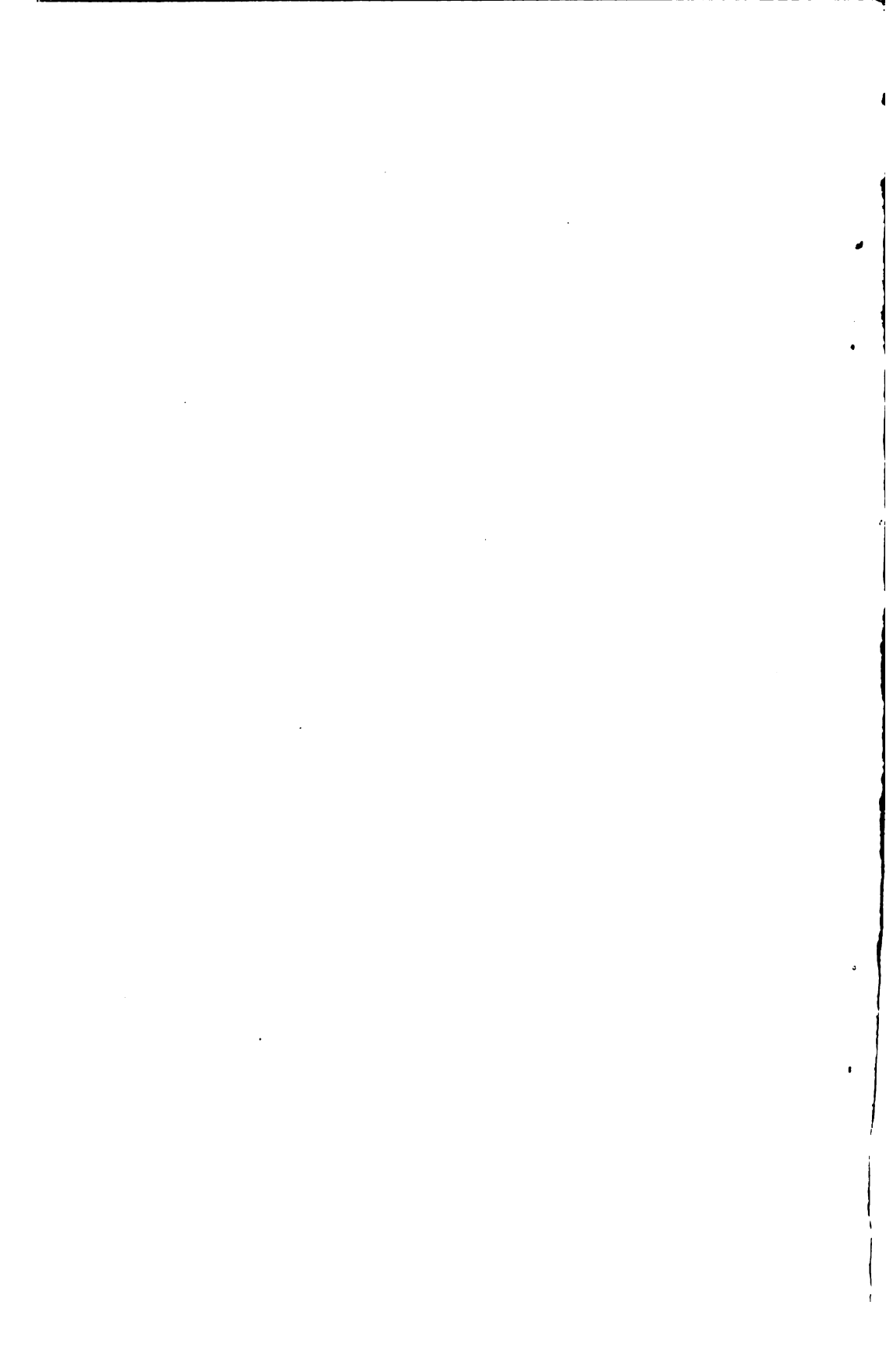


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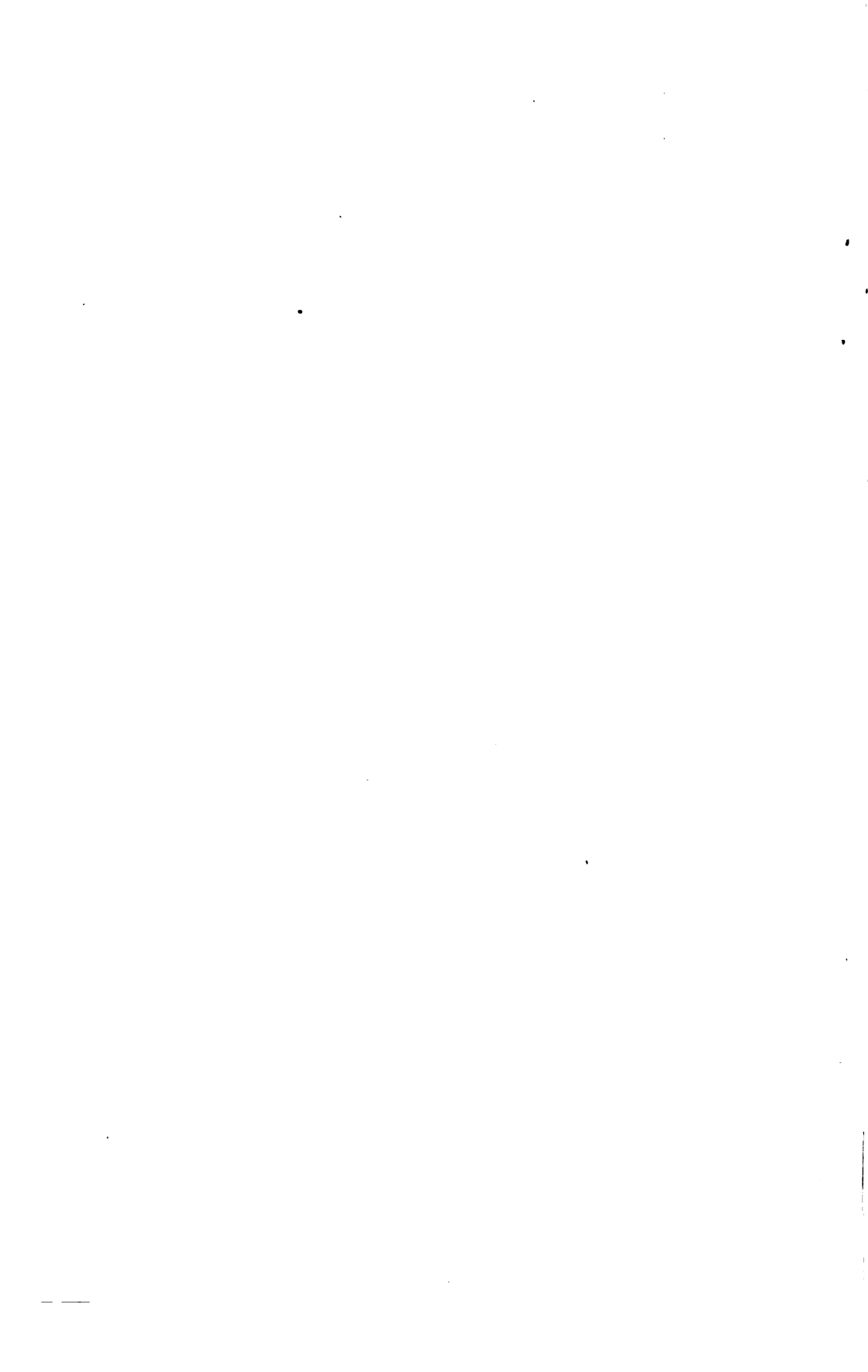
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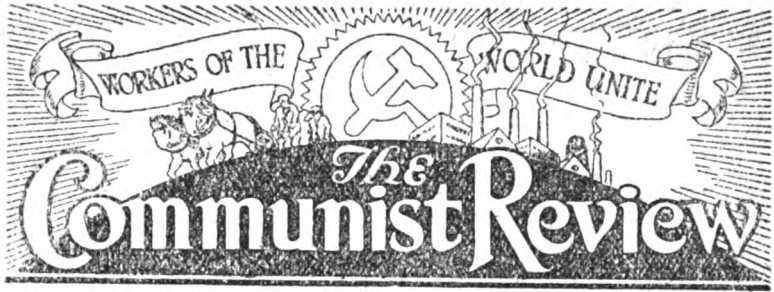
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THE EDITORIAL VIEW

TOWARDS A MASS PARTY.

THE Eighth Congress of the Communist Party this month will have under review fifteen months packed with events of the greatest political significance for British Labour and for our own Party. It will have to determine, objectively and without mercy for any sensitive feelings, whether as a Party we have kept abreast of those events.

* * * * *

The biggest crises for the working class are also the biggest crises for our Party. How did the Party pass out of the tests of Red Friday in 1925, and the General Strike in 1926? Let us forget for a moment the judgments already passed on the first question by the Plenum of the Comintern Executive in March, 1926 (printed in the Party pamphlet "Orders from Moscow"), and on the second question by the same authority in June, 1926 (the resolution printed in the July "Communist Review").

Red Friday, indeed, although it came a few weeks after our last Party Congress, rightfully belongs to the period which was then reviewed—the period of the fight for "Councils of Action" of the four threatened trades (mining, railway, transport, metal): for the "Workers' Alliance," as a step to greater powers for the General Council: for the mobilisation of the worker's maximum support behind the miners. In the events of the end of July, 1925, the Party's campaign for these objects and the approval of its lines by the Seventh Party Congress were fully justified.

But this was only a first encounter. The Seventh Party Congress placed on record its definite opinion that capitalism as a whole was on the downgrade, and that while sections (as in Germany)

might have achieved temporary stabilisation, and other sections (as in U.S.A.) might even continue to expand and grow stronger, the general decline was typified and most marked in Great Britain, and that no factors were in sight which could avail to stabilise capitalism in this country. From this analysis the Party was bound to draw the conclusion that the capitalist attack on the workers, and on their vanguard, the miners in the first instance, which had been beaten off in July, 1925, was bound to be renewed, with greater vigour and ruthlessness than ever before.

Hence, from August onwards, the central theme of Party agitation and propaganda became more and more the coming attack on the workers. At Scarborough and Liverpool, where our Party fractions and their immediate supporters already constituted the sole alternative leadership to reaction: at the trial of our 12 comrades, arrested for their campaign to prepare the workers: in our offers (October and February) of a united front campaign to the I.L.P.: at the extended joint session of the Party Executive (January) with Party trade union officials: through the Party fraction at the Minority Movement's "Conference of Action" (March): on the publication of the Coal Commission's Report: during the sectional trial attacks made by the capitalists on the railwaymen (the January Award), the builders (Weir Houses), the engineers (Hoe's)—at each and every turn the Party, individually and collectively, did its utmost to warn the workers of the coming offensive and of the need for practical preparations.

The warnings were justified, and the practical measures advocated in many cases forced upon the workers, by the General Strike.

* * * * *

It is worth at this point to refer to some criticism of the Party policy during the General Strike, offered by a comrade in an article which unfortunately came too late for publication. Starting from the premise that "the British working class entered enthusiastically upon a movement *that has been called*" (the italics are ours) "the last stage before insurrection," he finds that our Party showed its immaturity along two lines—first, in failing to issue slogans that would have united the whole working class for immediate ends, and secondly, in failing to take steps to provide an alternative trade union leadership nationally, in anticipation of the breakdown of the General Council.

On the first, he writes: "The Party did all it could to extend the objectives by theoretical propaganda and agitation. The slogan of a Labour Government was put out and stressed. But the Party did not use a slogan that would have helped greatly to make the workers' "will to victory" into a will to **class** victory: the slogan of 'Make it an All-in Fight!'—the engineers' demand

for a 20s. increase, the railwaymen's All-Grades' Programme," etc. On the second, he writes that while the Trades Councils took control locally, "there was not the shadow of a trace of an alternative leadership nationally. Why was this? Here is where the Party seems to have under-estimated its influence and opportunity. . . . [There was] no propaganda for a conference of Councils of Action. . . . The only body with standing enough to do it was the London Trades Council. . . . [This was] the whole Party feeling during the General Strike: the feeling that the Party was not responsible for the central lead—that had already been given by the General Council, and we could not alter it."

We quote these passages at some length, both to do justice to our comrade's case and because, if justifiable, they would constitute important political criticism. Are they justifiable? (i) It is regrettable that our comrade only tells us that the General Strike "has been called" the "last stage before insurrection," but does not tell us whether **he** would call it so. We suspect that he would not commit himself to such an absurdity, and, therefore, can be mildly surprised that he should refer to it. In general and in theory, of course, a General Strike is the "last stage before insurrection": but to speak of **this** General Strike as the "last stage," etc., is either to talk nonsense or to utter an "ultra-Leftism," which simply deals in formalities and not in the objective facts of the situation. And, if we reject this description of the General Strike, all our comrade's **political** criticism falls to the ground.

(ii) For what are the objective facts about the General Strike? Put briefly, they are: that it showed that the revolutionisation of the British workers is still a **process** and not yet a **fact**: that, although the workers were inspired by a spirit of genuine class solidarity, they were still bound down by traditions of union discipline and even occasionally of craft jealousy: that the nine days only **began** emancipating them, but far from completed the process: and that the slogan of an "All-in Fight" had, therefore, to be built up from **within** the sections and not simply "launched" as a ready-made slogan. And the actual facts are—possibly our comrade is not aware of them—that on the fourth day of the Strike, the Political Bureau decided on the very policy he suggests: that, on the sixth day, in spite of the difficulties due to illegality, the Party fraction in the Minority Movement secured the adoption and despatch of suitable leads to the M.M. groups in the various industries: and that, by the seventh day, the "Workers' Bulletin" was already publishing articles which prepared the way for this policy. A few more days would not only have driven the masses themselves further along the road to independent initiative and revolt against the General Council, but would have seen the fruition of the practical organisational steps undertaken by the Party.

The slogan of the resignation of the Baldwin Government and the formation of a Labour Government, to which our comrade refers, stands in quite a different category. Here there was no need of "building up from within." The Party was faced with the fact that at least three million British workers were out on the streets together for the first time, and that, in spite of the General Council's desperate efforts to confuse them by talk of "a purely industrial struggle," the capitalist Government's bayonets, machine guns, tanks, police, and O.M.S. were teaching them a different lesson. Millions of British workers were for the first time having a compelling and irresistible object lesson in the Marxist theory of the State: and, bearing in mind Lenin's teaching in "Left-wing Communism," the Party could not, and indeed **dared** not, lose this opportunity of helping them a stage further towards learning it completely, by throwing out the slogan of "Demand the resignation of the Tory (or O.M.S. or coalowners') Government, and the formation of a Labour Government with a mandate to nationalise the mines, etc."

If our comrade's criticism were directed at our **organisational** weaknesses—insufficiently prepared lines of communication, etc.—which hindered the efficient delivery of the Party leads, there would be more substance in them. The General Strike in this respect taught us a few important lessons, which we must do our best to apply.

* * * * *

(iii) With regard to the question of an alternative leadership, our comrade is again insufficiently informed. The London Trades Council, by the fifth day of the strike, had already held one conference—composed of secretaries of union district committees, with its own Executive—to set up a London Central Council of Action: and, by the eighth day, had held a second conference (on the initiative of the Party fraction), composed of the same bodies, **together with the secretaries of the sixty odd Councils of Action of the London area.** No doubt criticism could be made of the speed with which this or that conference was summoned, of the energy with which this or that comrade pressed for steps to be taken—but that is not the issue our comrade raises. So far as his point is concerned, it is not necessary to say more than that the London Trades Council undoubtedly **was** moving along the path, under mass pressure, which would have forced it to assume alternative leadership.

What was the real obstacle, the real factor in delay? It was precisely that same circumstance of prevailing craft independence, of union discipline which still kept the General Strike as an aggregate of sectional strikes rather than as a class strike, which

we have seen is overlooked in the dictum, quoted by our comrade that the General Strike was "the last stage before insurrection." For it was not only the London Trades Council which turned at first to the secretaries of District Committees, instead of to secretaries of Councils of Action, for authority, i.e., to the very organs which, next to the General Council and the union Executives, were **least** accessible to mass pressure. Let our comrade turn to comrade Arnot's description of the Northumberland and Durham "General Council," in the "Labour Monthly"—he will find precisely the same phenomenon. Let him turn to the report of the North-Western Area Council of Action (Manchester), given in the L.R.D. "Monthly Circular"—he will find the same again.

That is the lesson which we have to learn from the experience of the evolution of the Councils of Action towards real power—and not a lesson of failure on the part of the Party (again we except the possibility of some organisational defects, which made it possible for directions to reach the Party apparatus on the sixth day, say, instead of the third). The fact that the British workers were revolutionary enough to force their reactionary leaders to take the leadership of a General Strike which they hated and feared, but not revolutionary enough to throw out these traitors, is no accident: it is an inevitable stage in the revolutionisation of the workers, which is not a jump to the "last stage before insurrection"; but a process of bitter experience and hard-won lessons. And what applied to the General Council applied to the local Councils: they still looked to the union officials for authority.

Naturally, this could not imply that our Party must remain passive and "wait for a sell-out." But such a description of the Party policy (not only nationally, but locally also) would be less than just in a friend, and would be malignant misrepresentation from an "ultra-Left" or a "Trotskyist." Neither in its steady criticism of the General Council day by day, nor in its efforts to build up an alternative mass leadership within the narrow compass of the nine days, nor in its political and organisational slogans during the first few days after the strike—they ought all to be reprinted in a second edition of comrade Murphy's book—**is there the slightest justification for the assertion or suggestion that our Party was, by acts of commission or omission, "a brake on the revolution."**

* * * * *

Of course, the Party Congress will have to examine this question not only from the angle of what happened during the General Strike. The theory that the chief moment in the life of a Party is that of the decisive conflicts between the workers and the capitalists achieved melancholy notoriety during the discussions between comrade Trotsky and the leaders of the C.P.S.U. in 1924. We have learned that the period of comparatively hum-drum prepara-

tions, of day-to-day fights and struggles for the Party, are of no less importance, because it is in them that the Party is built as a battling, unbreakable spearhead of the working class.

Approaching from this angle, the Party Congress will have to say whether on the whole the Party allowed the mass campaigns in which it engaged, or the mass repressions inflicted upon it by the Tory Government and its valued allies—the leaders of the Labour Party—after Liverpool, have in any way induced it to compromise, to hide its revolutionary identity, or to obscure its Bolshevik principles. We have already referred to Scarborough, where the “Lefts” on the General Council stood back from the fight and left our Party group to lead the struggle against the Right: the Congress will have to say whether our Party line since the General Strike, and notably at Bournemouth, where the “Lefts” formally **went over** to the Right, represents a falling-back from or an advance on 1925. We have mentioned Liverpool: again the Congress will have to say whether, in our fight (theoretical and practical) to build a mass Left-wing opposition to the Liberal leaders of the Labour Party, in anticipation of Margate, our Party has compromised in its basic principles on the question of the role of violence, the role of the Party, the meaning of Imperialism, the importance of unity with the Russian workers. And a definite verdict from the Congress will be the more necessary because, in the Third Annual Conference of the National Minority Movement (August, 28-29), and in the first National Conference of the Labour Party Left-wing (September 18-19), the policy and activity of the Party have received bigger mass endorsement than ever before. The Party must know whether it is working on the right lines or not, and only an objective analysis can tell us.

An integral part of such an analysis, too, must be a definite verdict on whether the Party's policy in regard to the miners' struggle since the General Strike has been correct: because the miners' struggle continues to embody and typify the struggle of the British workers in the present phase of capitalism. Was it correct or incorrect to concentrate the Party efforts upon the embargo (with the levy as a secondary slogan), as a means of stimulating the activity of the masses, as a test for the renegades of the General Council “Left-wing” and for the sham friendship professed for the miners by the I.L.P. leaders and their political hangers-on: was it correct or incorrect to make this the central *political* issue, so long as the miners went on fighting and thereby undermining capitalist economy: was it correct or incorrect, at the same time as we threw responsibility for the desertion of the miners upon the General Council, to criticise and expose every false step, every weakness, every act of compromise, on the part of A. J. Cook, which would lead to his sharing responsibility with the General Council for any defeat, without gaining anything for

the miners? We leave out—for reasons of space—the similar problems which arise out of the Party's campaign for world trade union unity, for the Anglo-Russian Committee, and against imperialism.

This also the Congress must do, because it has a duty to perform towards the 5,500 new miner members of the Party—and to the other thousands of future members from amongst the railwaymen, transport workers, metalworkers, textile workers, who will unquestionably be brought into our Party by each succeeding wave of capitalist attack. It is not entirely correct to say, as sometimes is said, that our miner recruits have come in **simply** on the crest of a wave of revolt, as might have happened in 1919 or 1920. They have come in because they have had practical, tangible, concrete **proof** that only our Party had the right policy to meet their practical bread-and-butter requirements, and fought for that policy. We repeat that there is every reason to anticipate similar results when other sections of the workers are attacked, as undoubtedly they will be in the near future.

Everything will depend upon the Party being able to show them, by precept and by example, how it hammered out the policy, the results of which they know: how it combines day-to-day struggles with its revolutionary objective: how, therefore, it combines organisation of the widest mass campaigns, wherein it co-operates with all kinds of elements who are not yet, or who never will be, in our Party, with complete and clear preservation of its revolutionary identity, involving first and foremost the right of unsparing criticism. At the same time, the Congress must draw the organisational lessons which are the counterpart of these political lessons. It must tell the Party whether the concentration on independent Party groups wherever the workers are employed and exploited—in pit, factory, workshop, depot, street—side by side with the building of Party fractions everywhere where the workers (even a section of them) are organised, have or have not been correctly appraised as the central twin tasks of the Party in the organisational sphere, during the present period.

