory raising of the Bank Rate to 5½ per cent. since February under the pull of New York, all rule out any likely possibility, if the promised line of “sound finance” is to be followed, of any easy credit policy to smooth the transition. Speaking at the end of May of this year, just before the election, Professor J. H. Jones, Professor of Economics at Leeds, had occasion to refer to the “empty talk about industrial peace”; he pointed out that since the adoption of the Gold Standard in 1925 the world price had fallen 15-20 per cent., and concluded:—

“If the world price level did not come up again, the internal price would have to come

down, and the process of reducing it would mean a process of industrial strife of the first order and magnitude."

(*Daily Herald*, 25.5.29.)

The prospect of heavy industrial issues and conflicts is already present at the outset of the Labour Government. This applies particularly to the two leading basic industries of coal and textiles. In coal, the Labour Party is pledged to the repeal of the Conservative Eight Hours Act, yet already before the election, it was showing signs of hesitating and drawing back over this pledge; for to reduce hours in the present declining industry, without touching capitalist property rights and profits, means to raise the whole thorny question of the organisation of the industry. At the same time the district wage agreements enforced after the struggle of 1926 come up for review; and there will be a strong move for a new national wage agreement. In textiles, sweeping wage-cuts, as the necessary accompaniment of rationalisation, and affecting over half a million workers in both cotton and wool textiles, are already proclaimed, and in some cases begun to be put into operation; and there is every sign of a long postponed conflict drawing close. Issues are also gathering in engineering, in railways, and in other industries. In general, the Labour victory at the election and the advent of the Labour Government will mean a stimulus to the workers to move forward to resist wage-cuts and fight for wage increases.

The signs thus point to a new wave of economic struggles. The entire forces of the Labour Government and of the trade union bureaucracy will be used to prevent this wave developing. In this situation, the new strike strategy, under direct revolutionary leadership, is of prime importance in the struggle against the Labour Government. The policy adopted by the Fourth R.I.L.U. Congress, and the experiences already gained in Germany, France and other countries, become of vital urgency in Britain. The development of the new economic struggles becomes the key point for the mobilising of the working class opposition to the Labour Government and its policy of industrial peace and rationalisation.

The second group of tasks to which the

Labour Government is called by the bourgeoisie lies in the sphere of foreign policy. The central character of the present period of the international situation is that of war preparation, and this is the real task of the Labour Government. But the task of war preparation requires for its most effective accomplishment a pacifist guise; and it is here that we have the essential value of the Labour Government for the bourgeoisie, as with the old Liberal "pacifist" Cabinet of 1906-14 which prepared the war of 1914. The Labour Government will make pacifist gestures in plenty at Geneva towards the United States and towards the Soviet Union; and meanwhile the work of war preparation will go forward. In particular, there are certain directions in which British foreign policy, which had reached something of an impasse under the Baldwin Government, must make turns and manoeuvres; and this is rendered easier by a change of government. This applies especially to the question of the resumption of relations with the Soviet Union, which was coming strongly to the front in the last period of the Baldwin Government, but which was difficult of achievement by that Government after its record. The Labour Government may be safely counted on by the bourgeoisie to represent its interests in the narrowest and most exacting fashion in the negotiations with the Soviet Union; and no question of recognition will in any case alter or delay for a moment the plans and preparations of the war staffs against the Soviet Union.

The same consideration of utilising the Labour Government for a possible turn in bourgeois foreign policy applies also to the question of endeavouring to reach some form of temporary settlement with the United States. But here, the Labour Government in endeavouring to deal with the United States of Hoover is likely to find itself faced with considerable difficulties. The recent speeches of Hoover and Stimson, with the unconcealed threat of superior material resources behind them, have made abundantly clear that a settlement can only be reached on the basis of the final surrender of British supremacy at Sea, and the completion of the path which was begun at Washington in 1921. The British Admiralty, which accepted the Washington

Agreement only because the surrender there was still nominal, and the real conflict lay elsewhere, has hitherto stubbornly resisted this surrender. If this capitulation has now to be made so as to avoid a premature conflict, the ignominy of it will be laid at the door of the Labour Government. If, on the other hand, a settlement is not reached, the Labour Government becomes the direct instrument of war preparations against America and the triumphant demonstration of British "pacific" intentions.