* * * * *

Our Eighth Party Congress will have to do these things, not merely in order to pass decisions on previous policy, or to apportion blame and praise, but in order to equip the Party to face the new attacks—economic and political—which are beginning to loom up before the British workers out of the miners' fight. We face them, numerically twice as strong as we were last year: upon this Congress will depend in large measure whether we shall be, in spirit and determination, also twice as strong. Every Party member and every delegate to the Congress must address himself to this task.

E.C.C.I. Resolution on the Organisational Activity of the Communist Party of Great Britain

I.

Summary of the Organisational Activity of the C.P.G.B.

AFTER receiving a report on the organisational work of the Communist Party of Great Britain during the General Strike, the Org. Bureau of the E.C.C.I. records with satisfaction that the C.P.G.B. played an important and leading role in the ideological and organisational preparation of the General Strike. Despite its small numbers the Party understood how, through a correct policy and the correct application of united front tactics and the active work of Party members in the trade unions and in the factories, to develop its ideological influence over the masses, which was already considerable before the strike in comparison with the numerical strength of the Party. Moreover, they have also attained notable organisational successes.

In the ideological preparation the factory newspapers, whose publication was helped in every possible way by the C.C., played an especially important role. These newspapers expressed in concrete form the slogans of the Party and adapted them to local conditions. This made the Party's leadership possible. Thanks to the fact that the Party had for a long time been helping the comrades in the factories in a practical way with the contents and technical make up of the factory newspapers, it was possible without special direction to issue strike bulletins, and in the absence of a central organ to publish local Party papers.

Although there are still only a few factory groups and most of them have only a few members (on the average about five or six), the influence of the Party among the workers was much greater in proportion to the Party's strength. This was due on the one hand to the fact that the factory newspapers have appeared regularly for quite a while, and have appeared in relatively large editions, and on the other hand, the Party's influence is also due

to the fact that although the Party is small, nearly all Party members are active in Party work (while in other parties a large part of the membership is still inactive). It can be said our little C.P.G.B. was, so to speak, "everywhere." Practically in every locality, even where there were few Party members, there Party members were to be found on the strike committees and on the Councils of Action. Many of our comrades were placed in responsible positions as chairmen and secretaries of strike committees and Councils of Action, or as editors of strike bulletins. The workers had confidence in our comrades because they learned to know the Communists in practical work as those who were most active and made the best proposals.

Our Party played an important role in the formation and work of the Councils of Action. Despite the opposition and sabotage of the reformist leaders and trade union bureaucrats, it was possible to form such committees in a number of places. In most of these the Communists were fairly well represented. Although the Councils of Action were still in an embryonic stage, the mere fact of their existence contributed much towards popularising the idea of such Councils among the broad masses of workers.

Thanks to the activity of the Communists in the Councils of Action, it was possible in part to break the sabotage of the reformists. Despite the decision of the General Council which decreed that no propaganda be made (i.e., that no bulletins must be issued), a number of such bulletins were issued by many Councils of Action and Strike Committees at the initiative of the Communists and under their editorship.

The Party was able to win over large sections of working women to active co-operation in the organisation and support of the strike. March 8th was made the occasion of linking up the specific demands of working women with the immediate tasks of the revolutionary struggle of the British working class.

In the course of the strike, it was shown by spontaneous demonstrations that it affected the interests of the whole working class. The reports show a number of cases where the agricultural workers had far-reaching sympathy with the strikers and supported them.

II.

Deficiencies in Organisational Work.

One of the deficiencies was that the factory groups as such, did not play a prominent part during the General Strike. The entire work was carried on by the local organisations, even in

those places and industries which were untouched by the strike, and where the activity of the factory groups could proceed without disturbance. This can be attributed primarily to the fact that the factory groups are still undeveloped and have not yet become basic units of the Party. They exist, so to say, beside the old residential organisations which still pre-dominate in the Party. Because of this existence side by side of the factory groups and residential organisations, the factory groups, which should have been in the foreground during the strike, took second place, i.e., during the strike they did not function as such. As far as concerns the factory groups in the strike areas and in the striking industries there were without doubt great obstacles to systematic work by the factory groups. These were as follows :

(a) The numerical weakness of the groups as well as of the locals. This made it seem opportune to shift Party work from the groups to the general meetings of the workers' organisations, trade union branches, etc.

(b) Many workers live far from the factory and could not in view of transportation difficulties reach the group meetings.

(c) The tradition of the British worker to carry on his political and trade union life not in the factory, but in his branch and trade union meetings.

In spite of these difficulties, keeping in mind that the mobilisation and influencing of the workers in their factories was of the utmost political and organisational importance during the strike, the Party did not do all that it could have done to overcome these difficulties, and thus bring the factory group into action where it was necessary and possible to do so.

III.

The Next Organisational Tasks of the Party.

The ideological influence which the Party has among the working masses should be turned to organisational use. One of the most important tasks of the Party now as heretofore is the winning of new members, i.e., to make the mass of those workers who openly sympathise with the Party members of the Party. The fact that nearly 2,000 workers entered the Party in a short time is proof that it should be possible to realise the Party slogan : **"Double the membership this year,"** and thus advance along the road to a mass Communist Party. The efforts to gain new members should be carried on everywhere energetically and systematically. In particular the greatest attention should be paid to the

strengthening of the existing factory groups (doubling membership in the factory groups) and the creation of a new factory group in the most important works—in the mines, the metal industry, the railways and shipbuilding.

In the present objective situation, with the considerable swing toward the Left of the masses and the growing influence of the Party this is quite possible. It should strengthen the recruiting campaigns in every direction and facilitate the entrance of the workers from the work-bench to the Party. For the purpose of a more intensive and effective gaining of new members it is advisable to carry on more intensively the practice of holding open meetings of Party organisations, especially drawing in non-Party workers with the right to speak (meetings of sympathisers).

Parallel with the increase in the work of gaining members it is the pressing duty of the Party to adopt measures in order to keep the newly-won members and to reduce the existing fluctuation of the membership.

The Org. Bureau approves in this respect the practical measures and instructions adopted by the Organisation Department of the C.C. of the C.P.G.B. (Bulletins of the Factory Group Committees of the C.P.G.B. of March 5 and 30, 1926). The Org. Bureau especially emphasises the necessity of elementary political education for the newly-won members and their political training. Among other things they should be drawn into practical Party work without burdening them heavily and thus frightening them away.

Whenever possible short courses should be given for newly-won members, in accordance with the instructions of Agit-Prop in this connection.

Another important task is to train the factory groups in careful work, in order to prevent victimisation as far as possible, since many workers who thoroughly sympathise with the Party hesitate on account of this and refrain from joining the Party.

The C.P.G.B. in view of the increase in the Party's numbers and the growing complication of tasks all around, is faced with the problem of strengthening the entire Party apparatus. The enlarged field of the Party's activity and the rise of new tasks demand a stricter organisation and better structure of the central apparatus. Above all it is necessary to take measures for strengthening the organisation and trade union departments of the C.C.

Further, steps should be taken to quickly strengthen the Party apparatus in those political centres of the country (Birming-

ham, for example), which showed themselves during the strike to be leading central points of the area. The C.C. must establish connections with such regions under all circumstances, and send the most important functionaries as instructors to lead the Party organisations there. At the same time the organisations of these central points must have greater material resources for carrying on their work. The C.C. must consider the question of the structure of the Party organisation in such centres.

The C.C. should gather actual material. It should make a thorough study without delay of the work of the nuclei as well as the fractions and the Party leaderships from top to bottom during the strike and draw the necessary organisational conclusions from them. In addition the Org. Bureau of the E.C.C.I. considers it necessary:

To examine all existing concentration groups. Concentration groups should be transformed into regular factory groups wherever the required number of members is present (three). At the same time a position must be adopted on the question of practical working experience in regard to the concentration groups.

With the extension of the factory groups (i.e., their strengthening through gaining new members in the factories in question) and the formation of the new factory groups, the complete re-organisation of the Party should be pushed more and more. This is partly retarded by the continuation of the old residential organisations (branches). The existence side by side of factory groups and the old residential organisation hems in and restricts the work of the factory groups. The C.P.G.B. must, therefore, now also take up in a practical way the question of organising street groups. Without street groups the Party cannot gain a foothold among the individual workers, the handicraft workers, housewives, etc., who, during the General Strike manifested their sympathy for the Party. The formation of street groups must be approached systematically. All those not employed in factories should be organised in street groups. The tasks of street groups must be definitely stated, especially in regard to supporting the work of the factory groups, which must be made more active.

In the given moment the old residential organisations should be dissolved.

Hand-in-hand with the recruiting of new members the campaign for 100 per cent. trade union organisation should be carried on. In connection with this the special campaign started by the General Council for organising women workers in the trade unions should be energetically renewed. This campaign which should be carried on together with the Minority Movement, should first

of all be carried out on the issue of the removal of the reformist leaders and new elections of trade union leadership.

Special emphasis must be placed on the capturing of official posts in the lower trade union organisations. Care must be taken that every Communist belonging to a trade union should do daily organisational trade union work even more than hitherto and not drop into inactivity. This should be the case especially in those trade unions where the leaders have made particularly degrading agreements, as for example the railway workers and transport workers.

Where organisations are not yet affiliated as entities, it is the task of the fractions to carry on a wide agitation for affiliation with the Minority Movement, to gather around it sympathetic elements, to call joint meetings, i.e., to hold open fraction sessions for attracting sympathetic non-Party workers, etc.

The attitude of the Co-operatives during the General Strike showed that the Party, despite its generally correct policy, was organisationally too weak to achieve noteworthy results in the face of the predominating influence of the reformists. It is especially important just now to carry on with increased energy the building up of a Left-wing in the Co-operatives systematically and thoroughly with the trade union Minority Movement.

Following the great success of the factory newspapers the Party should increase their number and improve their technique and contents still further. Wherever possible a factory newspaper should be issued, at least in every big works of the most important industries (mining, railways, metal, shipbuilding and textile). A systematic campaign for the creation of a Communist daily must be carried out. The publication of small popular pamphlets must be continued.

The experiences during the General Strike with the Councils of Action should be studied with special attention and thoroughness, as these will play a big role in coming strikes. Their functions should be accurately laid down.

Work among the unemployed, whose number continues to increase as a consequence of the coal strike, must be strengthened. It is especially important to draw them into active struggle, the trade unions under much greater pressure than heretofore to support the demands of the unemployed (e.g., affiliation to the Trades Union Congress).

The successfully begun work among women should be continued energetically and persistently; the winning over of factory working women should be specially concentrated on. By drawing

them into strike work, for example the provision committees which fed the coal miners, they were made active. The Party should take advantage of this situation and seek to draw women into the trade unions and the Councils of Action and to win even more women as Party members.

The activity of the Young Communist League, which proved its worth in the General Strike and is now doing good work also in the coal miners' strike, should be given more attention. Greater support should be given to the Young Communist League. The campaign for drawing the young workers into the trade unions should be especially energetically supported.

The C.C. should undertake a careful investigation of the entire material relating to the support of the strike by the population in the rural districts. It should establish which organisational forms this support threw up. It should find out whether these organisational forms cannot be strengthened and built up so that the Party's influence may be strengthened over new considerable sections of the working population, which until now have been following the bourgeoisie and big landlords.

The increased organisational tasks of the C.P.G.B. make it imperative that the C.C. and its departments should advance to the establishment of the closest connections with the E.C.C.I. The Org. Department on its part should do everything in the immediate future to support the Org. Department of the C.C. of the C.P.G.B. in every direction.

The Party and the League

WITH the opening up of new Locals both by the Party and the Y.C.L., the question of mutual relations between the two organisations is raised in an acute form in many areas. On several occasions in the past, this question has been given serious consideration, and again, quite recently, was the object of discussion at a joint meeting of the Organising Bureau of the Party and the E.C. of the League.

In line with past decisions, it is possible to answer some of the most important questions which are causing differences to arise in the areas where new Party and League Locals have recently been organised. The answers will also interest older Locals which may not yet have given attention to this most important question.

In this article, I do not propose to deal with the whole question, but only to supply answers to and point the way out of the chief difficulties which have arisen during the period since the General Strike.

The Age Limit and Dual Membership.

No arbitrary age limit should be drawn. Some local officials are doing this. It is so simple to say all Communists below 23 years of age should be in the Y.C.L., and all above that age in the Party. A little thought, however, must show that this rigid application of the age limit is fraught with great dangers. It often happens that a comrade, though still under 23 years of age, is the most qualified of all local comrades to lead an important phase of Communist Party activity. On the other hand, we may find a comrade well past the 23 year limit who, by inclination and temperament, is eminently suitable to be an active worker in the youth organisation.

In order to allow of the best possible use being made of the qualities possessed by our young comrades, it has been decided as a guide to settlement of the age limit,

(a) That all comrades under 21 shall be members of the Y.C.L.

(b) That, between the ages of 21 and 25, comrades can be members of both organisations.

(c) At the age of 25, unless important reasons demand an extension, all comrades must leave the Y.C.L. and come inside the Party.

This decision raises two important questions. First, to which organisation must the dual member pay dues, and secondly, which controls the activity of the member. The answers are as follows: Up to 23 years of age, the dues should be paid into the Y.C.L.—after that into the Party. The question of the activity of dual members should be settled at a joint meeting of the local Party and the League Committee, when the requirements of both organisations are carefully considered and the wishes of the member in question have been ascertained.

Inter-Representation on Committees.

Another important problem which has lately arisen in some areas is the question of the “right” of Party members to attend Y.C.L. meetings and vice versa. It is agreed by some Party comrades that an immature and enthusiastic League Local is a positive danger unless its whole business and activity is supervised and controlled by the more mature (and in many cases, less enthusiastic) Party Local.

To exercise this control, the Party Local claims the “right” to allocate tasks to League members and, in some cases, demands the “right” for Party members to attend League meetings with voting powers.

Alternatively the League members turn up at Party Group meetings and aggregates and demand a voice and vote on all questions. Again the “right” is demanded, and in many cases granted.

There are no such “rights” in existence. The League should have complete organisational autonomy—and so also should the Party. Of course, the League must take its political direction from the Party, but to do this “rights” are unnecessary.

The form of contact between the Party and the League is clear. On every Party Committee from the Factory or Area Group, to the Central Committee the youth must have a representative with full power. Alternatively, on every Y.C.L. Committee from the bottom to the top, the Party must appoint a representative with the same power.

Assistance for the League.

Whilst the youth organisation has no ground for demanding admittance for its members to Party meetings of an administrative

character, a ruling on this question must not be used to shut the door of the Party completely to the youth.

Every opportunity should be taken of providing facilities whereby League members can participate in meetings which are of an educational character.

No aggregate Party meeting, at which an important political question is to be discussed should be organised without an invitation being extended to the Young Communists. At these meetings, they should be entitled to participate in the discussion without decisive votes. Then again, when Party Training classes, speakers' classes, Training Schools, etc., etc., are being organised, special consideration should be given to the claims of the Y.C.L. and efforts made to include a fair percentage of their members.

Another Pressing Need.

Experience, judged from Party organisers' reports, has shown another phase of activity where the Party can be of service to the Y.C.L. During the last three months, the Y.C.L. has been able to conduct widespread propaganda campaigns in various important industrial districts. A large number of inexperienced and enthusiastic speakers have been pressed into service. Many times their speeches have been ill-prepared and consequently complaints have been made against them by our Party comrades. This weakness has been freely admitted by the E.C. of the Y.C.L. and steps are to be taken to remedy this.

The Biggest Fault of All.

The above points, important as they are, fall into comparative insignificance when compared with the faults of some of our Locals which are actively preventing the formation of League Locals. Amazing as this may appear, nevertheless the fault is not limited to one town or district, but is prevalent in quite a number of areas. This activity arises out of a complete absence of faith in the capacity and willingness of young workers to serve the Communist cause.

In one big district nearly five hundred recruits have been enrolled by the Party. One-third of these are by age qualified to join the Y.C.L. No Locals of the youth organisation are in existence.

The older comrades agree that the "Y.C.L. Locals cannot exist unless 'wet nursed' by the Party." This, "the Party cannot undertake at the moment because of the many organisational problems connected with the miners' lock-out, and the big Party recruitment." One comrade, occupying an important Local position in the Party, states "we must get the Party 100 per cent. organised and then we will attend to the youth."

All this is wrong. The Y.C.L. does not need "wet nursing" by the Party to the extent that its birth is forbidden. In the case in question, and others where the same policy is operating, we say quite definitely: Group all the young recruits together, put them in touch at once with the Y.C.L., and, during the initial process of the formation of the Local, allocate one or two sympathetic and temperamentally suitable comrades to assist the young comrades.

As for the comrade who wants the formation of the Y.C.L. Locals delayed until the Party is 100 per cent. organised, we reply: No Local Party is 100 per cent. organised **until** a strong and virile youth organisation is in existence and functioning well.

Form New Youth Locals.

Nearly as bad as the above are those Locals of the Party which are neglecting the possibilities of starting a Local organisation of the youth. Altogether we have some 30 well established Locals which have a Party membership of over 50 members in important industrial centres and where no youth organisations exist. To these Locals we say, plain and direct, that they are evading one of their most important obligations.

With the sharpening of the struggle, it is more important than ever to harness the unbounded enthusiasm of the young workers for our cause. For a Party Local to neglect the organisation of the youth now, is to place its own future in peril. The offending Locals should at once depute a small number of comrades including the young members of the Local to undertake the specific task of organising a parallel local of the Y.C.L.

And Last, but not Least.

Party, Pit and Factory Groups have not fulfilled their full responsibilities to the movement unless, where opportunity exists, they have organised a group of the Y.C.L. in the undertaking.

With the mass recruitment in the minefield, it is possible now at more than 100 different pits to establish strong Party units and also strong Y.C.L. groups side by side.

It is no use some comrades excusing themselves on the grounds that because the unions give the youth full adult status, that there is no basis for a youth organisation apart from the Party. This may be and is a sound argument for joint Party and Y.C.L. trade union fraction meetings, but to tackle specialised propaganda, agitation and organisation of the young miners for Communism, to give them preliminary training for future Party work, we need a Y.C.L. Pit Group wherever we have a Party Group.

ORG. DEPT.

The Party and the Opposition Bloc

N. BUKHARIN.

(Continued from last issue.)

II.

The Ideological Differences Between the Party and the Opposition.

AFTER this brief sketch of our present position, we pass on to the questions raised in part in the C.C. Plenum by the comrades of the opposition, in part outside of the Plenum in connection with the work of the Plenum, or appearing in the utterances of other oppositional writers, journalists, theoreticians, and political economists. I shall classify remarks on the questions in accordance with the main problems confronting our Party at the present time, from the correct estimation of which our policy, our political standpoint, and the conclusions which we as leaders of the policy of the Party must draw for the immediate future from the present situation, depend at the present time.

Economic Policy in its Relations to the Industrialisation of the Country.

I shall first deal with the problem which I should like to name the problem of economic policy in its connection to industrialisation. I shall endeavour, though briefly, to dissect those theses of the oppositional comrades which express in their totality the system of the views of the opposition and their economic platform, and to compare these with the standpoint of the whole Party.

The first thesis advanced by the opposition is the assertion that our industry is retrogressing and that the disproportion between agriculture and city industry is increasing, to the detriment of city industry. I settled with this thesis to a great extent in my introductory remarks. It is characteristic of an opposition to paint the situation in exaggeratedly dark colours, but there should be limits to this process. However, the comrades of the opposition maintain that our industry is falling behind agriculture, that it

is not developing so rapidly as agriculture, and that the policy pursued by our Party and the policy of the majority of the C.C. are to blame for this.

As early as 1923, during the discussion on the price policy, our Central Committee was accused of so acting that industry remained backward as compared with agriculture, and in particular it was accused of a price policy detracting from the necessary growth of our industry. But you will remember, comrades, that facts have confuted these accusations. During the first economic year following the discussion of 1923, our industry made a spring forward of 60 per cent. In the following year there was another advance of 40 per cent. Our industry developed with amazing rapidity. This thesis of retrogression in industry is based in the first place on incorrect figures. At the beginning of this report I put the question in a positive form, and you have seen that the total balance is undoubtedly in favour of the growth of industry as compared with agriculture.

The second thesis advanced by the opposition in the sphere of economic politics, in their relation to the industrialisation of the country, is the thesis that we must now carry on a greatly intensified industrial policy, this to be accomplished in the first place by increasing the prices of our industrial products. Comrade Pyatakov, speaking in the Plenum on behalf of the opposition, spoke in favour of a rise in the factory prices of our industrial products, the rise to be actuated by our State economic organs; in his opinion this is one of the measures which has to be taken. These comrades are of the opinion that it would lead to a more intensive industrialisation of the country if we were to pursue a policy excluding reductions in prices, and aiming rather at increased prices for the products of our industry, and even at higher wholesale and factory prices.

We believe this policy to be entirely wrong, and we cannot agree to its pursuance. One reason why we cannot accede to it is the fact that a rise in the prices of our industrial products, consumed as these are for the most part in the towns, would involve a change in real wages, so that such a rise would endanger us both with regard to wages and with regard to the stability of the currency. And we cannot accede to this policy, because it would not only fail to help us to overcome the main evil of our industrial organisation, the evil of bureaucracy, the evil of unwieldiness, of enormous costs entailed both in the industries themselves and in the trade apparatus, the evil of irrational organisation of work, but it would make it even more difficult for us to rectify another category of our sins, those represented by the weakest points of our industry. Were we to accustom our industry and our economic organs to a higher price policy just at this juncture, then our

economic functionaries would not move a finger towards the improvement of the whole organisation itself, towards the diminution of unproductive tasks, and for rational working arrangements, decreased working expenses, reduction of costs of production, improvement of quality, etc.