In general, the contradiction between the whole character of the present period, which is a period of war preparation, and the pacific professions of the Labour Government at the head of British imperialism, is the second great driving force alongside the economic struggle at home, to the exposure and disintegration of the Labour Government, and to the awakening and advance of the revolutionary working class opposition. The development of this contradiction is likely to involve it in increasing difficulties and partial crises, which should provide the strongest opportunity for our attack. The ever-present possibility of the Labour Government being used in a crisis as the actual instrument of war would, if realised, transform the whole struggle to a new plane; and this possibility, alongside of the actual war-preparations of the Labour Government, needs to be kept in the centre of our propaganda and preparations.

The Third group of tasks to which the Labour Government is called by the bourgeoisie lies in the sphere of Empire policy. Here the central question of the period is India. In relation to the developing Indian mass struggle the rôle of the Labour Government is of supreme importance to the British bourgeoisie. The maintenance of British imperialist power depends on preventing the British and Indian masses from realising their common interests and common struggle. To give the Labour Government the hangmen's rôle in the repression of the Indian revolution means, in the first place, that the Indian masses are taught to look on the British working class as their enemy equally with the British bourgeoisie, and in the second place, that the entire power of the Labour Party and trade union machine, is used to stifle the sym-

pathy of the British workers for their Indian comrades and to paralyse all common action. It is notable that the Meerut trial was continually postponed by successive remands until the Labour Government was formed, so that the conduct and responsibility of this infamy should lie directly with the Labour Government, as with the Cawnpore trial five years ago; and that already the *Daily Herald* is doing its work in suppressing even the short accounts of the trial that appear in all the capitalist press. In this issue the fight of the Communist Party to awaken the British workers to what is happening and to their rôle, is of an importance going far beyond the immediate issue of the Labour Government, even so it should provide a powerful weapon for arousing the anger of the workers against the Labour Government.

The general outlook of the Labour Government thus runs parallel to the whole outlook of the "third" period. On the one hand, the Labour Government represents the highest point of the complete and organic union of the official Labour machine with capitalism, and in this sense, an attempt at stabilisation for a new period of capitalist development. On the other hand, the character of the present period of capitalism, of rationalisation and war preparations, of intensifying contradictions both at home in the economic field and abroad with regard to war and colonial questions, makes for a continual growing disturbance of the attempted stabilisation, leading to successive sharp and increasing crises, the intensification of the class struggle and the awakening growth of the working class opposition to the Government.

4. THE LEFT WING AND THE PROBLEM OF THE SPLIT IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The vital question is now the question of the development of the working class opposition to the Labour Government.

The special problem of the British Labour movement may be framed in these terms: that the wider split, corresponding to what was achieved in France at Tours in 1920, and in Germany finally at Halle in 1921, has not yet taken place in Britain. The existing Communist Party is still in the position of

pioneers and forerunners. The mass forces of the working class struggle are still held in the chains of the Labour Party, which has become the most efficient instrument of capitalism for cramping and thwarting their development. The British reformist leaders, wise in their generation, have been able to utilise the entire Continental experience for stifling and restricting revolutionary development within the working class organisations, before revolutionary development has reached any stage of growth equivalent to that reached in the leading Continental countries. The problem of how to free the path of advance and assist the development of the mass of the workers, and especially the leftward moving workers, still under the control of the Labour Party, is the essence of the problem of the advance to the Communist Party. The election fight was itself one method towards breaking the chains; but it was only one among many that are necessary.

The Labour Government now provides important and favourable conditions for hastening this advance, and for the division of reformism and capitalism from the workers. But this process is no easy automatic process of manifest exposure of the Labour Government and rapid passing over of a growing body of the workers. On the contrary, the Labour Government will make every endeavour by such concessions as it can provide after the sterility and defeats of the Baldwin régime, to tie the workers tighter to the machine of reformism and capitalism. The exposure of the Labour Government can only be achieved by the sharpest revolutionary propaganda awakening the consciousness of the workers; and this path demands new forms, groupings and methods of organisation only to be painfully worked out in the face of powerful repressive forces.

What are these forms of organisation, through which the working class opposition to the Labour Government can be gathered on the widest possible basis?

It is clear that every manifestation and every grouping of class struggle at the present stage, such as strike committees, committees of action, factory committees, etc., are already the first elementary forms of developing the working class opposition to the Labour

Government; since the whole nature of their struggle brings them into conflict with the Labour Government. The same applies to the work of auxiliary mass organisations for special objectives, such as the League Against Imperialism, etc. In the same way the task of building up a daily organ of the Party, which is now of decisive urgency, and the lack of which was a serious handicap at the election, is itself a powerful means of mobilising and organising the forces of opposition to the Labour Government.