Every monopoly runs a certain danger of rusting, of resting on its laurels. The private capitalist and private owner are constantly being spurred onward by competition; if Peter works badly and has great working expenses, whilst Paul manages at less expense, then Paul beats Peter. But if we, who have practically all big industry in our hands, who have a State super-monopoly and own all essentials, do not stimulate the leading staff of our industry to cheapen production, and to produce on more rational lines, then indeed we have arrived at the pre-requisite stage for the rusting of our industry on the basis of its monopoly. That which is actualised by competition (which does not exist, or exists in a very slight degree among us) in a capitalist State, we must attain by conscious pressure under the impetus of the needs of the masses: produce better and cheaper, supply better goods, supply cheap goods!

But if our price policy deviates from this principle, then we shall not fulfil Lenin's behest that our industry is to supply the peasant with cheaper goods than capitalism has done; we are more likely to find ourselves in a position in which the workers, and a thousand times more the peasants, will say to us: "What has been the object of the whole matter, if your economics lead to higher prices for your industrial products? You understand nothing of economics."

We must prove in actual practice that we understand economics very well indeed, and must thus devote our main attention to a policy of steady reductions in prices, actualised by reducing the costs of production and by creating better order in our State economic machinery. I stated above, when analysing the question of private economics, that the private capitalist contrives to keep his capital in quicker circulation, that his working expenses are lower, that he works with greater thrift, etc., and that our apparatus is unwieldy, that its capital circulates slower, that its working costs are enormous, etc. This depresses us. If we are not to stand aside before the capitalist, and if we are to make progress ourselves, to improve the quality of our products, to cheapen our goods, to develop the economic alliance with the peasantry, then we must exert our utmost endeavours for the reduction of prices, not for their increase.

The opposition is of the opinion that its policy of higher prices would ensure more rapid growth for industry, but we are

of the opinion that this view is entirely wrong, an illusion, a self-deception. The policy of high and rising prices would lead on the contrary to stagnation and rust in our industry. Our industry would rest on its laurels and trust in being able to cover everything out of the State Exchequer. It would do nothing for its advancement, for its development, or for the attainment of a position as a progressive technical and economic factor in our economics.

The third thesis which must be analysed in connection with this, or must at least be mentioned, is the thesis of the danger threatening us from private capital. I dealt with this thesis in my introductory remarks. I assumed the most favourable estimates on private capitalist profits to be correct, and am confident of having proved that even these most favourable calculations show no signs of that threatened private capitalist danger which is supposed to be hanging over our heads.

The fourth thesis, finally, advanced by the comrades of the opposition, is the assertion that our State organs are almost completely degenerated, that they have become entirely detached from the masses, and that the State, economic, trade union, and co-operative organs, as also the Party organs, and above all the State economic organs, are joining forces with the NEP-men, the kulaks (rich peasantry), etc. To this I must observe: It is true that through the fault of our bureaucracy there is a tendency to such degeneration among us: this cannot be contested. But we must contest with the utmost decision and energy the suggestion that our State industry is already degenerated, that it no longer represents the industry of the working class. This is an assertion towards which the oppositional comrades are steering, and they have very nearly ventured to express it outright.

Our industry is the State Socialist industry of the working class, but it has fallen a victim to the bureaucratic spirit. This is our definition. The fight against bureaucracy must, therefore, form one of our leading tasks, and here we must unfold ever increasing energy. But still we are very far from a position which would justify the comrades of the opposition in advancing such a thesis.

The Peasantry Question.

This is how matters stand with regard to the first problem—the problem of economic policy in its relations to the industrialisation of our country. I now pass to the second problem, one of most decisive importance: to the problem of the peasantry, and to the economic aspect of this problem.

When we attack this question first from its theoretical side, one point stands forth conspicuously, and I draw your attention to it because it represents, so to speak, the springboard from which the "New Opposition" takes its leap when solving this or that question in connection with the peasantry. This is the manner in which private capital and peasantry are identified with one another, and agricultural economics confused with capitalist economics. Private economics are regarded as identical with private capitalist economics, and there is a lack of comprehension of the fact that there can be such things as non-capitalist private undertakings. The discussion at the Fourteenth Party Congress dealt with all this, but it has not been so completely formulated until now.

I must first of all draw your attention to a theoretical compilation of all oppositional proposals, ideas, assertions, theses, etc., to comrade Preobrashensky's book "On the New Economy." Here the economics of our country are regarded as follows: On one side we have State economics, on the other private economics, and nothing besides. Private capitalist economics, the economics of the small peasantry, and every kind of private economic undertaking—among the poor peasantry, the middle peasantry, etc.—are all thrown together.

It need scarcely be emphasised that this standpoint is entirely wrong. When Lenin asked "Who is going to defeat whom?" we the capitalists or the capitalists us, he put the question from the viewpoint of: Who is going to win over the peasantry? Shall we win over the main mass of the peasantry, or will the capitalists do it? In Lenin's conceptions the peasantry played chiefly the role of an object subject to the influences of the opposing class forces. And when we put the question of "Who is going to defeat whom?" the answer will be essentially decided by the question of who succeeds in drawing over the peasantry to his side, for the struggle between the working class and the capitalist is a struggle for the peasantry. It is thus entirely absurd, and flatly contradicts Lenin's standpoint, when private capitalist economics are identified with agricultural economics in all their various strata.

This brings us to the second question of this series of peasantry problems: the questions of "pumping over" means from agricultural sources, and from private economic undertakings, into industry and into State economics. This is no simple question. It is perfectly clear that our State industry cannot obtain the means for its expansion solely from the work done by the working class within this State industry itself, and that it must necessarily draw on the non-industrial reservoir for the means to support and expand industry. One of the resources upon which we must draw is the peasantry. The peasantry must take its share

in helping the State to build up a Socialist state of industry, and thus the tax revenues, the industrial profits on the goods which we sell to the peasantry, and other various revenues, are drawn to a certain extent from the peasantry.

It would be entirely wrong to say industry should develop solely upon what is produced within this industry itself. On the contrary, the whole question is: How much can we take away from the peasantry, to what extent and by what methods can we accomplish the pumping over process, what are the limits of the pumping over, and how shall we calculate in order to arrive at favourable results? This is the question. Here lies the difference between us and the opposition, a difference which may be defined by saying that the comrades of the opposition are in favour of an immoderate amount of pumping over, and are desirous of putting so severe a pressure upon the peasantry that in our opinion the result would be economically irrational and politically unallowable. We do not in the least hold the standpoint that we are against this pumping over, but our calculations are more sober, we confine ourselves to measures economically and politically adapted to their purpose.

If we look at the matter with the eyes of comrade Preobrashensky and a number of other comrades who do not notice the difference between private capitalist economics and peasantry economics, then it is only natural that anxiety as to the limits to be observed appears to be entirely superfluous, since we deprive the private capitalist of everything which we possibly can and only permit his continued existence as a possible milch-cow for the future. But we cannot adopt the same attitude towards the peasantry as to the private capitalists. We cannot find a common formula applicable alike to the middle peasant, the rich farmer, and the poor of the villages, as comrade Preobrashensky would like to do. This is not the right way to put the question. Theoretical standpoints such as this lead us to different conclusions in practical politics as in other things.

The opposition proposes: Sell as dearly as possible; in selling goods at higher prices to the peasant, you are taking more from him. "Take more!"—this is the whole wisdom of the opposition. The formulation laid down by one of the comrades of the opposition, comrade Ossovsky, in an article which we published as a discussion article in the "Bolshevik" consists of the statement that we are now taking less from the peasantry than the Czar did. We should take more, and all evils will vanish from among us. But we must not judge like this, not merely because it would be inconsistent with our policy with respect to the peasants, but because it is incorrect from the standpoint of economic adaptedness to purpose, it is a naive illusion, a self-deception. It is ridi-

culous to suppose that our industry could develop with maximum rapidity under such circumstances.

Let us take a rough example. This year we could take ten times as much from the peasants as we are actually doing, and invest this in industry. But what would happen next year? Next year our agriculture would be worth nothing, we should have no raw materials, no cotton, no export grain, etc. At the same time industry receives an enormous influx of capital, everything which we can possibly squeeze out of the peasants. It would be nonsense to believe that this would secure the most rapid speed possible in the development of industry; obviously the first result would be a narrowing down of our markets, an absence of buyers.

I have chosen a rough example intentionally, but it serves to show that the maximum speed of development of our industry is by no means guaranteed by the maximum sum extracted from the peasantry. The matter is not so simple as all that, If we take less to-day, we thereby promote accumulation in agriculture, and ensure for ourselves a greater demand to-morrow for the products of our industry. If we secure higher gains for agriculture, this will enable us to take more next year than we could last. We thus secure for ourselves a still greater increase of revenue for the following year, and this revenue we can employ in our industry. This policy naturally involves a somewhat slower rate of speed this year, but will be compensated later by a rapid rise in the curve of our development. But if we adopt the policy of the opposition, we fly to a high summit of capital investment during the first year, only to fall the more inevitably and probably with a very abrupt drop. We can by no means guarantee our progress by these means. The policy pursued by the C.C. is adapted to the actualisation of our industrial development. The policy recommended by the opposition would not only plunge us into a series of political difficulties, but would retard and destroy the speed of progress of industry.

Now to the third question, which I have already discussed in my positive consideration of the situation. The comrades of the opposition exaggerate most frightfully the differentiation within the peasantry, and thus they constantly tend to fall into the mistake of ignoring the middle peasant; they devote too little attention to the question of the uplift of the middle peasantry, to the question of the co-operatives, etc. In connection with this aspect of the peasant question they have further failed to grasp the problem of the transformation to be undergone in the economics of the peasantry, the problem of the guidance of the peasants into other systems of work and other paths of development, their guidance into Socialist methods through the agency of the co-

operatives, and through the growing influence of the organs of the proletarian dictatorship on the economics of the middle peasantry. This question plays an extremely important part in our discussion. It is expressed in various combinations, forms the basis of various differences, and remains one of those fundamental bones of contention between the great majority of the C.C. and the leaders of the opposition.

The Social Character of the Soviet State.

Let us now turn to the third problem, the problem of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the policy of the proletarian dictatorship within our country. You may perhaps ask: Has this question then become a matter of contention in our Party? And yet it is true: the opposition has made even this question a matter of contention. Even in this question it has begun to express its doubts in a series of attacks and assertions. At first it was only the character of our Socialist industry which was made the subject of doubt, then came the doubt as to the correctness of our tactics in the peasantry question, and now the character, the class character of our Soviet power in our country is being questioned. This is another step in the development of the oppositional idea, another step away from the true Leninist standpoint.

Comrade Trotsky, in one of his speeches at the Plenum of the C.C., advanced the thesis of the "extremely non-proletarian character" of the Soviet power existing in our country. When the peasant question came under discussion, in connection with the results of the elections, the opposition stated that we are threatened by a deviation in the direction of the rich peasantry, and demanded decisive intervention on the part of the Party, in order to prevent any further shifting in a State already far from proletarian.

It must be observed that the idea that our State is not a Workers' State, that it is no longer the State of proletarian dictatorship, is gaining continual ground in oppositional circles. It might be thought that this sentence simply escaped from comrade Trotsky, in the heat of discussion. This is possible; but in this case it would have been his duty to withdraw the assertion afterwards. This was the more necessary that I drew attention, in my speech at the Plenum of the C.C., to this sentence, as something entirely foreign to us.

I repeat that it is possible for comrade Trotsky to have made this assertion in the heat of the discussion. But this sentence does not stand alone. An article will appear in the next number

of the "Bolshevik" by comrade Ossovsky, of the opposition. I have already made mention of another article of his in the "Bolshevik" in which he maintained that we should not by any means take less from the peasants than Czarism and the landowners took. Comrades, you must accord more attention to this question, for you will be well able to grasp that the question of the character of our State power is to us the central question. Have we a proletarian dictatorship or have we not? All other questions decidedly depend on this one, for if we have no proletarian dictatorship, this proletarian dictatorship must be actualised. And then we have to clear out of the way every obstacle hampering the realisation of this proletarian dictatorship.

Comrade Ossovsky writes:

"It would be well for us at the present moment to recollect the words spoken by comrade Lenin at the session of the Communist fraction of the Eighth Soviet Congress. He said that our State is not a Workers' State, but a Workers' and Peasants' State. It is only now, six years later, that it becomes comprehensible why comrade Bukharin is by no means able to draw the conclusions rising from the fact that our State is no Workers' State, but a Workers' and Peasants' State. The Lenin view of the Workers' and Peasants' State assumes a certain inevitable distance between this State and the State consisting of the proletariat and to a certain extent of the peasantry. The attempts to ignore the inevitable distance between the Workers' and Peasants' State and the proletariat are likely to be disastrous to the proletarian revolution."

This, translated into ordinary language, means: We have no proletarian dictatorship, our State is not a Workers' State, but a Workers' and Peasants' State; the proletariat must, however, defend its interests, and must thus oppose to a certain extent this Workers' and Peasants' State. Thus, if the proletarian Party wants to remain a proletarian Party, it must contend to some degree against the Soviet power. One thing must be said first of all, that it is becoming the fashion to try and find support in Lenin's authority for all kinds of nonsense, and those who do this, think it is going to cost them nothing, and that they may practise this art as long as they choose.

Here comrade Ossovsky directs his fire upon me. Lenin grasped the fact that our State is a Workers' and Peasants' State. Bukharin fails to grasp it. And since Bukharin is well known to be an adherent of the majority of the C.C. it is only natural that the C.C. comprehends nothing of this question, and is thus

pursuing a policy which, as comrade Ossovsky points out, can become extremely disastrous from the standpoint of proletarian revolution. First of all, I must challenge the testimony, and utterly reject this reference to comrade Lenin as witness, or rather, I myself call upon him as witness, in order to prove that comrade Ossovsky is entirely in the wrong, and that his standpoint leads in reality to conclusions disastrous to proletarian revolution.

The following was written by comrade Lenin ("Complete Works," Vol. 18-1, in the article: "The crisis in the Party," p. 33, Russian edition) with reference to the trade union discussion:

"When dealing with the discussion of 30th December, I must correct an error of mine. I said that: 'Our State is in reality not a Workers' State, but a Workers' and Peasants' State.' Comrade Bukharin at once interpolated: 'What kind of a State?' In reply I referred to the Eighth Soviet Congress then just concluded. Now, when reading the report on the discussion, I see I was wrong, and comrade Bukharin right. I should have said that: 'The Workers' State is an abstraction, and yet we have in reality a Workers' State, but firstly with the peculiarity that it is not the proletarian but the peasant population which preponderates in the country, and secondly it is a Workers' State accompanied by bureaucratic distortion.'"

This is surely perfectly clear, and comrade Ossovsky ought to have known that Lenin wrote this. Lenin here states directly, when speaking of the character of the State power: "We have a Workers' Government, but the peasantry is in the majority in the country." Right! "We have a Workers' State, but accompanied by bureaucratic distortion." Right! Thus our proletarian dictatorship, our Workers' State, has the peculiarities of working in an agricultural country and of having its State apparatus burdened with various bureaucratic aberrations.

This is perfectly true. But what is the class character of the State? It is a Workers' State. To state that our State is not a Workers' State, that it is already semi-bourgeois, is to assert that our State is already in a condition of degeneration, and to throw doubts upon the existence of the proletarian dictatorship in our country. And where comrade Ossovsky says this in so many words in a printed essay, comrade Trotsky expresses the same in his sentence on the "extremely non-proletarian character of our State." If this really were the case, it would be a very serious matter indeed. If we really had no proletarian dictatorship then we should have to pursue a very different line, and our Party,

in so far as it is a proletarian Party, would obviously place questions on the agenda aiming at a radical purging of the present Soviet power. Could it be otherwise? This is the first thesis.

The Rumour of the Bureaucratic Degeneration of the Soviets.

This brings us to the thesis of the degeneration of our whole State apparatus, and of the deviation of our policy, and of the policy of the present Soviet State from the interests of the broad proletarian masses. Comrade Kamenev has declared in so many words :

“The line you take is departing from the line of proletarian revolution, and is deserting more and more the interests of the broad proletarian masses.”

This is entirely in harmony with the idea that “our State has an extremely non-proletarian character,” and with Ossovsky’s assertion that we have no Workers’ State. It harmonises entirely with the whispers and rumours on the degeneration of the Soviet power at present occupying so much of the time of “pro-new-Soviet” (“Smyenovyezhovzy”) elements and various other liberal opponents of our policy. The opposition has pointed out that the numerous bureaucratic groups in our State apparatus are complemented by the equally numerous bureaucratic groups in the economic organs, the co-operatives, the trade unions, etc. It would thus seem that the whole of the groups composing our apparatus have practically nothing in common with the interests of the broad masses.

We have been believing in our simplicity that our Party is the vanguard of the proletariat; but now it turns out that it is a bureaucratic clique entirely detached from the masses. We believe the Soviet power to represent a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but it appears that all we have is an extremely non-proletarian State, headed by a completely declassed caste. The logical continuance of this train of thought is bound to lead sooner or later to the idea of the overthrow of the Soviet power—it can lead nowhere else.

And I repeat: Were I personally convinced that the situation among us has reached a point at which we have no longer a dictatorship of the working class, and we are being ruled by an oligarchy detaching itself from the interests of the broad masses, then my only conclusion would be that of Kautsky: Overthrow of the ruling power. Our comrades of the opposition have not yet reached this logical conclusion, and are not likely to. I for my part believe that the “God” of the Bolsheviki will yet stay their steps in time, and this will be an excellent thing from the standpoint of the interests of the Party. But we should be very dense indeed if we did not comprehend that this remarkable ideological development takes a straight line in this direction.

The Rumour of the Submerging of the Soviets in the Peasant Petty Bourgeoisie.

There is another assertion of the opposition which tends in

the same direction, the thesis that whilst our upper stratum, the Party, the Soviet power, the State and economic organs, are all submerged in a bureaucracy opposed to the interests of the working class, at the same time our subordinate Soviet organs are being submerged in the peasant petty bourgeoisie. The comrades take the election results and say: "Look, there are peasants in the village Soviets, and there will be more and more of them here—this is the way in which the Soviets are being vitalised." The upper stories of our building are being flooded by a bureaucratic clique, the lower stories by the petty bourgeoisie, and nothing but complete catastrophe is to be seen on both sides. The two waves will close over our heads and we shall suffocate.

This thesis of the submerging of our village Soviets under a flood of peasants is truly a pearl of creative thought on the part of the new opposition. The opposition appears to imagine it possible to govern an agricultural country in such manner that the working class non-existent in the village is still to maintain a numerical ascendancy. How can anyone imagine that the industrial proletariat is to have the majority in the village Soviets? Anyone who can arrive at such an idea must truly have a cabbage in place of a head. (Applause.)

Everyone in possession of even the most elementary political knowledge is aware that the Soviet power and the apparatus of our Soviet State represent a special system actually composed of several stories. No other than comrade Zinoviev has often told us, with the greatest enthusiasm, that the non-Party peasants should be induced to participate. To participate in what? In the Soviets. Do we suffer from the fact that the principle of vitalising the village Soviets has led to the election of non-Party peasants to the Soviets? I am of the opinion that we do not suffer in the least from this. Where is the laboratorium in which we convert the peasantry, overcome their individual psychology, induce them to follow us, educate them to co-operate with us in the Soviets and lead them on the proletarian and Socialist road? This is best done in the Soviets. And now we are told that the peasant is to be forced into a dark room—he may learn over the wireless. This is nonsense. We convert the peasant by actual practice, we induce him to follow our lead, to help us to secure the proletarian line.

The structure of our Soviet machinery is as follows: There are supreme, middle and subordinate organs. At the top there is a very powerful cadre, working under the leadership of our proletarian Party, and composed in the main of Party members. The further we proceed downwards, the more non-Party participants we find, and in the villages we find the structure supported by non-Party peasants who have hastened to our aid. We gradually introduce the non-Party peasants, who represent a petty bourgeois stratum, into the lower stories. We are secure in our

firm proletarian leadership, and influence the peasants in our own way, introduce them into our system of work, teach them to work in the new way, and induce them to take part in the work of Socialist construction. In this way the peasantry is guided by the proletariat. And when we admit the peasantry into the lower stories of the Soviet power, this is a necessary prerequisite towards the guidance of the peasantry by the proletariat.

We may take another example of the same kind, but from the experience of another country, for the purpose of refuting the clever assertions of our remarkable opposition. There is England for instance. England, too, has carried on imperialist war. As is generally known, Lloyd George, a bourgeois prime minister, admitted Henderson to his cabinet as representative of the working class and the trade unions. The same kind of thing has occurred in other countries. Now tell me this: is there a single Marxist who can maintain that at that time the English State was a bourgeois proletarian State just because Henderson was in the government? It need not be said that such an assertion would be absolute idiocy. You know who made this assertion. It was the opportunists. They said: Now, Henderson is a minister, and since he is a minister, this signifies a fresh epoch in the development of capitalism; the workers share the power, and we have no longer a bourgeois imperialist State, but something quite different. The proletarian dictatorship is being judged by the opposition essentially in the same manner.

When Lloyd George admitted Henderson into his cabinet, England did not cease for a moment to be a bourgeois imperialist State. Why? For a very simple reason. Because the bourgeoisie had sought out Henderson and his like for the purpose of transforming the ideology of the working class, and making the workers amenable to bourgeois ideology. Henderson fulfilled the task set him by the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie was enabled to take the working class in tow for the time being, and thus the nomination of Henderson as minister was the line on which the bourgeoisie drew the working class behind it, without altering the class character of their bourgeois power by a hair's breadth. They simply took their class antagonist in tow.

But in our case the greater part of the peasantry is not our class enemy, it is our ally, and when we admit these peasants into the apparatus of our State administration, and thus induce them to follow us, then it is surely a remarkable state of mind which can maintain that, because we do this, we have no workers' State, but some schismatic petty bourgeois two-class State, etc., and that, therefore, we have to conclude it to be our duty to protect the purely proletarian ranks against the Soviet State.

The root of the theoretical error of the opposition lies in the fact that these comrades fail to understand that the proletarian dictatorship must admit its class allies to the organs of

the dictatorship if it is to convert these allies to its standpoint, to guide them, and to lead them into the Socialist path in the interests of what was to Lenin the supreme principle of the proletarian dictatorship, i.e., of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry.

This is the real definition of the standpoint. And if the existence of a proletarian dictatorship in our country is doubted because we have no industrial proletariat in the villages and in the village Soviets, because we have no industrial proletarians in our organs in places where not even a magnifying glass can discover a proletarian at all, then this simply means that the main task incumbent upon the proletarian dictatorship, the task of inducing the poor peasantry and the great mass of the middle peasantry to take part in the work of actualising a Socialist state of society, has not been properly grasped. This lack of comprehension is a striking example of that lack of faith in the possibility of the actualisation of Socialism in our country, of that lack of understanding for the methods towards this actualisation, which was discussed in such decisive terms at the Fourteenth Party Congress.

The Results of the Election Campaign.

In this connection I must say a few words on the recent Soviet election campaign.

The last election campaign is the first which we have carried out without recourse to administrative pressure. We have applied new methods for the first time, and have transferred our preponderant attention to gaining the convictions of the voters and to exercising an ideological influence over them, and thus the various strata to whom our constitution accords the suffrage, enjoyed a greater amount of freedom at this election. What was the result of the elections? The result was that in the villages the proportion of Communists elected was lessened, and that elements have thus been admitted to the village Soviets, and in part to the city Soviets, which have hitherto been practically suppressed. This circumstance has given our opposition the opportunity to maintain that this is evidence of our becoming submerged in the petty bourgeoisie, and that the pressure put upon us by the petty bourgeoisie is here expressed by the machine of State slipping from the proletarian rails.

To this the following may be observed: In the first place very many comrades have observed the following in the provinces: If there have been fewer Communists elected to the village Soviets than at the last election (and in many places this is doubtless the case), those Communists who have been elected this time are supported by the whole village, whilst hitherto they have only been nominally elected, and in actual fact they were simply appointed, and possessed no authority among the villagers. It is

true that there were more Communists last time; but these Communists had no contact with the masses and did not lead the masses. But at the present moment, when we are drawing the total balance of our Soviet elections, we may confidently state that even where only a small proportion of Communists has been elected to the lower stories of our Soviet building, this does not signify any weakening of our growth, but is rather an expression of our growth, the proof that we are basing our leadership upon ideological conviction. One Communist backed up by his whole village is worth ten Communists standing alone.

Every great manœuvre, and every considerable change, of course, incurs expenses and renders a re-grouping necessary. When we declared at the Fourteenth Party Conference that a re-grouping had become necessary, some of our comrades lost their heads. They did not know what to do. Some abandoned their own Party opinions and yielded to the pressure exercised by others. Others again completely lost their bearings and did not know which way to turn. The real re-grouping did not begin until after a considerable time. It is true that we have admitted a great number of peasants into the peasant Soviets without bringing them everywhere sufficiently under our influence at the same time. This has been our minus. We have not been able to rearrange our ranks with sufficient speed, but still we had to take the first step in this direction, we had to change our course in order to advance more rapidly upon the new path. There is really nothing terrible about this. Our ranks now rearranged, we are now beginning to influence fresh masses hitherto not quite within our reach.

At one time comrade Zinoviev proposed that non-party conferences should be held, and a newspaper published for the non-Party peasants fraction, whilst comrade Sokolnikov demanded the legalisation of the Menshevists and of the S.R. They made these proposals, when they felt the ground somewhat insecure beneath their feet. They were prepared to abandon any position because the villages actually were grumbling against the Soviet power at that time. But when we make a carefully calculated evolution, calmly and collectedly, without fearing anything and strictly calculating the proportions, then they shriek that we are slipping down. We are not slipping down, we are establishing the proletarian dictatorship more firmly, and to-morrow we shall establish it more firmly still, if we do not deviate from the line which we are now following, but pursue a correct policy.

In concluding my remarks on the problem of our power, I repeat and emphasise that even if the opposition had no doubts on the class character of our power at the time of the Fourteenth Party Congress, there is now an undeniable tone of doubt, of scepticism, of disbelief in the proletarian character of our power.

(To be concluded.)

Building the Party

4.

Where to Make New Members: How to Keep Them.

By G. MIDDLETON (Glasgow).

THE present situation is undoubtedly pregnant with great possibilities for the Party, and the correct approach becomes of fundamental importance. I am of the opinion that we ought to tackle the problem under two heads or categories :

1. How to use our present Party resources in such a manner that we shall obtain a 100 per cent. increased membership.
2. How to cement this increased membership so that it will become moulded into Party life and activity.

Propaganda Meetings.

Under the first heading I propose to place propaganda meetings as our principal source of Recruiting.

Many very good arguments could be put forward to show that the type of recruits gained from this avenue is inferior to those obtained by personal contact. While an element of truth exists in this contention, it will at the same time be readily admitted that the number of recruits accruing from the avenue of personal approach and attention is almost negligible.

Accepting the premise that propaganda meetings are our greatest asset in obtaining new members we should immediately adopt some measures for assuring that our propaganda seed, which is still very scarce, is going to be sown on the most fertile soil. This at the moment is unquestionably the mining areas.

Concentrate on Mining Areas.

To meet this situation a scheme should be drawn up whereby the major portion of our propagandists could be attracted to the mining areas.

I am of the opinion that we are still inclined to dissipate a considerable amount of our energies on soil which at the present moment is bearing no results. I could quote several instances to substantiate my point.

The locals in the areas which will be deprived of propaganda meetings as a consequence would be easily appeased with an ex-

planation of why it was necessary to concentrate elsewhere, and the application of the scheme need not warrant complete starvation of these areas as an occasional meeting could be arranged in order to keep the Party message before the workers.

How to Keep Members?

Under the second heading we are confronted with a much greater problem than the recruitment of new members. The question of the retention of new members transcends all others in its importance. The registers of many of our locals could show that, apart from a small nucleus of members, they have completed several metamorphoses during the past three or four years.

It is perfectly true that the type of recruit in our recent influx is of a better calibre than many we obtained in the past. It is also true that the economic conditions are propelling the workers nearer to our Party every day that passes. But I think the main point is struck by comrade Brown when he says :

“ We must realise also that not all backsliding from Party membership is due to the individual. Other causes are at work and attention must be paid to these also.”

Our Training Methods.

Workers enter our Party with no previous political associations; in many cases no trade union connection and therefore no organisational precedent. They come in imbued with the idea that our Party offers the panacea for all their troubles, also that the Revolution is just round the corner, and many other fantastic notions. To produce a good Party member, capable of constant and sustained activity, it is necessary first of all to lay the basis in these new comrades' minds of what the Party stands for and how it is going to be achieved. We must give them an organisational and political understanding.

Our previous methods of training do not meet the problem. The present training syllabus is admirable in many respects, and no doubt the new one will be a decided improvement; but their acceptance is too mechanical and their presentation at training groups is something beyond parliamentary description.

Lectures to Start With.

The Question and Answer methods for new members should be made taboo. It is like a process of cross examination in the third degree—or an inquisition. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it drives the new member away under the impression that some night he will be asked where he was born and all about his family history.

In every local of the Party one or two very capable comrades should be commissioned with the task of drawing up about a dozen simple lectures based on the Training Manual. A central training class should be established for all new members, and the Lectures delivered to them in simple understandable language. The students should be encouraged to ask questions and assimilate as much knowledge as possible.

With a well-versed understanding of Party policy and organisation will come a considerable devotion of energy to Party work. *Our new members enter our Party effervescent with enthusiasm and gasping for information. We must appease these desires by supplying the information before calling upon them to perform all kinds of Party tasks.*

Importance of Personal Contact.

There is one other aspect of tremendous importance in the retention of new members. I refer to the question of contact immediately after a member has joined. Failure to perform this very elementary task has resulted in locals losing a good percentage of their new members.

When a recruit hands in his or her name and address at a propaganda meeting, it is incumbent upon the local organisation to take steps to ensure that the said recruit is visited and told all about their meetings and training classes, etc.

In short we must make our new members feel that we take an interest in them. *We must demonstrate that ours is a Party which means business and knows how to go about it.*

5.

G. L. ROUGH.

(Dundee.)

THIS is not the first influx of recruits into the Party. In the past workers were enrolled, kept contact with the Party for several weeks, and their enthusiasm died down and they were never seen or heard of again. Why? Was the worker to blame? Did the Party comrades do their work properly?

Some comrades say he only joined on sentimental grounds, and because papers had to be sold, etc., etc., he was not enthusiastic enough, and so on.

The problem of keeping inside the Party the hundreds of recruits passing through the books has worried many an L.P.C. member. Numerous ideas have been evolved to get over this serious problem, but the problem still remained. If the problem was so serious to many L.P.C.'s before the General Strike, what must it be now, when in every part of the minefields and other industries locals are being quadrupled in membership, new locals are being set up, groups are being formed, and we explain to the masses, that because the Party is right, the miners especially join our ranks; but, comrades, the Party is not a second edition of the I.L.P., and whilst it is a very easy job indeed to set up a group or local, our tasks only begin after that step has been taken.

Our most important task now is to train these new comrades, it is here that the directing committee has to admit defeat. Whom can we appoint to give a Communist education to these workers, what comrade has the necessary time to pay particular attention to this group or local?

It does not mean one night each week to do this, but every possible minute at a comrade's disposal must be given, and every comrade of any value to the Party is engaged in Trade Union work of some description, delivering papers, attends his Party group, and so on, with the result it would be suicidal on many occasions for an L.P.C. to place an additional burden on a comrade; and the group or local receives a visit, possibly from a comrade who explains the Party in general terms, and these raw, non-politically educated workers are allowed to carry on in the best manner possible.

The Party states that the Reformist method of round-table talks with the capitalists is no longer applicable, that what we require is a strong, centralised and disciplined Revolutionary Party leading the workers. But Communists must not be disciplined

"Robots," taking instructions from a central committee, but workers who are able to digest all instructions and to decide on a definite line of tactics to suit a given section of the front, in order to attain the objective stated in their instructions.

This means that Communists must necessarily have an elementary knowledge of the numerous Theses published by the Comintern since the Second Congress in August, 1920. Yet we find in our ranks comrades who have been in the Party a long time, admitting their inability to read or understand many of the most important theses, published either by the Comintern or the British Section. Numerous other comrades state they do not have the time to study many of the most important questions of policy and tactics, with which the Party in Britain is faced. Facts like these will be found in every local of the Party, with the natural result that there is very little political discussion inside the ranks of the Party, and surely if the Communists are to be the leaders of the workers in Britain, we must read much more than the "Workers' Weekly."

We require an ever-increasing cadre of Party members who are able and willing to be trained as Party Tutors, comrades who have a thorough understanding of Communist Theories, and at the same time a practical experience in the workers' ranks.

These comrades should take full charge of the special Tutors' classes which are organised in the districts, with their sound knowledge of Communist Philosophy, and gradually build up a group of capable comrades, who in turn will train the groups of Party members and thereby embrace the whole Party membership.

Whilst the Agit-Prop Department have decided to send a Political Letter to the locals for discussion periodically, and the proposed central Leninist School is very good, we must admit this is not sufficient.

District study schools should be set up, meeting at weekends, where picked comrades will receive a knowledge of Marxism and Leninism. Co-operative buying of books, like Bukharin's "Historical Materialism," should be set going at these schools.

The Party must be composed of politically-conscious Communists if we are to be able to guide and to gain the leadership of the working class. Our tasks in the future will be heavy ones, therefore we must equip ourselves as quickly as possible with a sound Communist Philosophy.

The Labour Land Policy

A FRAUD ON THE LAND WORKERS.

By DR. ROBERT DUNSTAN.

(Communist Candidate for West Birmingham.)

THE land looms large on the political horizon and party follows party in staging an enticing programme for the attraction of the electors of the County divisions, who at present hold the balance between the contending politicians intent upon an electoral victory. So far the various programmes run much the same course and are obviously prepared so as not to antagonise the landlord and farming interests, whilst with many pleasing words and well-guarded promises an attempt is made to gain the confidence and the votes of the land workers, the wage-slaves of the landlord and the farming interests. In spite of this Labour land report there is yet room for a Socialist land policy and one will come which will raise the class issue between the labourers and their exploiters, which will demand the land for the community without compensation and will prepare the way for the organisation and control of the agricultural industry by the workers.

A Right-wing Policy.

A perusal of the report upon Labour policy on agriculture shows at once its source. It is evident that it comes from the Right-wing political wire-pullers anxious to get a foothold in the counties and at the same time not to antagonise the landlord and the farmer. The ambiguity of its wording, the careful qualification of all its hesitating proposals to aid the workers, are typical of the mode of approach of the Labour Party to every issue under its present leadership. The policies of "continuity," "gradualness" and of "class collaboration" so beloved by Messrs. MacDonald, Sidney Webb and Philip Snowden stand out in all its sections. The proposals are meant to mean one thing to the land workers and their industrial allies and another thing to the leadership of the Party, and the landlords and the farmers with whom a deal is proposed.

Turning to the Report, one is amused to see it described in the Introduction as a "vigorous policy" to achieve "the three-fold ideal of **'better farming, better business, better living.'**" This is indeed a useful slogan for a Party claiming to lead the workers and in case the farm labourer doesn't quite see where he comes

into the picture there is a pious statement of opinion that the "Labour movement . . . cannot tolerate . . . the existing standard of life of the agricultural worker." This is inspiring but in the body of the Report there is precious little in the way of any concrete proposals for the benefit of the workers upon the land. "Kind words can never die," but some bold leadership and hard hitting in the class struggle would be more appropriate to the moment.

Compensation for Landlords.

It is clear upon examination that the programme is marked with timidity and weakness and it is entertaining to find the "Daily Herald" in a recent issue (6-8-1926) trying to boost the Labour policy and to contrast it with the Liberal proposals, claiming that the Labour plan was "bold" as compared with the "timid" Liberal scheme. A careful reading, however, of the two will show but little distinction, indeed, their likeness is so apparent that they can be declared to be twins, though the Liberal nursling appears to be somewhat more robust than its Labour brother. Both the policies as would be expected declare for compensation for the landlord interests.

This "bold Labour plan" after charging the landlords with failing to perform their duties, with treating the land as "a playground, and as a means of obtaining social prestige," and as people "who invest neither brains nor energy in the business" of agriculture goes on to compensate these parasites for their neglect and failure. The land which all Socialists have declared to have been stolen from the community is to be purchased. Aye! and at what price? "Dispossessed landlords are to be compensated on the basis of the annual value as assessed for income tax (Schedule A.)" We are not told what multiple of this annual value the landlords are to get, but it is not hard to conjecture that it will be a substantial one and that the sum needed for this capitalisation of rent will be as high a one as it lies within the power of the House of Lords to enforce, aided by the reactionary press of the country and the compromising nature of a weak leadership of the Labour Party. Lloyd George's proposals in the "Green Book" are bold and revolutionary when compared with this vague and timid Labour policy. In his scheme, the landlord's compensation would be strictly limited to the annual value of his present rent and paid in the form of an annuity and there is a further important proviso which couples the question of compensation with a minimum wage for agricultural labourers, it being provided that where a tenant farmer alleges that he cannot pay a decent wage because of the rent of his holding fixed under the scheme, then if his claim is established the rent is to be reduced and **the landlord's annuity docked by an equivalent amount.** There is nothing in the Labour

plan to fix compensation, rents and wages as part and parcel of the same transaction, which means that the landed interests will force a hard bargain and that either the community, the farmer or the labourer will have to foot the bill and it is not difficult to see that it will be the unfortunate worker's lot to bear the burden.

The lack of sincerity in the framing of this policy is shown by the fact that the Report suggests that the purchase of the land will cost the community nothing as the price is to be met by the issue of land bonds and redeemed from the future increase of economic rent. This barefaced attempt to show that the scheme will cost nothing is a fraud on the working class movement and especially so in that the plan definitely excludes from nationalisation all land with "urban value" and the purchase price being left open means that it will include all and probably far more than the economic value of the land transferred to public ownership. No doubt should exist upon this important point that under the official Labour programme public funds will find their way into the pockets of a class condemned as inefficient, useless and a danger to the common good. This Report is a part of the price paid for the Right-wing victory at Liverpool, but how can the General Council of the Trades Union Congress support this policy in face of the express instructions of last year's Congress at Scarborough that the land should be nationalised without compensation?

Large Holdings of Land Untouched.

Further this "bold" policy will leave in the hands of the landlords as private property large tracts of land. The scheme does not propose to nationalise the land of "occupying owners" and this will exclude private parks, woods, land farmed by the big owners employing bailiffs and also all holdings farmed by "farmer-owners," nor as already mentioned will land with "urban value" be touched. These exceptions will leave the pleasure lands of the rich alone and the urban land speculators will be able to hold on to their land and grow rich as monopoly prices rise. This more than considerate treatment and the sure prospect of substantial compensation will, no doubt, appease the landlord interests if ever this elaborate compromise is put into operation.

The Tenant Farmer.

Having done its best to square the landed proprietors, the programme proceeds to promise that the tenant farmer "need fear nothing from the change," for "tenants will be secure in the possession of their holdings" under the County Agricultural Committees unless the land is required for public services or the land is badly farmed. Agricultural land in any quantity is unlikely to be claimed for public use and with the aid of a powerful Farmers' Union (with a third of the representation on the govern-

ing authority), no tenant will take much heed of the risk of dispossession for bad farming. The Report states that the "County Agricultural Committee will, in suitable cases, cultivate land themselves on a considerable scale." Here, under an active organisation would be a case for acquiring tenant-held land for such a public use and if this proposal were left unqualified the policy would not be a popular one amongst tenant-farmers, who have great influence and voting strength in the County constituencies. Lest they should be frightened, the Report immediately qualifies this important move towards a Socialist policy by adding that "of course, such public farming will not entirely supersede tenant-farming, which will for long continue to be the normal method of tenure." Can there be a better example of the timidity and weakness of those responsible for this Report?

A Fabian Paradise.

We need not enter here into the details of the methods suggested for the "Public Control of the Land." The local administration is to be under the care of the County Agricultural Committees on which the representation provided for the land workers is carefully made a minority one, there is to be a National Agricultural Commission with at least six full-blown Commissioners and needless to say their staffs. These will form a happy hunting ground for the Fabians who, indeed, will be in a paradise, ordering and regimenting the minimum paid wage slaves for the use of the farming interests. Under a Workers' Government authorities for the control, organisation and use of the land will, of course, be necessary but under this Labour policy these Committees will be used by the big capitalists for their own ends, whilst in a Workers' Republic they would be instruments for working class control in the interests of the workers.

Bluffing the Land Workers.

Under this "bold" Labour policy landlords are to be compensated, tenant-farmers protected as employers of labour, but what of the land workers? This programme is advanced by the Labour Party and will be advocated as a Socialist policy throughout the country, but it abandons the avowed teachings of all Socialists that our industries should be controlled and run by the workers in trust for the working class community. Far from approaching this it placates the landlords, secures the farmer and cries for "better business." It must not be thought that the farm workers find no mention in the Report, such an omission would be fatal to the political hopes of the Party's officials and would write off the chance of approaching a million workers, and so many words are wasted upon the labourers and their hardships, together with a nice appendix setting out the present wages

paid in the various counties, but the programme leaves the worker a landless wage slave to be exploited by his betters. The pious statement that "every industry should be organised as to provide a living wage for the workers engaged in it," is valueless and looks hypocritical in face of the present action of the Right-wing leadership in its efforts to get the miners to accept a starvation wage in the mining industry. As for any action to enforce an improved wage for the farm workers, the Report goes no further than to state that "the Labour movement **will press** for the recognition of the agricultural workers' claim to an **adequate** standard of life." Ambiguous words these and ones which will leave the average farm worker cold and unmoved.

The timid nature of the Report is well shown in the paragraphs headed "Access to Land," but throughout this section the proposals are, as usual, vague and more than carefully qualified. For instance:

"Where there exists a **proved demand** for land, agricultural workers should be granted access close to their cottages. . . . While in **certain districts**, it is undesirable that the cultivation of land should be **generally** developed under a system of small farming, it is equally undesirable that farm workers should be denied access to the land."

In the face of such language as this it is not wonderful that Colonel Wedgwood, who, as a disciple of Henry George, holds strong views on the land monopoly should declare that the Committee responsible for this land policy were holding on to the coat-tails of the Farmer's Union.