The central problem, however, still remains: what should be the correct form of wider mass organisation to unify and concentrate the fight of the Left Wing workers against the Labour Government and the official Labour Party policy and leadership and for the immediate demands of the working class? The development of such a wider mass organisation, and the correct leadership of the Party within it, is the necessary condition of the extension of the Party's influence.

In the past period the attempt was made to provide for the organisation of the Left Wing workers in the so-called "National Left Wing Movement," which was built up with the assistance of the Communist Party between 1925 and 1928 on the basis of affiliated local Labour parties and Left Wing groups, originally to fight the Labour Party Liverpool decisions for the exclusion of the Communists, and eventually on a general alternative Socialist programme against the official Labour programme. This movement was formed on the conditions of the old period, before the Labour Party had become a closed and disciplined Party. The movement found difficulty in adapting itself to the conditions of the new period; it was greatly weakened by the Labour Party expulsions and disaffiliations, so that it came to exist largely outside the Labour Party, and lost in influence; it also began to run the danger of appearing in the guise, not of a wider mass organisation for the immediate objectives of the class struggles, but of a small parallel organisation on a centrist Socialist programme between the Labour Party and the Communist Party. These weaknesses led the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party at the beginning of this year to decide to discontinue support to this

organisation, and so clear the ground. This decision, as the speeches in criticism of the existing organisation abundantly showed, was essentially a vote against the past errors and weaknesses, and not a final decision of the issue in principle. But the interpretation of this decision took on a purely negative form of dissolving the existing National Left Wing Committee; and the new forms to follow it were not determined. The whole question is thus now left open, and is gravely urgent.

The problem is complicated by the fact that the Labour Party, like every developed Social Democratic Party, is fully equipped with its own professional "Left" leaders, whose rôle is to take charge of every sign of Leftward opposition and lead it along the path of radical phraseology and empty gestures to ultimate submission to the official policy at each critical point. Maxton, Wheatley, Brockway, Price, Wilkinson and others are at hand to perform this rôle in the Labour Party; Cook, Hicks, Purcell and others in the trade unions. The deliberate omission of the "Left" elements from the Labour Cabinet does not so much mean an act of "defiance" to the Left, as the capitalist press freely interprets it, as that these "Left" leaders are thus freed to pursue their special rôle of affording a safety-valve for any working class opposition that may develop to the Labour Government and keeping it in safe channels of essential docility to the Labour Government and the Labour Party at any critical point. The Independent Labour Party, which seeks to figure as the organisation of the Left and of the "Socialism in our Time" programme within the Labour Party numbers in its ranks 200 of the present 289 Labour Members of Parliament. Al-

though thus holding complete responsibility for the policy of the Labour Government, the I.L.P. will none the less endeavour to figure in the country as the Left-wing critic of the Labour Government and the exponent of a militant Socialist policy. Just as the previous "Socialism in our Time" and Cook-Maxton campaign paved the way for complete support of MacDonald at the election, so a similar process of "leading" the opposition in order to defeat it may be expected in relation to the Labour Government.

In this situation the task of the Communist Party to clear the way for the real development and advance of the Left Wing workers becomes one demanding considerable political skill and combined strength and elasticity of leadership. It becomes necessary at once to assist the organisation of the Left Wing workers under whatever immediate or passing forms are found effective, and to encourage and stimulate every sign of real fight, and at the same time to maintain the sharpest criticism of the phrase-making "Left" leadership in the service of MacDonald, and to fight against the illusions of Left Socialist ideology, of the possibility of "reforming" the Labour Party, etc. The previous experiences of the Party in this field, in connection with the Cook-Maxton movement and with the "National Left Wing Movement" of 1925-8, have given valuable lessons, but lessons in dangers and weaknesses rather than in the discovery yet of the correct path. The problem which is here raised requires separate and fuller treatment. It is clear that the correct solution of this problem is the key to the successful fight against the Labour Government and the advance of the Communist Party.