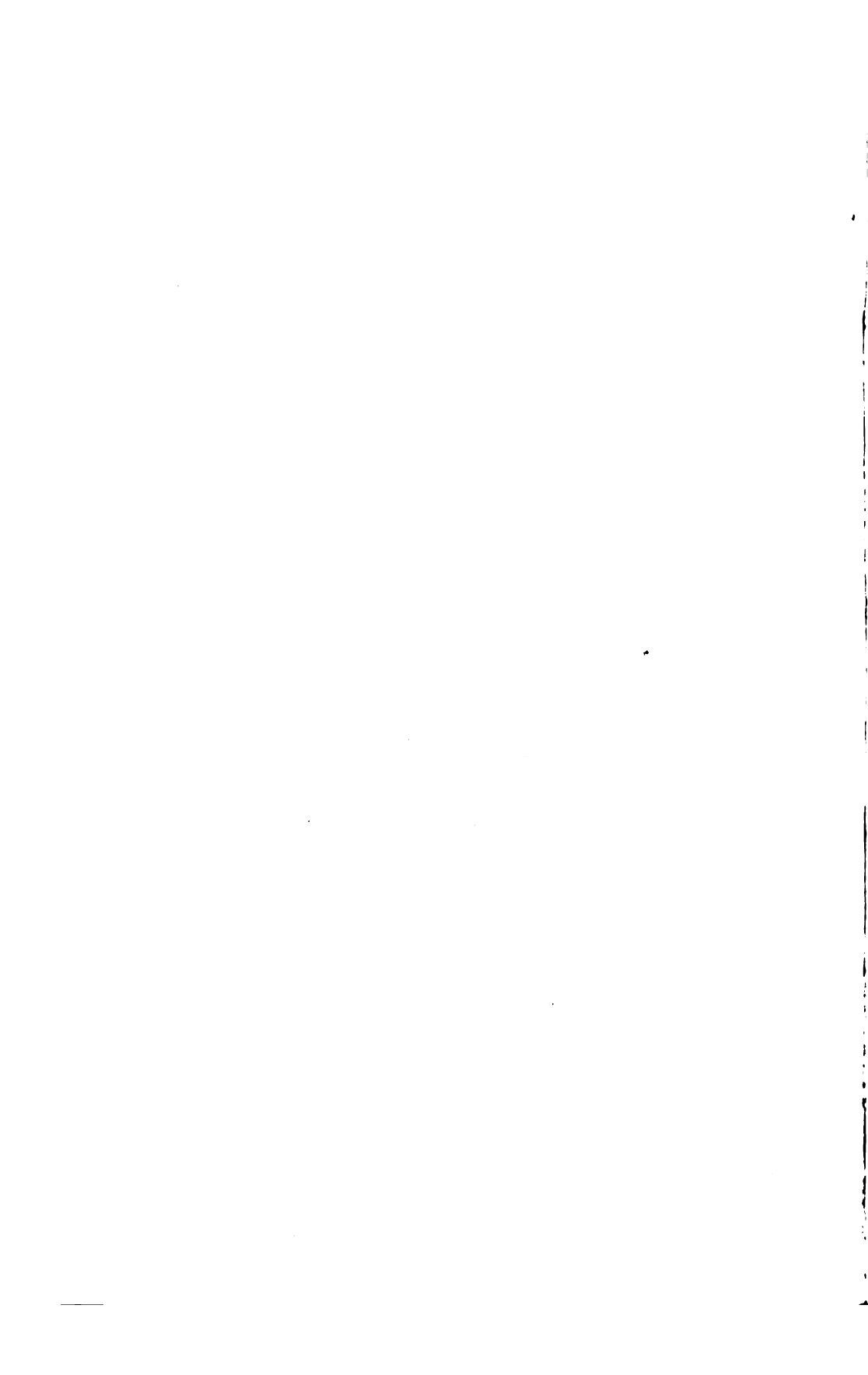
Tied Cottages to Remain.

The evils of the tied cottage are discussed at some length in the Report, and at a first glance one is tempted to think that here at last the programme is to take a courageous course in the interests of the workers. But no!—the tied cottage is to remain and the labourers are to live in fear of their farming masters and the Labour policy is carefully limited to supplying "an adequate number of untied cottages in every area." Here as elsewhere the Report contrasts badly with the Lloyd George proposals for these go much further than the cowardly policy presented to the Labour movement and declared to be a "bold plan" by the "Daily Herald," though the Report lacks any evidence of boldness and courage. Indeed the whole policy is like a free-hearted woman, being all things on to all men, but reserving her sweetest smiles for those well blessed with worldly goods.

A Workers' Land Policy.

What is wanted is a land policy in which the interests of the toiling masses shall come first and not last. There is no place in the Labour movement for landlords, capitalists and businessmen adapting the policy of a great Party to their own ends and to defend the present system of society. The Communist Party demands a clear, uncompromising struggle against landlordism and the exploiting of the working class. Our Party demands the nationalisation of all land, urban and rural, without compensation so as to free the land from the grip of a monopoly now in the hands of a small but rich section of the community. All rent should be paid to the State and the Rent Fund should be used to maintain the social services, including the provision of a National Housing scheme, National Insurance against Sickness and Unemployment, Pensions and Education. This fund would also provide the means to organise the use of the land and provide credits for the public farming of the large estates and for settling the dispossessed land workers on the land so that the right to work the land would be open to all who derive their living from it. Such a policy would bring peace and security to the agricultural industry and relieve the town workers from the grip of the slum landlord. As an immediate political objective, an agitation should be raised demanding a minimum wage for all farm workers at least equal to the 1921 standard, a 44-hour week with a recognised half-holiday and the abolition of the "tied cottage" system; but in pressing this programme the wider policy should not be forgotten. There is no reason to divide the land problem into two sections—urban and rural, or to divorce the town and country workers, and it is by uniting all the workers into one great proletarian army that landlordism and capitalism will be swept away.

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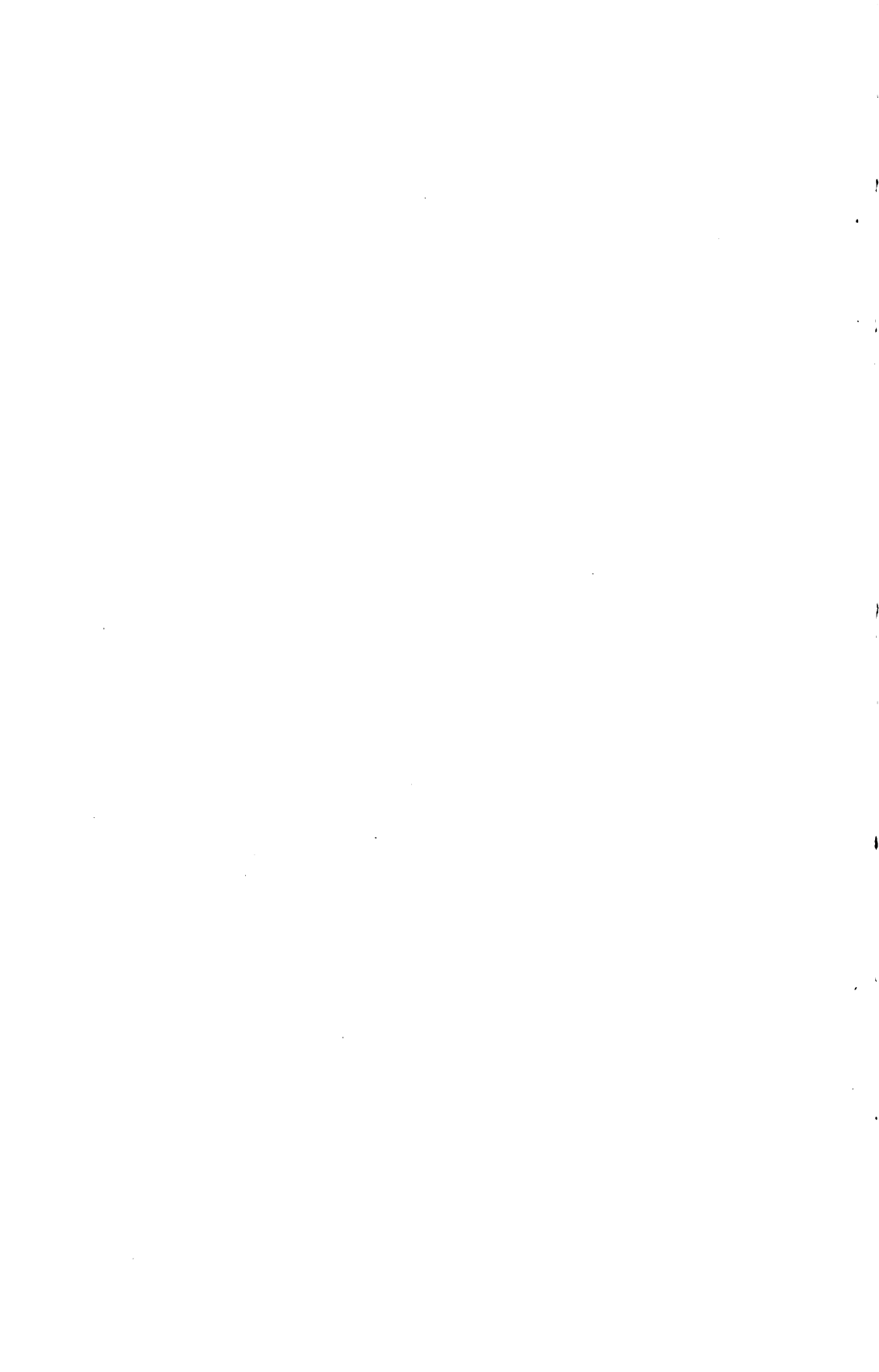
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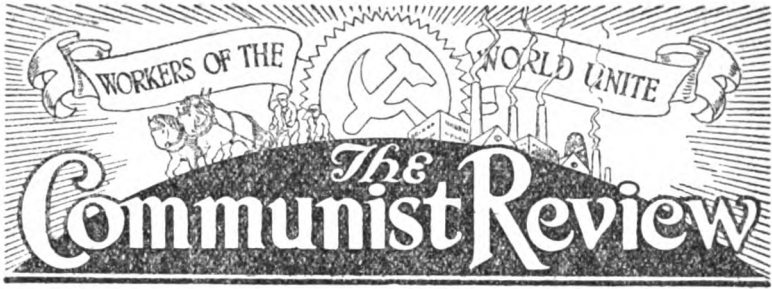
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THE EDITORIAL VIEW

NOVEMBER this year marks the ninth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. For nine years the regime of Bolshevism, under the guidance of the Communist Parties of the Soviet Union, and with the assistance of the Communist International, has been consolidating itself and laying firmly the foundations of Socialism. Nine years of triumph, indeed, but not without a grim struggle. What that struggle has meant only the Russian proletariat can understand.

Outside the Soviet Union, a real judgment as to the achievements of these nine years must be based, not on the particular conditions of to-day—though these far outstrip most European States, and bear comparison with the highest—but on a comparison betwixt 1917 and 1926. One must never forget that when the workers and peasants, led by the Bolsheviks, the Communist Party, seized power in November, 1917, they were faced with a position so near complete disaster as to be unparalleled in history. The civil war and intervention period from 1918 to 1921, when the bourgeoisie and landowners, backed by world imperialism, of which Great Britain was the leader, overran great areas of Russia, murdering and destroying, completed the breakdown and brought the actual famine. Yet even at this appalling prospect the spirit of the workers and peasants, of their revolutionary Communist Party and its great leader Lenin, never failed. Above all the Red Army defending the revolution did not fail, and the enemies of the Republic were one by one defeated and driven over the frontiers.

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The dictatorship of the working class under the leadership of the Communist Party was able to defeat not only the counter-revolution of the bourgeoisie and rich peasantry, but also the armed intervention of the Allied Powers. As a result of their

military victory, the Russian workers have been able to use their dictatorship to cement the alliance with the poor and middle peasantry, without which the proletarian State could not exist, and to lay the foundations of Socialist society.

This building of Socialism in alliance with the peasantry is the new economic policy introduced in 1921. Already before this date the land, foreign trade, banking, transport and heavy industry had been nationalised, but the actual tasks of Socialist construction could not be undertaken so long as the internal and external enemies remained undefeated. The five years, 1921 to 1925, have been used by the Russian workers to restore industry to its pre-war level, but Socialism will not be completely established until the efforts of capitalism have been far surpassed, until Russia has been industrialised and her millions of peasants can buy cheap and excellent commodities from a great Socialist industry.

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The year 1925-26 has seen the first drive towards the creation in Russia of this new Socialist industry. Under NEP private capital has been allowed to exist alongside Socialist production. Yet Socialist production has enormously outstripped private capitalist production. Of the total turnover of commercial and industrial undertakings of the Soviet Union for 1925-26, 48.2 per cent. goes to State enterprises, 28.6 per cent. to co-operatives and only 23.2 per cent. to private enterprises. In the five years from 1921 industrial production has increased 110 per cent. and agriculture 28.8 per cent. Last year industrial production increased 14 per cent. (heavy industry 19.7 per cent), and agriculture 7 per cent. Between June, 1925 and June, 1926, no less than three hundred thousand new workers were brought into heavy industry.

How fast the Socialist elements in the economy of the U.S.S.R. are increasing, how rapidly the proletarian basis of the State is being broadened is seen not only from the above figures but from the fact that in 1925-26 the State has expended £75,000,000 on new industrial construction. For the year 1926-7 it is calculated that no less than £84,500,000 will be spent on new industry (power stations, re-equipment of plant, new factories, etc.).

Along with this great increase in material prosperity as Socialism grows, goes an increased well-being for the workers. Between the years 1922-23 and 1925-26 wages have risen 67 per cent. and the wages of unskilled workers in most industries, in transport, railway, post and telegraphs are now to receive a further 10 per cent. increase, thus bringing them nearer to those of

the skilled worker. Before the war the average worker earned 364 roubles a year. To-day he earns 630 roubles, plus 16 per cent. for social insurance. Even taking into account the rise in the cost of living, this represents a very much higher standard of life than before the war. The Russian worker has every year two weeks holiday with pay, and under the social insurance scheme he receives not only free medical treatment, but free holidays in rest homes and sanatoria. In 1922, 200,000 workers passed through convalescent and rest homes, etc. In 1925, 250,000.

Of these 80 per cent. were workers and 20 per cent. employees. These are the practical achievements of the revolution and Leninism for the workers.

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What has capitalism done for the working class over the same period? Since the close of the war Europe has been an armed camp. Workers have been shot down and murdered, in Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland. There have been anti-Communist "Labour" Governments in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Belgium and Great Britain. In Germany, to-day, there are 2,000,000 unemployed and Hindenburg is sitting as place warmer for the Hohenzollerns. In Austria, Sweden and Belgium there is unchecked reaction, while in Great Britain to-day, side by side with 1½ million unemployed, and 1,000,000 miners locked-out, reaction and government by intimidation grow apace.

The victorious Russian workers have sent £1,000,000 as a token of solidarity with the miners, and imposed an embargo on all coal and oil. But the Amsterdam International, on the other hand, with its 15,000,000 members, has deliberately sabotaged every attempt to help the miners' struggle, while the reformist trade union and Labour Party leaders in England have betrayed the General Strike, and betrayed again and again the miners' fight.

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Capitalism has nothing to offer the workers but starvation, misery and insecurity. Having ruthlessly dismembered whole nations, it is now confronted with the fruits of its own stupidity. Artificial trade barriers and customs accentuate the crime of the Versailles Treaty of 1919, until even the criminals themselves are forced to cry out against their own folly, for such is the meaning of the Bankers' Memorandum. This document, issued by the bankers and industrialists of 16 countries with a view to removing trade restrictions, has its origin stamped upon it in the preponderance of British signatures, and reflects the straits into which British industry in particular has fallen. Its appearance

coinciding with the Imperial Conference, means that Britain, which has been mainly Free Trade, is facing the alternative of the development of an extensive tariff system being operated throughout the British Empire. This changed relation is due to the development of U.S.A., whose economic and financial penetration in Europe has revived Germany as an intensive competitor of Britain.

The degree of unity between the respective signatories is almost imperceptible, due to their different interpretations of what this vague document means. The French and Italians sign with reservations, the U.S.A. states that it only applies to Europe, and to Germany it means the annulment of the Versailles Treaty. These contradictions are the reflection of the unequal development of the imperialist groups and endorse the thesis on the international situation presented at our Eighth Party Congress last month, which outlined the new relations created by the war and the development of Anglo-American antagonisms.

This memorandum means that Great Britain is trying to assert and maintain her role as the dominant factor in world politics, and is seeking for a combination which can operate against her developing rival, U.S.A. By her failure since Locarno to create a Continental bloc against U.S.S.R., and her loss of political hegemony of Europe with the drawing together of Germany and France, she seeks in order to retain her power, to create a wider bloc, as for example, the conference at Romsey.

The third factor of Locarno is expressed in the Bankers' Manifesto, namely, the attempt to draw together the debtor States of Europe in a bloc against their creditor, U.S.A. The degree of success in this direction is to be noted in the comments of the world Press, which are adverse, and the significant silence in the British Press, which, in view of the opposition generated, are attempting to conveniently forget it. Nevertheless, the manifesto is a grudging recognition by the British bourgeoisie that the development of the U.S.A. is of such a character that Britain can only hope to become a very second-rate power, unless the development of U.S.A. is curbed.

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The ninth anniversary of the Russian Revolution thus, more than ever, shows the world divided into two camps—the camp of the free Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, where every day the position of the workers and peasants grows stronger and conditions of life improve, and the camp of imperialism, where the hours and wages of workers are worsened; where millions are more or less permanently unemployed, where workers' organisa-

tions are attacked and destroyed, and where vast sums are spent on preparing for war, as for example in China. To-day, the choice is clear before the workers of the world—the way of Baldwin and MacDonald, or the way of the Communist International and the Russian Workers' Republic.

NOTE.

Next Month a Special Review of J. T. Murphy's Book, "The Political Meaning of the Great Strike" by J. R. Campbell.

The Ninth Anniversary of the Soviet Republics

ON November 7th the toilers of the U.S.S.R., and with them the world proletariat and the oppressed nations of the East, will celebrate the ninth anniversary of the existence of the **first Republic of Soviets in the world.** On this anniversary every class conscious proletarian should sum up the results of struggle of their class brothers in their own country, and compare them with the attainments of the working class in the U.S.S.R.

The year which followed November 7th, 1925 was the first year in which the Soviet Republic having healed the wounds of seven years of war and restored industry to the pre-war level began to construct a **new** industry, and **extend the economic** basis of Socialism. This year also marked a **new** period in the crisis of world capitalism.

The Leninist teaching that the Socialist revolution is the only way out from the post-war blind-alley has been confirmed in actual events. The last year has been characterised by the uninterrupted construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., and the sharpening of the economic crisis in Europe and the capitalist attack on all fronts.

The Social-Democratic leaders are no longer talking about the downfall of the Soviet regime, the decline of Soviet economy, etc. The actual facts glaringly contradict this anti-Soviet agitation. That is why the **main** trump card of the Social-Democratic press is the assertion about the "degeneration" of Soviet Russia, the slowing down of the tempo of economic growth, the alleged retreat of Socialist economics before the attack of private capital, the "kulakisation" of the countryside, the ousting of workers from organs of Soviet power by petty bourgeois elements of town and village.

Making the widest use of absolutely unfounded and, in the majority of cases, slanderous cries of the ultra-Lefts about the "degeneration" of the leader of the U.S.S.R.—the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—the Social-Democratic leaders have recourse to the last resort of the demagogue: "The Communists say we are opportunists," declare Boncour, Pilsudski and Vandervelde and MacDonald. "But look at the Russian Bolsheviks, that is where there is real opportunism, that is where the cause of Socialism is being betrayed!"

All this slanderous campaign of the ultra-Lefts and Social-Democrats is founded partially on falsehood, and partially on complete ignorance. Facts, as we shall see, refute their assertions.

Firstly, the growth of Socialist elements in the economy of the U.S.S.R. is steadily continuing. The State has expended more than 750 million roubles on new industrial construction. Giant engineering works have been constructed, such as the Volkovo hydro-electric power station (Volkshovstroï); a number of factories in the Ukraine and along the Volga have been restored and set going, and many new combined factories and works are being constructed.

If we compare the figures only of the extension of production (which the enemies of the U.S.S.R. do), during the last year, and this year, of course the percentage of increase in output and the number of workers in the second instance is less than in the first. But this by no means testifies a slowing down, or what is more, the failure of Socialist construction, for during the preceding year the percentage of increase was **most exclusively** to be accounted for by the **repairing of old factories**, while, during this year, it is distributed between the repairing of old and the **construction of new factories and works**—the building of a number of which will be completed only in 1927 or 1928.

The prospective plan of the development of industry proposes **not a decrease but, on the contrary, a systematic increase of the sum of capital expenditure.** Thus, for instance, the preliminary figures of the Gosplan (State Planning Commission) estimate capital expenditure in 1926-27 at 845 million roubles as against 750 million roubles in 1925-26. The proof that there is no retreat whatsoever from Socialist economy is testified by the **more rapid tempo of development of industry** as compared with agriculture. Whereas, for instance, the production of agriculture during the past year increased only by 7 per cent., the output of industry increased by 14 per cent., and the production of heavy industry even by 19.7 per cent.

If we take a five-year perspective plan of development of national industry, (we find the estimate proposals of Gosplan show a 110 per cent. increase of industrial production and 20.8 increase of agricultural, the trading section of peasant production), it will increase by 42-43 per cent.

Secondly, there has been absolutely no retreat of Socialist economy whatsoever before private capital. Private capital is playing a negligible role in the process of production. During the past year it has not increased its role despite even the attempts of the State to bring it into the process of production. Private capital displays a certain activity only in trade.

Last year private capital undoubtedly utilised the shortage of

industrial goods to revive its own speculative activity. But the growth of co-operation and State trade did not stop. Private capital was ousted from a **number** of sectors of the commercial front. Hence, one may only speak of a slowing down in the tempo of ousting the "private trader" during the past year. From the point of view of the **accumulation of capital**, the State economy is many times more powerful than private capital.

Last year was marked by certain economic difficulties. But these economic difficulties in the first place were difficulties of **growth**, and, therefore, quite different from the crisis of capitalist countries, secondly, they were difficulties arising from the historically inherited disproportion between industry and agriculture.

The Soviet Republic, ruined by seven years of war and deprived—as a result of the financial blockade of international capital—of the possibility of receiving large credits abroad, has been compelled to industrialise **with its own resources**. The fundamental strategic slogan which the Communist Party put forward at the Fourteenth Congress—the industrialisation of the country—in this way endeavouring to fulfil the Lenin plan of organising a correct exchange of wares between town and village and thus bringing agriculture on to the rails of collectivism.

The severe "**regime of economy**," now being conducted by the Party and authorities with the full support of the toiling masses; the increased campaign for a **regime of economy in all social life** and in accordance with this, increased investments in **savings banks**; the system of **international loans**—such are the main methods for raising the financial resources necessary to strengthen industrial construction.

The re-organisation of production conducted by means of technical improvements raising the productivity of labour, **the lowering of overhead charges** which have overburdened the cost of production; **improvement in the quality** of production—such are the main measures which will enable Socialist industry to ensure an alliance with agriculture.

Still more fantastic are the assertions about the "degeneration" of the Soviet State. The Social-Democratic leaders dreaming of a **restoration of bourgeois democracy in Russia** are disappointed with the **strengthening of the political power of the Soviet State which is the result of the wise policy of extending Soviet democracy**. In their endeavour to conceal the fact of the **strengthening of the political alliance of the proletariat and peasantry in the U.S.S.R.**, the fact of **the extension of Soviet democracy**, they hypocritically assume the guise of enemies of the kulaks.

Can the fact of the increased number of electors in the 1925-

1926 campaign (as compared with 1924-25) from 17 million to 19.5 millions, be called a sign of the "degeneration" of the Soviet State? Can the fact of the increase (in the villages) in the percentage of peasant electors from 41 to 47, (and in the towns) the increase from 24 per cent. to 37 per cent., of the petty handicraft workers, the workers not organised in trade unions, workers' wives, etc., all of whom formerly stood aside from any participation in the elections to Soviet organs be called as proof of the decline of the **proletarian** dictatorship in Russia?

If we remember that the activity of the main section of the toilers of the U.S.S.R.—members of the trade unions—has increased (percentage of participation of this category increased from 52 to 57) and that in all the leading Soviet organs the position of the proletariat remains unshakable, then, the fact of the increased activity of the peasants (though far behind the activity of the toilers organised in trade unions), of the handicraft workers, workers' wives, will merely go to show the strengthening of the political alliance of the proletariat with the widest strata of toilers.

And, if we remember Lenin's watchword that the alliance with the peasantry in Russia is the main task of the ruling proletariat, then we will understand that the ninth year of the existence of the Soviet Republic in Russia has been a year of strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship. This strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship has taken place side by side with an extension of the proletarian basis of the dictatorship. This is shown in the growth in the number of industrial workers (from June, 1925 to June, 1926, 300,000 new workers were brought into heavy industry), as well as an increase in the proletarian kernel in the Communist Party itself.

On the basis of the growth during the past year in the internal power of the Soviet State, the influence of the Soviet Union on an international scale has continuously widened and the endeavours of the Soviet Government for peace have been strengthened. Thus the Soviet Government has patiently tolerated the behaviour of the puppet of imperialist Japan—Chang-Tso-Lin, who has broken the Soviet-Chinese treaty and his own treaty with the U.S.S.R. and openly provoked the Soviet Government to military encounters. The Soviet Government has displayed the maximum of self-restraint, for her policy is different in principle from the imperialist colonial policy of Tsarist Russia. The Soviet Government is more anxious than any other that the sovereignty of the Chinese people should not be infringed.

The Government of the U.S.S.R. took the initiative in respect to guarantee treaties with the Baltic States, the conclusion of which has been delayed up to the present day—as the former Estonian Ambassador in Moscow, Birk, has publicly disclosed

—because of the resistance of Poland, and the military circles of other Baltic States.

Strictly carrying out a policy of peace the Soviet Government at the same time has frequently made it understood to the whole world that it is a revolutionary government of the victorious proletariat. This, for instance, was the case on the occasion of the incident with the British Government concerning the latter's note in connection with the monetary aid from the A.U.C.T.U. to the British workers.

Then the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in reply to the British Government pointed out that the Soviet Government is a government of the working class, that the role of the Communist Party in the working class movement of the U.S.S.R. and its trade unions can in no degree abandon their self-activity and independence in every sphere of defence of the interests of the working class and their trade union struggle, including, of course, relations between the fraternal organisations of other countries and the mutual exchange of aid in case of necessity.

These rights of the workers in trade union organisations are recognised, although not in any distinct form, at least de jure in all West European countries, and in the U.S.S.R. these rights of the trade unions are assured both de jure and de facto by the very structure of its State and nature of its political regime.

The balance sheet on the ninth anniversary of the Soviet regime may be drawn up with a credit balance in the matter of the extension of the Socialist elements of the country's economy, the strengthening of the alliance of the proletariat and peasantry and drawing the wide masses into Soviet construction. The peoples of the U.S.S.R., particularly the small nations, which were oppressed by Czarism, are energetically engaged in building up economy in a new life. **The Soviet Republic is steadily proceeding along the path indicated by its great leader—Lenin.**

The Margate Conference

By HARRY POLLITT.

THE most amazing thing about both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference is the complete lack of any analysis at either of these important gatherings of the existing world situation in general, and the situation in England in particular.

The Margate Labour Party Conference was no exception to what has been the accepted rule. The 1,200 delegates from trade unions, local Labour Parties, Divisional Labour Parties and Socialist societies met, and were expected to arrive at correct decisions on matters of policy that can only be done after a careful analysis of the objective conditions facing the working class movement.

Of course, it is argued by the existing leadership that no change in policy is necessary, that the Liverpool Conference laid down once and for all the main policy of the Labour Party. At Liverpool the Communist delegates pointed out that the whole series of elaborate resolutions carried at that Conference was based upon the viewpoint that capitalism was slowly recovering; that a complete reconstruction must take place before any real Socialist measures can be adopted, that slowly and surely, peacefully and quietly, without any unconstitutional measures, it would be possible by means of the Labour Party policy to pass out of the bondage of capitalism into the promised land of Socialism.

We were laughed out of court, called the "apostles of pessimism and despair." Unfortunately for our critics and the Labour leaders, the class struggle does not always fit in with their theories. The result has been that from the time of the Liverpool Conference to the Margate Conference, a series of profoundly important events has taken place, which simply cannot be ignored unless the leadership must lead to disaster.

These events can be specially enumerated; the General Strike and the miners' lock-out; the threatened attack upon the trade unions and the increasing of the powers of the House of Lords and the continual decline of British capitalism.

Abroad, Locarno, and the series of counter groupings to maintain a balance of power; the pact against the U.S.S.R.; the new and acute situation arising from the last meeting of the League of Nations; the tremendous events in China; the policy

of the British bourgeoisie towards India, Egypt, South Africa and Canada.

All these are issues that have had and are having an important bearing on all the current struggles of the working class, and yet the annual conference of a so-called working class political Party, representing over 4,000,000 workers, can take place without the leaders stating clearly and simply how and why these issues have arisen, what they mean, what their importance is to the working class, and what in this situation is the immediate political line the workers must take.

If once the reader grasps the fact that so far from being done, the exact opposite is the case, he will see at once what the real role of the Labour Party under the control of the present leaders means for the whole movement. To give point to this, it is necessary to remind the reader that at the Scarborough Tory Conference, Baldwin devoted the greater part of his speech to an explanation and justification of the Government role during the General Strike.

At Margate, the General Strike was never mentioned by a single leader, and the attempt of the Left Wing group to raise the question, as was done in the excellent speech of Alex. Gossip, was deliberately steam-rollered and suppressed by the platform on the ground that the General Council had asked for no criticism to be allowed at this stage.

The supreme test of the Labour Party leadership came with the General Strike, it ended in the greatest betrayal in working class history, and yet Labour's annual conference can take place without that same leadership being compelled to state and defend its actions during the General Strike and after, because it is not considered the thing to go into such questions in the British movement. Such low, vulgar tactics, it is argued, are all right for the Continental movement, but after all "our movement is composed of gentlemen."

But there was one issue that could not be burked and that was the miners' heroic stand. The challenge from the coalfields could not be kept out of the Conference Hall. The Executive, through Robert Williams' address, thought they were strong enough to be able to dismiss the miners' lock-out with a resolution of a particularly nauseating character. They never had such a shock in their lives. The fight against this resolution by the organised Left Wing, who demanded the campaign for the Levy, Embargo and Dissolution of the Tory Government, brought out in opposition MacDonald, Thomas, Tillett and Shinwell, and the whole trade union bureaucracy, but the delegates from the local Labour Parties, I.L.P. and many trade unions knew that they

simply dare not line up with the cowardly and defeatist resolution of the Executive of the Labour Party.

On a vote being taken to refer the resolution back for re-drafting in the light of the conference discussion, despite a whole series of obstructionist tactics from the platform to delay the taking of the vote, particularly in view of the tremendous effect created by Arthur Horner's speech, the voting resulted as follows: For reference back, 1,368,000; Against, 2,159,000.

The resolution was then put as a substantial motion, with a plea that it should be carried unanimously. The result was: For the resolution, 3,315,000; Against, 210,000.

I want to draw attention to that figure of 210,000. This was the average vote on any proposal affecting Communists as delegates, or Communist policy as put right up against Executive policy. The figures are not high, but their importance for us is great, because in the main, the whole of the votes represented came from delegates from local Labour Parties, and from trade unions, where the delegations demanded a quota of the allotted total vote. They can, therefore, be said to represent accurately the views of the delegates nearer to the actual struggle of the workers, than do those of the greater portion of the delegates, who, in one capacity or another, are officials of the movement, and, as a consequence, reflect the official bureaucratic viewpoint.

It should also be noted that just as after the refusal of the Bournemouth T.U.C. to do anything of a practical character to help the miners, the miners afterwards by a huge majority, rejected the Government surrender terms and their delegate conference adopted a new fighting policy. So, while Margate turned them down, the miners in the same week endorsed that new policy and gave their Executive the mandate of full speed ahead.

If the Margate Conference leaders, were afraid to deal with the General Strike because they knew that they dare not face the workers; if they were afraid to stand openly and boldly for the miners, at least the average trade unionist had a right to expect that the Conference would have something to say about the new Tory attack upon the trade unions, and the proposed increase of powers to the House of Lords, in order to destroy any attempt of the next Labour Government to use Parliament in the interests of the workers.

If any had such hopes they were doomed to disappointment. The very Labour Party that bases itself upon the trade unions, that is practically useless without the miners; that year by year takes the pennies of the trade unionists, had no fighting lead to give these workers in view of the imminent attacks upon their rights of organisation.

What was the position at the Tory Conference, held just one week prior to Margate? The following resolutions adopted un-animously will clear the air.

TRADE UNION LAW.

"That, in view of the experience afforded by the General Strike of May, 1926, this Conference is of the opinion that the present state of the law relating to trade unions constitutes a menace to national security, whilst depriving the individual of political and industrial freedom, and that this Conference, therefore, urges the Government to introduce legislation to amend the law:

"(1) To make illegal any strike called without a secret ballot of the members of the trade union affected.

"(2) To increase the security of the individual worker against victimisation and intimidation on account of his political beliefs.

"(3) To make mass picketing and the picketing of a man's private residence illegal.

"(4) To require the national accounts of trade unions to be audited by chartered accountants."

HOUSE OF LORDS REFORM.

Sir R. Sanders, M.P., moved: "That this Conference welcomes the assurance of the Prime Minister that it is the intention of the Government to deal in the present Parliament with the question of Second Chamber reform, and respectfully urges that it would be advisable that a measure on the subject should be introduced next session."

The above resolutions read with the speeches at the Conference, and the subsequent speech of Baldwin, show clearly that this is no stage play. An announcement has subsequently appeared in the Press, that Lord Birkenhead is now drafting a Bill on the trade union question.

Now what was the Labour Party's reply? The following resolution speaks for itself:

TRADE UNION RIGHTS. EMERGENCY RESOLUTION.

"This Conference regards the declared intention of the Government to restrict the legal activities of trade unions in trade disputes and political action and to limit their freedom to manage their own internal affairs as a gross piece of class legislation and an intolerable interference with the hard-won and long-established rights of organised workers.

"It declares its determination to resist with all its strength any such attempt, and, should the Government persist in its intention, confidently awaits the issue of the struggle."

These are the two policies. One clear and breathing confidence, the other weak, hesitant, expressing "its determination to resist with all its strength," but not indicating a single practical tactic that can rally the workers to begin a counter attack now. "Confidently awaits the issue of the struggle," in the same way and with the same results, as they awaited the General Strike?

With the bald facts of the situation staring them in the face one would have imagined that the Labour Party leaders would immediately take advantage of the present industrial situation, link up the attack on the trade unions with the Government attack

on the miners and intensify the campaign for the dissolution of the present parliament, which as everyone knows was elected on false pretences, and mis-uses its power against the famous British principles of "fair play and democracy." This slogan of the dissolution of the forgers' parliament is quite popular, not only with the working class, but with a large part of the population in general, which sees quite clearly the disastrous results of Baldwin's mismanagement of the affairs of State. Nothing of this kind was initiated, no attempt was made to warn the workers or arouse their class instincts and call them to battle. Only a shoddy imitation of the Parliamentary game. The results of such a policy if we allow it to continue can lead to nothing but further defeats and disillusionment.

The effect of the Tory Government's declaration of war upon the organised working class means that if and when Labour secures a majority in Parliament it will be important to do anything in a constitutional way, because at that time the powers of the Lords will have been so extended and increased that they will be able to nullify every effort of a Labour majority. Yet when Mr. MacDonald was the head of the Labour Government he did not dare to touch the rights and privileges of the House of Lords. He once tried to explain that he had too much contempt for the House of Lords. Mr. Baldwin in this, as in his open appeal to the American people not to send money to the British miners, is not too proud or dignified. He is a realist and inclined to make the best use of any weapon that the Labour Government leaves untouched, if it will aid him in keeping the workers in misery and subjection.

Further, the Margate Conference should have demanded that the General Council of the T.U.C. immediately put into operation a campaign to operate the Scarborough 1925 decision on the formation of factory committees, because strong workshop organisation will be not only a tremendous bulwark against the attempt to destroy the trade unions, but a most powerful weapon in all the immediate struggles of the working class. Without the trade unions the Labour Party is nothing. Any weakening of the unions is, therefore, a weakening of the Labour Party itself. It is then an added argument among the many that have been used that the slogan of the dissolution of the Tory Parliament should be adopted in order to attack the Government, not by an exchange of Parliamentary courtesies and gentlemanly decorum, but by bold campaigning in the country, rousing and leading the working class movement to that point where the Government would be forced to dissolve. By these means the whole repressive policy of the Tory Government could be challenged now, and a new fighting spirit aroused throughout the whole of our movement.

In regard to the international situation the usual Liberal

foreign policy resolutions were adopted, backing of Geneva and the Protocol; trade with Russia; sympathy with China, but no demand for withdrawal of all armed and naval forces in and around China.

This is one side. Now look at the other. There was running through the conference a sound, healthy note of opposition. It was very noticeable that MacDonalld had to attack any resolution, however apparently unimportant, that contained anything likely to embarrass the next Labour Government. The opposition was that of the organised Left Wing which worked loyally and sincerely with the Communist fraction.

This Left Wing consisted of delegates from trade unions, but chiefly from local and Divisional Labour Parties. There were no "big names" or "star turns" among them, but, by good team work, they created the impression that here was the first open organised opposition at a Labour Party Conference, and it was a very good augury for the future.

Margate definitely cleared the air as far as our policy is concerned. It is now a straight fight between MacDonalld's Liberal Party policy and those who stand for a working class policy. In other words, a Communist policy. Many good Left wingers may not accept that implication of opposing MacDonalld, yet they will work loyally with us, being unafraid of any platform slander about "conspiracies" and "fractions."

The other comrades who want a "Left Wing" without the direct association of the Communist Party, have seen at Margate what is in store for them, unless they realise that it is impossible to build a Left Wing movement around personalities, and face the fact that the trend to the Left is the result of objective conditions plus the class peace policy of MacDonalld. Further, these comrades must realise that in such a Labour movement as ours, the Communist Party must have an integral and leading part because its whole policy is based upon an analysis of the present objective conditions and the class struggle.

Those "independent Left Wingers" who continue to waste so much good time criticising the "deplorable tactics of King Street" will, if they are wise, learn from Margate that there cannot be any Centre, carefully preserving its balance, but only an organised Left Wing, with its roots in the working class movement and struggle, and that this must either lead to open association with the Communist Party or a perpetuation of sterile individual efforts, which, in reality, are a help to MacDonalld, and not to the working class.

To our Party in particular, Margate has one striking lesson. That is, that on the confession of their responsible leaders, the

Labour Party cannot disqualify a trade unionist, who is a member of the Communist Party, and elected by his trade union as a delegate to a Labour Party Conference. It is clear to me that so far as our leading Party members are concerned, locally and nationally, that the only way they can express Party policy at Labour Party Conferences, either in their own delegations, or on the floor of the Conference, is by being elected as delegates from their trade unions.

This means that we have to redouble our activities in the trade unions, in order to win the confidence and following of the workers, thus securing positions of responsibility and influence, and using them not like the reformists, to stem the rising tide of the workers' demands and aims, but to fight for a working class policy.

This is not a job that can be left to the future. We must begin now. It is a question of looking a few years ahead, and beginning the organising and preparation work now.

Our Party must also bring immediately before the widest masses of workers its alternative policy to MacDonald, better known as "The Reds and the Labour Party." This policy which challenges every issue raised by MacDonald as Labour Party policy, should be immediately discussed at local Labour Party conferences, and ways and means devised for getting it on the Agenda of next year's Conference.

The National Left Wing Movement should profit from the experiences of Margate and take up an energetic campaign for its activities. The Communist Party will support this campaign to the utmost of its power. If such steps as these are taken and we do take our trade union activity more seriously, our Party has a tremendous opportunity before it during the period immediately ahead of developing the driving force and taking the organisational measures to make it possible for the new leadership of the working class movement to come right to the front.

Russian Education

By A MEMBER OF TEACHERS' DELEGATION TO U.S.S.R.

THE first impression one receives on an examination of education in Russia is the tremendous enthusiasm shown by all concerned. In England, the bourgeoisie favours education so long as it is "safe," that is, so long as it turns out from the elementary schools well-drilled slaves and obedient dope press consumers; from the technical schools skilled cheap labour, and from the secondary schools and universities leaders imbued with bourgeois culture and ideology. Unfortunately, however, the teachers are not always "safe," and some are even turning to the Communist Party. The suspicion of this by the bourgeoisie is seen in economy campaigns, Geddes' axes, famous circulars and the like. In Russia, there is no such suspicion. In all the live elements of the Union there is a real enthusiasm for education and a realisation of its power. Whatever economies are made in other directions, none is effected in education. Foremost amongst the constructive work of the present and future is Communist education.

The establishment and preservation of Communism demands a Communist mentality among the workers; our Russian comrades have realised that the most important agent for creating this is the establishment of a new type of education which shall make no hypocritical pretence of impartiality, but which shall boldly place as its aims the creation of skilled, intelligent, class-conscious workers. Hence it is the workers themselves who demand that teachers shall be better paid, a demand that is resulting this year in a substantial increase (averaging 25 per cent.) in the wages of all types of teachers.

At the time of the November Revolution, the teachers were in the main definite opponents of the Bolsheviki, and the Soviets were faced with deliberate sabotage. Now, teachers are everywhere showing the greatest enthusiasm and devotion to the new order which has given them real freedom in the schools. The recent English delegation of teachers was frequently informed by individual teachers that though they themselves were not members of the Party, yet they rejoiced in the new atmosphere and methods brought into the schools by the Soviet Government. The Director of the Darwin Museum of the Second University of Moscow, after showing us the wonderful exhibits, which for their scientific value are unequalled by any other natural history

museum of the world, assured us that he was not a Communist, he was not a Marxist, and he was not even a materialist, but he must state that the museum would never have reached its present position but for the help of the present Government.

In accordance with the practical and Communist aims of Russian education, there has been evolved a new type of school. In the main there is no separation of subjects in what are called the Labour schools, the Soviet equivalent of our elementary and secondary schools. Human labour is the central portion of the work. The child studies his surroundings in the village or town and is hence led to the study of nature, social life and industry. In the later stages of the work he learns about the world, especially in terms of what is the most important for modern life, the conditions of industry. Further, there is no pretence that the school is above politics, nor are the teachers obliged to avoid it as a dangerous subject. Some idea of the result was afforded by the interesting and intelligent questions put to us by children in an Excursion Centre near Moscow.

The enthusiasm of the teachers and organisers is shown by their eagerness to learn of others; they read foreign educational books and periodicals, select what is best in the latest methods and welcome criticism of their own efforts. The resulting system almost everywhere adopted is that of the laboratory method combined with the project plan. For Communist children it is essential that children should be accustomed to working together, hence there is no separation of the sexes and the children work out their subjects of investigation or their projects in little groups and engage in full discussion upon them. It must, of course, be understood that no one thinks that the work of the school should all be conducted in the actual school buildings or under the active supervision of a teacher.

Some idea of how this project and complex system is actually applied can be obtained from a description of what was observed at the Kostimmo Excursion Centre near Moscow. The project started with an examination of the neighbouring village in the course of which the children painted a picture of every house. From a calculation of the number of houses, the value of the land and of other details they came to the conclusion that the revenue per head per annum amounted to 45 roubles, 80 kopecks.

It was obvious that the peasants could not live on this, how then did they live? Examining the surroundings, the children came to the conclusion that something was obtained from the forest. It was, therefore, necessary to make the forest productive and its future was thus the main question. From the problem of the preservation of the forest, the children next reached a statement of the various institutions engaged in this work and

studied whether the work was done on an industrial or on a co-operative basis. Further, they examined how the wood was used and observed the carving that was carried on in the homes of the peasants. All this work was done by small groups working together and freely discussing their results before drawing them and writing or publicly speaking about them.