Magdeburg

By Karl Kreibich

THE reporter of the Leipzig *Volkszeitung* complains very bitterly that the Social Democratic Party Congress, which was held in Magdeburg at the end of May and the beginning of June, opened with the "Overture to William Tell" and Rossini's "Requiem," a mass for the dead, instead of with Beethoven's "Eroica," which would have been more suitable. At any rate, if the glorification (even if only musical) of William Tell, by no means a revolutionary, but still a hero, was too great an honour for this society, the mass for the dead was all the more suitable. The wish of the Leipzig *Volkszeitung* for a "left" Congress is only a cultivated, artistic expression for a desire already expressed by Goethe:

"The servant loves to sing a song of freedom of an evening in the inn. It aids digestion and seasons the liquor."

These "left" Social Democrats are no ordinary servants, as Social Democracy has advanced from being a mere agent and has become a member of capitalist society, indispensable and dignified, and therefore of nearly equal birth. The "Lefts" are an even more indispensable and dignified part of Social Democracy. Their task is to play some seemingly radical accompaniment to Social Democracy's rapid progress towards Fascism. Ordinary songs of freedom are unsuitable in face of the growing dissatisfaction of the working class with Social Democracy; they are too primitive and might easily be misunderstood by the workers, that is they might be correctly understood and followed up. Therefore the more quickly Social Democracy develops towards Fascism, the more complicated and diplomatic become the phrases of opposition of the "Lefts," and the softer become their seemingly radical, flutelike notes.

The most outstanding characteristic of the Magdeburg Congress is that it completed, not only the transition of Social Democracy to Social Fascism, but also the more recent capitulation of the "Lefts" to Social Fascism.

The statement of the Chairman, Wels, about the right of Social Democracy to estab-

lish a dictatorship against the working class gave the key to the Congress. This declaration is not very surprising when considered only in the light of Social Democratic policy, but it is more surprising when considered in the light of the present situation in Germany, where the question "Dictatorship or Democracy?" has already been supplanted by the question "What kind of dictatorship?" "Dictatorship by whom?" The character of capitalist stabilisation in Germany is more glaringly illuminated, and the sharpening of class contradictions more strikingly characterised, by this way of putting the question than would be possible by the most fundamental discussion. Nothing better illustrates the position inside the Social Democratic Party, or rather inside the Social Democratic bureaucracy, than the fact that this statement was received with applause and without opposition, just as there was no word of criticism for the prohibition of demonstrations, for the bloody acts of Zörgiebel on May 1st, or for the dissolution of the Red Front Fighters. The whole Congress, from Severing and Wels to Seydewitz and Levi, was united on this point—*i.e.*, on the necessity of a Social Democratic dictatorship for suppressing the revolutionary proletariat.

During the discussion on Zörgiebel's actions of May 1st, Aufhäuser and Toni Sender had only one objection to make—that these actions increased the influence of the Communists and lessened that of Social Democracy. If the result had been the reverse, these "Lefts" would have had no objection to the actions of the police. They demanded therefore only more cunning and more effective methods of suppression. On this basis the unity of the "Lefts" with Zörgiebel was established in every discussion. The difference of the present period from the Noske period of 1919-20, a difference which is denied by the Right Wing and the conciliators in our ranks, is also made clear by this unanimity. Noske's watchword, "Someone must be the bloodhound," is now obsolete; it

no longer meets the claims on Social Democracy. To-day the watchword of the whole of Social Democracy is: "We must all be bloodhounds."

No less interesting was the discussion on the coalition policy. Never, in a Social Democratic Congress, has there been so much complaint about the lack of gains for the working class that have been obtained by the coalition policy. Stampfer, the editor of *Vorwärts*, threw the pretty word "Koalitions-katzenjammer" (coalition sickness) into the debate, and *Vorwärts* itself called the Congress: "The Congress of the Dissatisfied." At the same time, never has a Social Democratic Congress so unanimously recognised in principle the policy of coalition. The *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, in its concluding article, had to say that the coalition has "been essentially strengthened by this Congress." In this apparent contradiction are expressed the facts that Social Democracy is now an integral part of the capitalist State and that the defence of the State has become its chief task. It therefore becomes increasingly difficult for it to put coalition with the bourgeoisie before its followers, as a means of obtaining gains. As a substitute for gains, the Social Democratic workers are given the assurance that things would be even worse if the Social Democratic Party did not take part in the government. Naturally this amalgamation with the State found expression in eager recognition of the State, the republic. Nothing new was said on this point, only variations on the old speeches. Only the eagerness and unanimity of this discussion are noteworthy. The most lively was Dittman, who stated that as Germany is in process of transition to Socialism, the police force, being Social Democratic, is no longer the instrument of the ruling class (this after May 1st!), and that it is no longer true to say that "on one side stands the working class and on the other the whole bourgeoisie." So there is no longer any class struggle as there once was! All is clear. Everything fits in beautifully: there is really no capitalist society, no capitalist State, no real class division, and therefore no more class struggle. MacDonald and Mond, the American yellow trade union leaders and Mussolini say the same in other words. In