Another feature of school life in Russia is the system of self-government everywhere adopted. The children form their own committees for governing each class and representatives from these bodies see to the general discipline of the school. Moreover, the children themselves have a part in the general arrangement of the studies of the school, and in addition, each class has its own special committees for special purposes. One of the most interesting things observed by the present writer was the sight in School No. 33 of Moscow, of a small child of nine conducting an election of a hygienic commission.

All types of organisations are encouraged in the schools and the pride of the children in their membership of the Pioneers is very striking. Parents' committees are also formed and take an active interest in the work of the schools.

No account of education in Russia would be complete that did not allow the special difficulties that have to be faced. The Tsardom feared education, and at the time of the establishment of the Soviet system, something like eighty per cent. of the population must have been illiterate. In the United Kingdom at the beginning of the present century, one per cent. of the recruits for the Army were illiterate, in Russia the figure was sixty-two per cent. The liquidation of illiteracy is thus one of the great problems of Russian education. Despite civil war and famine, so much progress has been made in the nine years since the November Revolution that it is hoped that only a few more years will be required for the complete solution of the problem as far as those are concerned who are under the age of thirty.

There are, first of all, the Labour schools for the rising generation, supplemented by institutions for the vagabond children who constitute a special problem produced by the Revolution, the civil war, the famine and the hunger. Then comes the Red Army, one of the most wonderful and efficient institutions of the Soviet Union. Out of a population of 140 millions, 80 per cent. are peasants who have received practically no education, hence the recruits for the Red Army are on their entrance, mainly illiterate peasants. Every man of twenty-one is obliged to serve in the army for twenty months and within the first few months he must learn to read and write. Further, he is instructed in political science and obtains a new and Communist outlook upon the world. Consequently each soldier on returning to his district be-

comes a centre of Communist culture and a source of enlightenment to the peasants.

One other difficulty is the result of the material condition of the Soviet Union. Industrially, and hence materially, it is far behind Western Europe. One result is that the equipment of the schools is poor, and like the buildings, is usually inferior to that of the average English school, though great improvements are taking place and many schools produce their own desks and other equipment by the work of the pupils. Similarly, the lack of sufficient and suitable textbooks has been a great disadvantage which is now being to some extent, overcome.

The State Publishing Company is the largest publishing firm in the world. Between October, 1925 and October, 1926, it has published twenty-three million textbooks. Again, when the Soviet Government set to work to organise schools, it found comparatively few in existence, now there are 80,000, though these are far from enough, and the country districts are especially in need of the further increases that are being made.

Lastly, the lack of accommodation in Moscow itself necessitates running all the schools in two shifts, morning and afternoon. Nevertheless these difficulties are being faced in such an efficient and resolute manner, and such splendid foundations for a real Communist education are being laid that another generation will see Russians the best educated people in the world, not indeed, in useless bourgeois culture, but in the new Communist culture of the workers.

The need for technically trained workers is being met in three ways. For the higher branches by the Technical Schools and Universities, for the young workers in factories by factory schools, and for those who have only a very elementary education by the "Rabfacs" or Workers' Faculties where the education continues up to the standard of entrance to the Technical Schools and Universities. In all these education in social subjects occupies an important part.

Lastly, there are the more indirect agencies for the education of adults. Even such a bourgeois opponent of the Soviet system as Sir Martin Conway, has testified to the splendid condition of the museums of Russia. In every museum special guides are ready to conduct the numerous parties of workers and to explain the exhibits. The theatres in their revolutionary development are the most interesting in Europe. The famous Meyerhold Theatre in Moscow, with its new methods and theories has begun to attract the attention even of bourgeois critics. The Proletcult movement and the Workers' Theatres have also introduced new methods both of acting and of staging. Everywhere in Moscow there are theatres working out unconventional new methods. The

plays themselves are usually Communist and revolutionary in subject, like the finely written and well staged "Cry of China," recently produced at Meyerhold's Theatre, or if not then revolutionary speeches are introduced.

Everywhere theatres are springing up and the workers are originating their own theatres, often in the factories themselves. The boasted bourgeois culture of London cannot support one opera, Moscow supports three, one of which travels to the workers in the outlying suburbs, and all of which are eagerly supported by the people.

One of the most important of all the agencies of public instruction is the newspapers. The Russians waste no time on divorces and murders and there is no society life to produce scandals. Instead there are clever readable articles on the things that really matter both at home and abroad. The Russian worker has a far closer knowledge of foreign affairs than any but the select few of our own people. This explains why they at once realised that the miners' struggle was part of the class war and that they themselves were directly interested and hence voluntarily started collecting for their English comrades before any request had come from their own trade union and other officials.

Two common features of Russian life should be mentioned, in every factory and in every school there is a Lenin Corner with flags and portraits and there is likewise a wall-newspaper with paintings, which, in the high artistic level usually reached, are alone enough to refute the charge that education in Soviet Russia is producing a grey, dull life from which the Arts are banished.

Lastly, one thing may be mentioned as an example to all trade unionists and class-conscious workers, there is only one trade union for all educational workers. This includes all whose work is connected with education, from the cleaner to the university professor all are members with equal rights. English teachers divided among 3 different organisations and with only one class-conscious organisation in the country (the Teachers' Labour League), may well ponder over the example of this union whose membership for the month of October amounts to 713,000.

Who Fixes Wages in U.S.S.R. and How ?

By G. MELNICHANSKY.

[The writer of the following instructive article is one of the foremost leaders in the trade unions of the Soviet Union, and took an active part in the recent meetings of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee. As an active trade union fighter of international fame, he writes with first class authority on this all-important question of how wages are fixed in the Soviet Republics.—Ed.]

IN the Union of Soviet Republics there is a strict separation of the functions of administration of industry from the functions of organisation and of protection of the interests of manual and office workers employed in industry. The former is centred in the organs of national economy, trusts and factory administrations, and the latter in the labour organisations, the trade unions. There are thus two organs interested in questions of wages and conditions of labour. All questions of this character are, therefore, decided jointly by these two organs. This decision is usually consolidated by a collective agreement for a definite period—six months or one year.

As it is necessary for two parties to come to an agreement on any question which might arise, it stands to reason that there may be differences of opinion between the parties, and that they might find it impossible to come to an agreement on some question or other. To deal with such difficulties we have the institution of "conciliation chambers" and "arbitration courts" attached to the organs of the People's Labour Commissariat.

In the event of differences arising between the trade union and the economic organ, both sides submit the disputed question to the decision of the conciliation chamber, whose task it is to make the two sides come to a voluntary agreement. The conciliation chamber is not empowered to make compulsory decisions. But if the conciliation chamber fails to make the two parties reach an agreement, and the question remains undecided, an "arbitration court" is summoned. This court consists of an equal number of representatives of the two parties, who, on their part, nominate a chairman, or in other words, a super-arbiter. According to the laws of our country, the decision of the Arbitration Court is final and obligatory for both parties.

Our legislation has also provided for such cases as, for ex-

ample, when the representatives of both parties cannot agree on the candidature of the chairman or super-arbiter. In such a case, at the demand of one of the parties the People's Labour Commissariat, or its organs in the provinces, are in duty bound to intervene in the conflict and to appoint their own representatives as chairman-super-arbiter. Practice has shown that the contending parties are more frequently inclined to hand over the dispute to the Arbitration Courts at the outset, avoiding the conciliation chambers for fear of delay. This system is applied when the general wage and conditions of labour are fixed throughout a factory or in separate branches of industry.

But within the enterprise itself there is a special commission consisting of an equal number of representatives of the factory administration and the union (the factory committee) and the "wages conflict commission" who watch over the correct application of the collective agreement, and decide any questions of wages and conditions of labour which arise in application of the collective agreement. Here are decided contentious questions in connection with the amount of wages, the definition of qualifications, and any errors in the payment of wages, etc. These decisions are arrived at with the agreement of both parties to the dispute and are final, provided they do not infringe the code of labour laws.

In our country great importance is attached to negotiations between the trade unions and the representatives of the economic organs concerning the conclusion of a collective agreement, as well as to the agreement itself. According to the rules which guide our work the administration of the trade union must prepare a draft collective agreement a considerable time before the beginning of the negotiations with the economic organs, and if such an agreement is already in force it must bring forward new draft proposals—the changes in the collective agreement which it proposes to place before the economic organs.

This draft plan is distributed between the factory committees whom it concerns, and these committees have to discuss the new proposals and to bring up the plan for discussion at the delegate and general meeting of the workers of the enterprise. The factory committee, as well as the delegate meeting and the general meeting in the factory, are entitled at the discussion of the plan to reject it or to introduce changes into some of its paragraphs, as well as any amendments.

All the amendments and new proposals are entered in the minutes and are handed over to the administration of the union. When the amendments and new proposals of all the enterprises concerned have been received, the administration of the union sums up the entire material and brings it up for discussion at a special conference of the factory committees of all the enterprises con-

cerned, giving at the same time its own judgment on all the proposals which are received. This judgment finally confirms what demands are to be placed before the economic organ for necessary changes in the old collective agreement. It is these demands which had been endorsed by the conference of factory committees which are brought up for discussion with the economic organs.

In the process of the negotiations themselves with the economic organs the administration of the union must keep the factory committees constantly informed on the progress of the negotiations and their prospects.

The process of fixing wages and conditions of labour in private enterprises is the same as in the State enterprises, that is, by means of signing a collective agreement on the basis of a mutual understanding. If necessary, the conciliation chamber or arbitration court is resorted to when, in the case of private enterprises, the People's Labour Commissariat is not entitled to appoint a compulsory super-arbiter. If the private owner of the enterprise cannot or does not want to come to an agreement with the union, the strike method is applied.

Indian Currency

By E. N. ARMITAGE.

THE recently published report of the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance is a document at once comprehensive, involved, contradictory and so completely sophisticated that one cannot, when reading it—or should we say reading between the lines?—help but come to the conclusion that the Government of India, having spent a matter of Rs.331,000 upon its compilation, is more concerned with the problem of deluding the workers, with a so-called Gold Standard, than it is with that of giving them a medium of exchange in which they can have confidence.

One of the greatest obstacles, from the Commission's point of view, to a satisfactory solution of the currency problem, is the inherent habit of hoarding by the native. As the native has always looked upon his silver rupee as his standard of wealth, the Commission has devised a plan whereby the silver rupee could be reduced in value, and replaced by a token of baser metal, or paper convertible into gold.

The minimum amount of gold purchasable being 400 ounces, about £1,700 in value, it will be interesting to see the natives queueing up at the proposed State bank for the purpose of satisfying themselves that they have a really "visible" Gold Standard!

The terms of convertibility being quite beyond economic possibility for the native worker, it is hoped to instil into him the more economic habit of investment—"replacement of the uneconomic evil of hoarding."

Different Methods of Robbery.

Although there is a unanimity of opinion that a Gold Standard should be installed in place of the present sterling exchange standard, there is considerable difference of opinion as to the exact ratio which the rupee should bear to sterling through gold. In other words, should the native be robbed from behind, or when he is blindfolded? The majority opinion is that the rupee should be stabilised at its present rate of 1s. 6d., whilst a "minute of dissent" is put in by Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas strongly advocating the "historic" rate of 1s. 4d.

To the uninitiated native, already robbed of his silver rupee, it would appear of little consequence whether his paper one had an exchange value of 1s. 6d. or 1s. 4d. The Commission is, of

course, quite aware of the fact, and indeed, having perpetrated a conjuring trick upon him, proceeds to fall out over the problem of how best the goose can be induced to lay its golden eggs.

The dilemma in which the Government of India finds itself to-day is one of almost exact parallel to that which has recently been faced by the British Government, namely, the choice of two evils—a financial or an industrial crisis. Realising quite clearly that the leading strings required for the successful negotiation of a financial crisis were held in Wall Street and not in London, the British Government chose, what (for capitalism) would be the lesser evil, culminating in the preliminary skirmish of the General Strike.

In April of last year, Churchill announced the intention of the Government to bring to a "successful conclusion" the policy, recommended by the Cunliffe Commission in 1919, of a gradual return to parity of sterling in relation to the dollar, a recommendation acted upon without deviation by each succeeding Government, including that of MacDonald. Keynes, the economist of Liberalism, pointed out in no uncertain manner the industrial strife which was bound to ensue.

The Position in India.

Whilst fully alive to the issues involved, the Government of India, like that of Britain, prefers to choose (for them) the lesser of two evils. Indeed, they can do so with much greater confidence than their fellow conspirators at home: the tank and the armoured car during industrial disputes are a much more useful form of argument east of Suez than in this somewhat more enlightened country, whilst—at the moment—they would be useless as a means of negotiating a financial crisis.

A basic fundamental, from which the Commission builds its recommendations, is that "In a well-regulated system of currency, the volume of currency should vary freely in response to the varying requirements of trade." In superb contradiction of this dictum it then proceeds firmly to nail upon the Gold Standard the rupee at a fixed rate of 1s. 6d.

Briefly to follow the course of the rupee, during the period of unparalleled capitalist economic instability—1914 to the present day—we see that in 1917 it broke away from its "historic" value of 1s. 4d., rising until February, 1920, when it reached 2s.; it then fell away rapidly to 11½d. in August, 1921, afterwards rising again until June, 1925, when it reached its present rate of 1s. 6d.

The period from 1917 to February, 1920, was, of course, the boom period in this country; exports of cotton and other goods

from Britain to India had never previously reached such dimensions for the very simple reason that the merchant in India was required to pay so many less rupees for an equal value in sterling than he had to pay when the rupee was at a lower level of exchange. From 1920 to the present day, with slight exceptions, the reverse process has been in operation.

Lower Wages or a Lower Rupee?

The Commission having decided that the rupee must be stabilised—in conformity with the general plan of attempted economic stabilisation—at 1s. 6d. Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, like Keynes, shows the necessity for reducing wages to a level compensatory for the relative appreciation of a rupee from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. Rather than adopt this course of accentuating industrial strife and “the deliberate intensification of unemployment” he—again with Keynes—would adopt the more subtle method of reducing the value of the rupee, i.e., its purchasing power, and allow wages to remain stationary.

Two quotations from the report will suffice in proof of this contention.

1. “Industries generally in India are still suffering from the prevailing depression. An adjustment in wages to the 1s. 6d. basis, if it has to be enforced, will therefore entail a long and bitter struggle between capital and Labour.”
2. “The adoption of a 1s. 4d. rate would result in an arbitrary reduction of the **real** wages of labour.”

Consequences of a 1s. 6d. “Gold” Rupee.

The most obvious consequence, to the native, of a change in his currency from what we may term a silver to a gold basis would be the rapid decline of silver values thus forcing from him his, collectively, considerable possession of silver. By this means, and with the looked-for rise of an “aristocracy of Labour,” it is hoped to instil into the more fortunate the habit of investment. The instillation of the investment habit is merely another move in the splitting tactics of capitalism. A conclusion, as clear as daylight, may here be drawn—**support for a reformist movement in India is playing directly into the hands of British Imperialism.**

A further consequence, of no little import, would be the effect upon China, which still retains a Silver Standard; a heavy depreciation in silver values, at the instigation of British Imperialism, is a prospect which John Chinaman is ill inclined to relish.

Industrially, the intensification of the struggle by the native worker to maintain his meagre standard of living may safely be predicted. In fact from whatever angle we view the problem of reforming the currency of India, our conclusion is strengthened that for the Imperialists a pre-requisite to capitalist stability is a lowering of the standard of living for its slaves.

The Party and the Opposition Bloc

By N. BUKHARIN.

(Continued from last issue.)

From the Idea of Freedom for Groups—to the Lead of Political Democracy in the whole Country.

I now pass on to the fourth problem, the problem of Party mechanism in the system of the proletarian dictatorship. You are aware that up to now we Leninists have regarded the unity and coherence of our Party as the first prerequisite for the maintenance and firmer establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. We Leninists have always imagined that the proletarian dictatorship can only be secure in our country, if our Party plays its role properly and when this Party is in the first place the sole party in our country, that is, when the legal existence of other parties is made impossible, and in the second place the Party is consistent in its structure, that it represents a structure excluding any independent and autonomous groups, fractions, organised currents, etc.

I shall not remind you, comrades, of the expenditure of energy, the many words and the many gestures, which we have witnessed from comrade Zinoviev, from this very platform, in his efforts to demonstrate this elementary Leninist truth. And now this has all changed at one blow. Now the whole opposition, the whole oppositional bloc—Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Krupskaya, etc.—demands freedom for fractions within the Party. The first signal for this change of front was given by comrade Zinoviev from the platform of our Fourteenth Party Congress. As you well know, Comrade Zinoviev declared on this occasion that we should call upon all former oppositional groups to share the leadership of the Party. This germ has since developed, not merely into a bud, but into a full blown, if not particularly sweet smelling and aromatic flower. (Laughter.)

It must be observed that if the opposition now insists on having our Party reconstructed on a basis permitting a freedom to form groups and fractions, some of the comrades of the opposition are arriving at conclusions of which we must take careful note if we want to know which way the wind is blowing. Comrade

Ossovsky, of whom we have already spoken as a member of the opposition, pronounces the following judgment in the article quoted: In our country there is no unity of economic interests. The working class has its interests, and the peasant class has its interests, differing somewhat. And then there are private capitalists in the Union, again a third group of interests. But we have only one Party. And if we have only one Party, and will not legalise other parties, then we must arrange matters so that there can be elements within our Party itself who represent capitalist interests. I am telling you all this in my own words, but comrade Ossovsky writes in a learned language as follows:

“The positive solution of this question (that is, the question of the unity of our Party) would not be difficult if we had not to prove the possibility of the unity of a party not the only legal one.” (That is, if there were other parties as well.) “We should then be the sole ruling Party, but not the only party in the country. It is a much more complicated matter to prove the possibility of absolute unity in the sole legal party in a country containing extremely multitudinous economic tendencies. No one denies that our economics include spheres in which capitalist spirit of enterprise could play a positive role. In this case the Party, remaining a united and sole party, has to actually protect all the interests in the country, including those of capitalist enterprise.”

These are the super-clever theoretical arguments with which comrade Ossovsky seeks to justify the demand for freedom to form fractions. If you want to have one party only in the country, he says, and there are various interests to be considered, then strive to give “freedom” to those who protect the interests of the rich peasantry and the capitalists. It is difficult to defend the interests of the rich peasantry and the capitalists within the confines of our Party constitution. Let us open the door, and you will have a fraction of NEP-men, a fraction of the petty bourgeoisie, and all this together will be called the C.P.S.U. Then the dictatorship will flourish in our country, for then the Party will correspond to a Workers’ and Peasants’ State. Strictly speaking, we could go even further in the same direction. Presently he will be saying: “Workers,’ Peasants’ and NEP-men’s State.” Then everything will be in the best of order. Workers’, Peasants’ and NEP-men’s State. Workers’-Peasants’-NEP-men’s Party, one sole Party in the whole country, and everything in perfect order. (Laughter.) You will now understand what lies at the bottom of all this. The fractional groups in our Party are naturally based upon various social currents, and if we permit the formation of fractional groups, if we permit the existence of fractions, then the next stage will be nothing more nor less than the legalisation of other parties.

An example: There is a Medvedyev fraction, whose standpoint has been made known to you in an article published in the "Pravda." (See "Imprecorr" Vol. 6, No. 54, 29th July, 1926, p. 904, "The Right Danger in our Party.") Comrade Medvedyev demands that our State industry be placed in the hands of the concession capitalists, and that the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. be liquidated; he demands immediate affiliation to the Amsterdam International; he demands the cessation of all discussion on the peasantry, for the peasantry is—the "dreary village." This is a well-developed Menshevist programme.

We are told that we should grant freedom to this legitimate view, to this fraction. Do they not call themselves, seriously, the "Workers' Opposition"? It does not matter that they want to dissolve the Comintern and perform other revolutionary wonders; all this signifies nothing if only they call themselves the "Workers' Opposition."

Let us assume that we permit the existence of these fractions, and that our Party includes a legally recognised Medvedyev fraction. Then the Menshevists would next come to us and say: We ask for nothing more, at present we only want what Medvedyev wants: close the Comintern, destroy the Red International of Labour Unions, pursue a policy of extensive concessions and ignore the peasant, for why should you bother with him? They would say to us: "Why will you not legalise us, since there is already one such legal fraction in your Party?" It is obvious that we should then have to legalise the Menshevists. If we legalise such a fraction as this in the Party, we legalise by this another party, and if we legalise another party, then we are truly slipping down from the line of proletarian dictatorship to the line of political democracy. That is, to the line so long advocated by the Menshevists, by Kautsky, by the S.R. and by many others of our political enemies.

It is to be observed that oppositional circles seem to like to dally with the idea of two parties. This same Ossovsky prophesies that we shall have two parties in the immediate future, both of which will call themselves Communist at first: One party which will be in favour of withdrawal from the Anglo-Russian Committee and will stand for a very "international standpoint," and another party which imagines that Socialism can be built up in our country alone, a sort of "National-Communist" Party. This entertaining of the idea of two parties has already become extremely popular in oppositional circles. The standpoint taken by the opposition on the freedom to form groups and fractions is one step on the road to this idea, which in its actual essence is the idea of the justification of a split in the Party.

This is in our opinion the fourth fundamental problem dealt with at the Plenum of the C.C., and I believe that the opposition has here too wandered completely from the path of the A.B.C. of Leninism with respect to the importance and the character of the Party in our country, and from the A.B.C. of Lenin's teaching on the organisatory character of our united and sole Party.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS.

In what Direction is the Ideology of the Opposition Developing?

Comrades, I now come to the question which must have occurred to every one of you: In what direction is the ideology of the opposition developing, which is its ideological marching route, where is it going? I must refer once more to Medvedyev's standpoint, but shall not repeat its outlines, as these are already well known to you.