Germany, this gives the following picture. German trust capital marches towards Socialism hand-in-hand with the proletariat, under the leadership of Hindenburg and Zörgiebel, and the only obstacle in the way is the damned Communists. What more is required for the ideological preparation of Social Fascism?

Defence of the Fatherland, the Reichswehr and armoured cruisers follow from this attitude towards the capitalist State. The official speaker, Dittman, spoke in such a way that, as one of the delegates said, "he had won by his speech the praises of the newspaper of the Magdeburg People's Party." Schöpflin quite rightly said: "The lines laid down only regularise what we have always carried out in practice. With the help of Social Democracy, the armed power of the Republic has been created and every man of the Reichswehr has been accepted." Crispian spoke quite logically, in his Social Democratic way, when he said: "The aim of Socialism is a society without violence, therefore there is no room in our programme for a programme of armaments"—and so he was in favour of the line laid down by the Party Committee, *i.e.*, support for the Reichswehr, which is something similar to an organisation of force. The Chancellor, Hermann Müller, discovered that the world war might have been avoided if, before the war, in France the Social Democrats had wanted to go into the Government and if in Germany they had been allowed to. Many delegates would have made the recognition of the Reichswehr more palatable for Social Democratic workers by feeding them with hopes of its becoming more democratic, but Severing declared coldly and soberly that that was impossible because it was incompatible with the "militarisation of a group," therefore the most that could be discussed was the possibility of winning over the Reichswehr to the support of the Republic. When he praised the tactics of filling the police force with trade unionists, he expressed his sorrow that such tactics were not possible in the Reichswehr—not because Social Democratic trade unionists would not join, but because the reactionary authorities in the Reichswehr would not accept them. The result of the discussions was the adoption of proposals which give Social

Democratic ministers a free hand on all grants for the Reichswehr, and which are so general on the question of disarmament that even the *Frankfurter Zeitung* made fun of them.

In its observations on the Congress, the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* wrote that the task of the "Lefts" was "to prevent the proposals from becoming the basis of a policy which would once more place the German working class in the position in which it was in 1914." It was not the leadership, but Paul Levi who made it clear that there was no danger of a split on this point. In his article in *Klassenkampf* he wrote that, in the event of a new outbreak of war, a split must and could be avoided. But since, in the next war, the position of Social Democracy will be, not that of a capitulating opposition, but that of an old, tried and independent party of the Government, Levi's remark is, for the workers, nothing but an empty phrase designed to betray, and, for the leaders, an assurance that there is no need to fear that, in the next war, the "Lefts" will put forward even the small amount of opposition that the tamest Independents put forward to the last war. The Social Democratic Party authorities cannot wish for more; indeed, they should not ask for more as long as they want the "Lefts" to succeed in keeping the left workers in the Party.

On foreign policy, neither the miserable speech of Breitscheid nor the equally miserable discussion brought out anything new. The only thing was that Breitscheid this time spoke still more diplomatically, and more than ever emphasised his capabilities and aspirations in the part of Foreign Minister. If there was nothing else to be got out of this speech, still it made clear one point, and that the most important: the assurance to the Entente imperialists that a Social Democratic Foreign Minister in Germany would be an even more trustworthy guarantor of their interests than Stresemann. Apart from this, the most interesting statement was that made by Hilferding, who reported on the "successes" of the Paris reparations negotiations. He justified his financial policy, apart from the well-known assurance that it might have been worse, by stating that after the Paris agreement on reparations the seven fat years

will arrive. Stampfer characterised this financial policy with the drastic words: "It gives finance capital particular pleasure to keep the author of a famous book on finance capital tightly on the curb." But more important for Social Democratic foreign policy than all the talk at the Magdeburg Congress is the fact that, just as with the Dawes Plan, the Entente Bonds, the first since the Versailles peace to be freely accepted by Germany, were negotiated with the leading influence of Social Democracy. German Social Democracy takes upon itself the task of extracting from the workers the tribute for Entente and American finance capital. It even adds that this policy is a deliverance from the dictated peace of Versailles. With this, German Social Democracy shows more clearly than ever that it is, not only the ally of German finance capital, but also the best support of international finance capital in Germany.