It was not for nothing that the central organ of our Party entitled its article against Medvedyev's standpoint: "The Right Danger in our Party." Nobody with ordinary commonsense can deny that the extreme Right is represented in our Party by a group of the one-time Workers' Opposition, for it is impossible to imagine a more extreme Right in the sphere of international revolutionary politics than a standpoint in favour of the liquidation of the Comintern, a standpoint which names the West European Communist parties a "rabble of petty bourgeois lackeys" living "on Russian gold," which demands the liquidation of the Red International of Labour Unions, the abandonment of our Socialist industry to foreign capital, etc. This standpoint inclines further to the Right than any other in our Party, strictly speaking, it is ideologically already quite outside of our Party. And we must never forget that the present opposition, which represents a bloc comprising various oppositional currents, includes as one constituent the group around comrade Medvedyev. The opposition has given us no sensible reply to our repeated requests to turn aside from the Medvedyev standpoint, at least at the Plenum of the C.C., and join hands with us for a determined attack upon it.

But this is not all: About a year ago a group of comrades commissioned comrade Zinoviev to write an article against a letter in which Medvedyev explained his viewpoint, and to publish this article in the names of a number of comrades. Comrade Zinoviev did not execute this commission. When he was asked at the C.C. Plenum why he did not fulfil this duty, he replied literally: "Since you are directing your fire against the Left, I did not think it suitable to attack the Left comrade Medvedyev." Thus comrade Zinoviev regards the standpoint of comrade Medvedyev

as a "Left" standpoint. Thus it would appear that, if Medvedyev is of the "Left," then comrade Zinoviev stands to the Right of him. I do not know what is to be thought of this logical conclusion. In reality comrade Zinoviev is, of course, not Right of comrade Medvedyev. This is happily not yet the case, but if we regard the ideological position of the various oppositional groups, objectively and without consideration of persons, we can find an ideological bridge connecting the components of the opposition bloc.

What Does Medvedyev Write on the Peasantry Question?

"It is foolish"—he writes—"to suppose that the economic position of the small peasant can now be saved; it is inevitably doomed to decay and to complete extermination. It is mere petty bourgeois Utopianism to believe that there can be any uplift in peasant economics."

This is what we all said under the capitalist regime. But to speak like this under the conditions furnished by the proletarian dictatorship is to accept a standpoint widely differing from the Leninist. Comrade Medvedyev comes to the conclusion that there is no use in troubling about the "dreary" village. For him the peasantry is represented by this pseudonym of the "dreary village." Why should we, real proletarians, trouble ourselves about the "dreary villages" (or with the "stupid rabble" in the Comintern)? Let us rather give our industry to the concession capitalists, in order that we may earn a few more pence. Such is the weak, placid, trade unionist countenance which peers forth from behind this platform. But when the comrades of the new opposition maintain that the differentiation in the peasantry has made such strides that the middle peasant comes scarcely in question, or when comrade Preobrashensky fails to observe the difference between private capitalist and peasant economics, then we have here an undoubted ideological relationship to Medvedyev. These two standpoints are not identical, but they are ideologically related.

If our opposition throws doubts on the Socialist character of our State industry, and comrade Medvedyev attaches so little importance to this Socialist character of our industry that he is prepared to abandon this industry to the concession capitalists, this is the second bridge connecting the ideology of the two groups.

If comrade Medvedyev does not believe that we have a proletarian dictatorship, and is of the opinion that it is the task of the proletarian organisation to exercise pressure upon the State, and at the same time we find other comrades of the opposition letting slip such sentences as that on the "extremely non-prole-

tarian character" of our State, then we have here the third ideological bridge between the group of oppositional comrades and the group around comrade Medvedyev, which latter group may be said to be leading the way as "vanguard" of the whole oppositional bloc.

If Medvedyev believes that our Party is rotten, that it has run off the rails of proletarian policy, and comrade Kamenev asserts that our policy deviates from the interests of the broad masses of the workers, again this ideological similarity forms a bridge, the fourth uniting these two groups with one another. All deviations begin in this manner and lead in their later development to entirely anti-Bolshevist conclusions. This is where the collective opposition and the Medvedyev group are ideologically related.

We shall be told that the most far-reaching, revolting and evil-smelling proposition made by Medvedyev is that for the liquidation of the Comintern, whilst there is nothing similar to be found in either Zinoviev's or Trotsky's utterances. This is true, for the present. We should be the first to thank destiny were it to remain true for ever. But if the opposition continues on its present path, it may still lead to such a crisis. Ossovsky so often mentioned—an adherent of comrade Trotsky—has already hinted at this conclusion. He writes approximately as follows: Our Party, the C.P.S.U., is exposed to the pressure of various forms of economics, etc. (Here we must recollect what has already been said above on the representation of capitalist elements.) Consequently it must renounce its role as leader of the Communist International.

Let us think this thought to its logical conclusion: If the C.P.S.U. does not renounce its role, this means that in no case will it lead the Comintern further on the path of revolution. This means that its "degeneration" will involve the degeneration of the Comintern. The ultra-Left in Germany are already saying this to-day. Their conclusion is the necessity of creating a Fourth International. What will our opposition say when it maintains that our Party has fallen away from the line of revolution, and yet it still remains the leader of the Comintern? In this case the opposition will begin to declare loudly that the Comintern has fallen away from the proletarian path with the Russian Party. The further development of the views of the opposition will then be along the line of a false, neglectful and declinatory attitude towards the Comintern.

I repeat: We shall be the first to thank destiny if this does not come to pass. We shall be the first to be pleased. But if it

is not to happen, then the opposition must leave the path of destruction which it is now treading. It must pause and think whither its ideology is leading it.

The Opposition at an Intermediate Station—on the Platform of Trotskyism.

What is the ideological current thus developing in the opposition? The current is tending in the direction of Shlyapnikov and Medvedyev, it is becoming a completely liquidatory tendency on the basis of disbelief in the building up of Socialism in our country. At the present moment, the opposition is resting at an intermediate station, called Trotskyism. The official ideology of the whole opposition in its totality—including comrades Zinoviev, Kamenev, Krupskaya, etc.—is obviously that of open Trotskyism.

At the time when we prophesied that the matter would end in Trotskyism, we were not believed by many comrades, members of the opposition. They said: That will never be the case. You will remember how Zinoviev rose up again Trotsky, what thunders he called down upon him, both at home and in the foreign Party press. How many pamphlets were written by Zinoviev, Salutzky, Safarov, Kanatchikov, and a large number of other comrades, many of them somewhat evil-smelling pamphlets, which aggravated the question to a point to which it should never have been brought. But now comrade Trotsky has become the ideological leader of this whole oppositional group, whilst neither comrade Zinoviev nor comrade Kamenev has a single independent idea. They come forward with common declarations, with a common standpoint, with common signatures; and the main point is that all the ideas contained in these utterance are the ideas of comrade Trotsky.

This is in accordance with the facts. I have already described these ideas. Whose opinion is the present opinion held by the opposition in the peasantry question? It is comrade Trotsky's opinion. I have detailed our differences in questions of economic policy; I have described comrade Preobrashensky's standpoint. Whose standpoint is this? It is Trotsky's standpoint, which has borne away the victory in the opposition, whilst Zinoviev and Kamenev have capitulated before it.

And in the question of organisation, in the question of granting the freedom to form groups and fractions—whose are the views defended here by the opposition? It need not be said that these are Trotsky's views, for he has stood for them for decades. These are views which Trotsky expounded in 1923-24, at the same time as his demand for freedom for groups and fractions.

Comrade Zinoviev, at a Moscow Functionaries Meeting, held on 11th December, 1924, spoke as follows:

“We, therefore, beg you, the Moscow organisation, to give us a clear and unequivocal answer (the subject dealt with was the discussion with Trotsky). If you believe the time to have come for legalising the fractions and groups, say so plainly. (Thus spoke comrade Zinoviev in 1923 and 1924.) We do not believe that this time has come yet, or that it will come at all during the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It cannot come, for this is a question bound up with the freedom of the press and the political rights of the whole of the non-proletarian strata of the population, etc. Those who do not grasp this do not understand anything whatever of the whole situation. It is our attitude towards the peasantry which is involved. We cannot permit a schism in the Party, for we should thereby permit a split in the State.

“The slightest disorder in the Party takes immediate effect upon the whole apparatus of State . . . This is being discussed by both the specialists and the other categories of employees. Schism in the Party inevitably engenders schism in the whole State apparatus. Thus the question of fractions is a question of ‘life and death’ to the Party.”

Thus comrade Zinoviev spoke against Trotsky. But to-day it is he who is contending for fractions and groups: he has forgotten everything and appears to consider all that he said so recently, on 11th December, 1924, as empty chatter.

“Trotskyism is and remains at bottom to a great extent a Left nuance in the European, that is, opportunist pseudo-Marxist anti-Communist spirit.”

This is what comrade Zinoviev wrote on Trotskyism. In another place he writes:

“It has often been said that all the misfortunes of the Party started from the Tenth Party Congress.”

Why this? It was precisely the Tenth Party Congress which declared such a discussion within the Party to be superfluous.

“The policy of the Tenth Party Congress is the policy of Leninism. The attack made by comrade Trotsky against the

fundamentals of Bolshevik policy, against the fundamentals of Leninism, on the basis of the balance drawn by the Tenth Party Congress with respect to the freedom of fractions and groups, cannot be acknowledged as right." And so forth.

Thus comrade Zinoviev wrote at one time. And now all this has been thrown upon the dustheap. Now all this is forgotten. It was spoken with the greatest enthusiasm, but is none the less forgotten. Trotsky remains as victor in the bloc established on the basis of withdrawal to a distance from Lenin's ideological principles, though it was Zinoviev who designated Trotsky's standpoint as nothing more nor less than a variety of Menshevism, containing nuances fundamentally hostile to Bolshevism, etc.

The Ideological Sources of the Opposition Bloc.

Let us turn to the question of the ideological sources from which the opposition bloc derives its ideas. I am of the opinion that the bedrock foundation of the ideology of this opposition bloc in all its constituents is actually, as seen at the Fourteenth Party Congress, disbelief, or at best doubt, of the possibility of building up Socialism in our country, and I maintain that this arises out of the former viewpoint held by all the representatives of the present opposition bloc.

Thus, for instance, in comrade Trotsky's case his lack of faith is associated with his conviction that if international revolution is not victorious, then the counter-revolutionary peasantry are inevitably bound to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is the fundamental standpoint developed by him in his theory of permanent revolution and is the standpoint from which he has not departed.

In the case of comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev their lack of faith is a part of their past; at the time of the October revolution they thought that we, as sole Party backed by the proletariat, were not capable of coping with the tasks imposed by power.

And then comes the "Workers' Opposition." Here again I must remind you of a fact which many of us have forgotten. One of the deserters at the time of the October revolution was comrade Shlyapnikov: he left his post at this turning point. He was People's Commissary at that time, and sent in his resignation. It may, of course, be assumed that he did not do this on his own initiative, but probably after consultation with those sharing his views.

The three main elements of the present bloc have shown

by their historical past that their estimate of the class forces in our country is such that they doubt the possibility of the working class, under the leadership of our Party, proving capable of drawing the mighty waggon of our backward country out of the bog into which it has fallen. These are the first and deepest sources of the ideology of the present opposition bloc.

The Party will not Permit a Fractional Split.

I think it will now be fairly plain to you why the opposition has had recourse to such unheard of action as that leading to the affair of comrade Lashevitch and others. (I shall not enter into the nature of this affair here, since it is as well known to you as to me—the decisions of the Party will be published.) The steps taken by these oppositional comrades have led to a violation of Party discipline perfectly unheard of in the history of the Party, and it has been possible that a candidate to the C.C., with the undoubted approval of members of the Polit-Bureau, has held mass meetings in the forest, against the Party, against the line pursued by the Party, for the purpose of overthrowing the present leaders of the C.C. of the Party, and of creating a new organisation actually representing the germ of a new Party whose influence was to extend over the whole country.

Comrades, I shall not here demonstrate to you the entirely criminal character of such action from the standpoint of the Party. This seems to me entirely superfluous. You all understand it without explanation. But I honestly want to understand how it could come about. I think it has been made possible because these comrades, as regards ideology, have fallen away from the line of the Party to such an extent, and are internally so completely convinced that without them the Party will fall over a precipice, slip from the proletarian pathway, and drive the country to the verge of the abyss, that they feel themselves impelled to grasp at any available means—they rush into the forest and cry for "help." This is the only possible subjective justification for them.

But from the standpoint of the Party there is no justification. The Central Committee and the Central Control Commission have been faced by the fact that a number of comrades, including some holding extremely responsible positions, had actually taken such steps as the convocation of an illegal meeting against the Party and its leaders. Were we to tolerate such actions, our Party would cease to exist to-morrow as a Leninist Party. We cannot tolerate this. We say to these comrades: Defend your principles, declare your standpoint, speak in the Party meetings; but if you take to the forest, if you will not reply to our questions, if you refuse to make statements before the Control Commission,

if you choose the method of organising a new Party within our Party, the method of illegal organisation, then we shall fight you relentlessly. But we shall not let matters go so far as this. Comrade Zinoviev was perfectly right, two years ago, when he said that the question of schism in the Party is a matter of life and death to the Party and to the proletarian dictatorship.

The danger is somewhat lessened by the fact that the comrades of the opposition have only in their imagination the masses of the proletariat behind them, In reality they will continue to be more and more like generals without armies, or admirals of the Swiss fleet. (Laughter and applause). This will come about the more rapidly as the Party itself attacks the work of enlightenment more energetically and steels its own ideology.

This work of enlightenment is the leading point on our agenda. This is the first task to which we must devote attention.

The opposition is speculating upon various possibilities. It is speculating upon our economic difficulties. It is speculating on the fact that we suffer many shortcomings in our present life, that many different trends of feeling have arisen among the workers during the past year, and will probably be followed by many others. And finally, it is speculating on the supposition that the present Central Committee will not be capable of leading the Party without them, the highly gifted supermen. The opposition believes that we shall break down under a task too difficult for us. But we, comrades, are confident that if the opposition will not help us to lead the Party, then we shall do it without them. (Enthusiastic applause.)

(To be concluded.)

A Query and an Answer

DEAR COMRADE,

I wish to draw your attention to what is a very serious discrepancy between "The Theses on the Lessons of the British General Strike" as printed in the "Inprecorr" (Vol. 6, No. 47) and "The Theses" similarly printed in the "Review" of this month (July).

In dealing with the rôle of our Party during the Strike, the "Inprecorr" on page 770, section "M." states that we did correctly in issuing, in addition to the slogan of "The overthrow of the Baldwin Government," that of "The *Workers'* Government," while the "Review" on page 132 refers in this latter direction to our slogan of "The formation of a *Labour* Government." Now there is obviously a tremendous distinction between the slogan of a "*Workers'* Government" and that of a "*Labour* Government." If through some mishap in translation or from any other cause the Comintern is under an impression which is not based upon the actual state of affairs in this country—for, speaking personally, as far as Manchester was concerned, in all documents that came through during the General Strike from the Centre, there was no question of a "*Workers'*" but only of a "*Labour*" Government—then the C.I. must be made to see that our Party leadership did, in fact, commit a serious error.

This question has been fought out on the Manchester D.P.C., some comrades justifying the Centre's slogan of the "*Labour* Government"—others saying it was incorrect, likely to mislead the workers, and urging only the "*Workers'* Government" as the correct slogan.

Not that those of us who were for this latter slogan imagined that the situation was so ripe that one could conceive a "*Workers'*" Government, *i.e.*, one resting for its authority upon the organs of the working class alone, displacing the Bosses' Government which was carrying on under the screen of a Parliamentary majority. Our view was and is, that in putting forward the demand for a "*Labour*" Government, the Party was in effect saying to the workers that "Nationalisation of the Mines without compensation and with *Workers'* control" is the only way out of the chronic crisis in the mining industry—and that a "*Labour*" Government, resting on a Parliamentary majority, with the State machinery in general in the hands of the capitalist class and its henchmen, would be able

to achieve this—a fact which we know is not true and which we dare not for a moment let the workers imagine is true. It is ridiculous to suggest that in putting forward the demand for a “Labour” Government, we of the Party knew quite well that such a Government could achieve little, but we put it forward in order that the workers would have an opportunity of becoming disillusioned of the Parliamentary machine—the workers might become correspondingly disillusioned of the Party which told them to strive for the use of an instrument which turned out to be useless. No, the correct slogan is the one which the C.I. apparently imagines our E.C. put forward. The “Workers’ Government” slogan gives the Party the chance of explaining to the workers exactly under what conditions “Nationalisation, etc.” is possible.

If the workers in the beginning interpret the Workers’ Government as merely a “Labour Majority” Government, being as yet under the influence of reformist notions, then the Party is in the strong position of being able to say “Very well, we’ll help you to get your Labour Majority Government, but we warn you, etc., etc.” An attitude the Party couldn’t possibly take with justification when itself calling on the workers to demand a Labour Government.

The question is a serious one and therefore one that the Party must be absolutely clear on—otherwise in the more serious revolutionary crises ahead the Party may commit unnecessary mistakes.

Yours fraternally,
G. COHEN.

DEAR COMRADE,

In reply to your letter of July 20th, we are desirous to inform you, in the first place, that you are under a misapprehension as to the degree of informedness of the C.I. about the Party slogans during the General Strike. Long before the Theses of the E.C.C.I. were adopted on June 8th, the E.C.C.I. was in possession of the manifestoes and other documents issued by the Party, and was fully aware that we spoke of a “Labour” Government and not of a “Workers’ ” Government. The latter form can only have been used in the English edition of the “Inprecorr” by an error on the part of the translator. The version in the “Review” is an official one.

Secondly, we must state quite clearly and definitely that when we spoke of a “Labour” Government, we did so deliberately, and in full knowledge that it would in all probability be understood as a Government of the Labour Party. To be absolutely clear on

the point, we considered that if a Government, not merely of the Labour Party, but one headed by MacDonald, were formed as a result of the Strike, this would be a highly desirable result, which the Communist Party could only rejoice at as a big step forward in the class struggle.

Thirdly, we are fully in agreement with you that a Government headed by MacDonald could scarcely be conceived of as even introducing, let alone forcing through Parliament, a measure for the nationalisation of the mines without compensation. We agree, further, that it would be a dangerous thing for the Communist Party to sow the illusion that it would do so. It was for this reason that, as you will see on referring again to our manifesto of May 5th, we were very careful to avoid saying that it would.

But there can be no question that the mass of the workers, quite independently of our desires, would believe that such a Government would carry out this and other Socialist measures. If they believed this in 1924, feeling that it was only the minority character of the MacDonald Government which prevented it then, they would certainly believe it when the Government had been swept into power in consequence of a workers' victory during the General Strike. And it would only be hard experience that would teach them otherwise.

This point is the crux of the issue you have raised, and just this you seem to miss. Nowhere in your letter do you indicate what in your mind is the concrete and objective difference between "Labour" Government, *i.e.*, a Government of the Labour Party and a "Workers'" Government. We can scarcely imagine that by the latter you had in mind a Soviet Government: or that you consider that under no circumstances can Communists advocate a Government by the Labour Party as such. The only possible conclusion is that you had in mind, "Not a Right-wing Government, but a Left-wing Government"—possibly relying for support on Councils of Action as well as Parliament (again, we do not like to assume that you were suggesting a struggle at this stage for a Workers' Government, relying solely on Councils of Action and dismissing Parliament, *i.e.*, a revolutionary Government in the full sense of the word).

The question is, therefore, "Had the Communist Party a choice between a fight for a Right-wing Government, which would certainly sabotage the campaign for nationalisation, and a fight for a Left-wing Government, which might be expected to promote and begin such a campaign, at any rate, if not to carry it relentlessly through to a conclusion?" Put in this way, the question admits of only one answer—the Party did not have such a choice, except in its own imagination.

What was the situation? After the last Labour Government, both the C.I. and our Party decided quite definitely that the *mass*

of the workers was very far from disillusioned in a Right-wing Government yet. Whereas within the active minority of the Labour movement there was growing disillusionment in MacDonald, the popularity of MacDonald amongst the mass of the workers was, if anything, even greater than before (as shown by the million extra votes gained in the 1924 elections). This was due to the fact that the very existence of a Labour Government for the first time (coupled, of course, with the progressively deteriorating economic situation), had aroused to political consciousness hundreds of thousands of workers who previously had been quite apathetic in politics.

You will find this viewpoint confirmed in the resolution of the last Plenum (printed in the new pamphlet "Orders from Moscow"). Now, in these circumstances, the cry "Down with the Baldwin Government: Form a Workers' Government" (always assuming that you had in mind a difference in substance, not in words) would have been futile. It would have passed over the heads of the workers, or at best would have been understood as a demand for the formation of a Labour Government—and our explanations to the contrary would have merely caused bewilderment. It would have represented a jump ahead of actual development, and would, in fact, have been a typical act of "Ultra-Leftism," resulting in practice merely in isolating the Party.

Our view was and is that the formation of even a moderate Labour Government *as the result of a General Strike* would have been itself a fact of tremendous revolutionary significance, in that it would have given the workers a sense of class power such as they never yet had. In such circumstances we should immediately take up the fight to push the Labour Government further, to rally the workers around demands for drastic action against capitalism, to expose the Labour Government if it failed, to maintain the Councils of Action in being, etc. But all this, while essential, would be subordinate to the vast educative experience which the working class itself would gain, watching the actions of an actual Government brought into being by their victory over the capitalists, and therefore with no excuse for compromise or hesitation.

Subjectively, we know in advance that MacDonald would not attempt to fight capitalism (except where pushed, as on the Campbell Case and the Anglo-Russian Treaties). But that should not blind us to the fact, that if MacDonald were *forced* to take office on the crest of a victorious General Strike, this would objectively be a big step forward, even from the point of view of his exposure before the workers. Lenin's chapter in "Left-wing Communism" remains as fresh as ever on this point.

Yours fraternally,

THE EDITOR, "Communist Review."