On the question of the social and political gains from the coalition policy, the greatest praise was the statement, as modest as it is untrue, that the social political situation of the German working class has at any rate not become worse. Nothing definite came out of this discussion, except that the Congress noted the wishes of the trade unions, put forward by Aufhäuser. In the German Social Democratic Party one must be a "Left" to demand the eight-hour day, the ratification of the Washington agreement, the maintenance and continuity of unemployment relief, and opposition to the abolition of social political laws, increased import duties and taxes on the possessing classes. These demands of course cannot be granted by German finance capital, and therefore no resolution was adopted by the Congress. Even on the question of unemployment relief, about which the strongest words were used by the leaders, no resolution was passed which was binding on the ministers. *Vorwärts* is still very proud of this. This is sufficient to show the danger that in the near future threatens the few social political gains of the German working class from the Social Democrats.

God is one of the authorities of bourgeois society, and His church is one of its organisations of force. Whoever defends the throne

of finance capital must also defend God and His altars. For that reason the atheists at the Congress were thrashed and the doors of the Party were opened wide to religion and the clergy. They were very proud that there are so many clergy in the Party and still more in sympathy with it. Just as with other capitalist organisations of force, Social Democracy becomes closer to the Church every year, the number of Social Democratic functionaries in Protestant, Jewish and other sects increases. On the question of the Roman Catholic Church, the Prussian President, Otto Braun, categorically stated that he would sign a treaty with Rome. So German Social Democracy has completed another part of its foreign policy—the consolidation of Germany in the political, spiritual and financial organisations of world imperialism. The League of Nations, the Pope and the International Bank will now form the three cornerstones of the international policy of German Social Democracy.

What part have the "Lefts" played at this Congress? The most pitiful and shameful that they have yet played. On the vote on general policy, for instance, most of the minority consisted of groups who voted against the resolution because they were against any resolution which bound the Party on the question of armaments. But more important is the fact that the "Left" did not put up any serious opposition on any question. The Wels pronouncement on dictatorship was not challenged, and not one of the "Lefts" uttered a word on the bloody deeds of Zörgiebel or on the raging persecution of the Communist movement. Kurt Rosenfeld stated "with pleasure" that there was not a single opponent of the coalition policy at the Congress. Leydewitz, from Zwickau, gave the assurance that "he disapproved as much as the leaders" of the resolution, moved by individual organisations, to expel the "armoured cruiser" minister. The Right Wing Radloff, from Hanover, was not contradicted when he said: "Leydewitz and Rosenfeld have spoken to-day—spoken about

the coalition policy in a much more restrained manner than they did at Kiel." But more correct than all the talk of the "Lefts" was the statement of the delegate from Zeitz, Bergholz, that in the factories and among officials, the discussion on armaments had received more attention than had been given to any subject for decades. After this congress and the shameful behaviour of the "Lefts" it will receive even more attention, and it will take a direction very unpleasant for Social Democracy.

The capitalist press was very weak in its comments on the Magdeburg Congress. The *Kölnische Zeitung* wrote that it would be a good thing if Social Democracy in the coalition could be prosecuted for unconstitutional acts as they were in opposition. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* bestowed on the "Proposals on the Armaments Question" the censure: Too little, but still an advance; have patience, it will very soon improve. Apart from the attacks of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the Liberal press treated the Magdeburg Congress with the goodwill of a protector who has a sympathetic understanding and a soft forgiveness for little weaknesses. The Centre was a little troubled by the beginnings of Social Democratic competition in religion. The extreme Right is angry because the Social Democrats threaten to snatch the fat morsel of dictatorship from under its very nose, and because it fears that Social Democracy will anticipate it with finance capital. This anger is lessened by the hope, already expressed, that finally, if there is no other way out, the dictatorship can be carried out in common. In general, all these criticisms bear the stamp of ordinary political quarrels between the different parties of the bourgeoisie, and none of this polemic goes outside the framework of party business in bourgeois society. In the whole of this quarrel one can see that Social Democracy belongs to them, is always looked upon as one of themselves, has become a constituent part of the whole system.