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REVIEW OF THE MONTH THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW

HISTORY will sum up 1922 as a year in which the workers experienced many defeats and in which the capitalist class failed to overcome the many problems that are destroying their social system. At home and abroad the condition of capitalism is more critical than it was twelve months ago. Despite a long series of international conferences the internecine struggles of world capitalism have forced on new crises in Central Europe and the Near East. Germany moves rapidly to chaos and her impoverished and hungry masses are getting bolder as discontent becomes universal. The leaders of the Second and the Two-and-a-half Internationals are now the final bulwarks of capitalism in that country, as elsewhere. But even they, without desiring it, may very soon find themselves forced into revolutionary activity as a result of economic and political upheavals. Thus, the New Year commences with many sinister portents that point to international strife.

At home the situation is as bad as it was twelve months ago. To-day the unemployed agitation has reached a height never touched before. The Communist Party, ever fighting desperately for the bottom dog, has done its utmost to compel the trade unions and the Labour Party to concentrate upon the unemployed. We demanded, during the General Election, that unemployment should be made the vital issue of the fight. Thanks to the energy of our members, thousands of whom are out of work, the unemployed have so skilfully conducted their agitation that the trade unions, at long last, have realised the need for paying some attention to the matter. And even Mr. Arthur Henderson has adopted the Communist tactic of making the condition of the unemployed the main theme of his parliamentary campaign in the Newcastle by-election.

The political triumph of Mr. Bonar Law indicates that the most relentless elements of the capitalist class have organised their forces

for an open attack upon the workers. During the opening days of the New Year there are clear indications that a most determined attack has been planned to reduce wages and to extend the hours of labour. The landlords and rentiers are backing up the capitalist offensive against the masses by raking in increased rents. Hence, all along the line the year 1923 promises to be one of intensified class struggle in which the much vaunted democratic constitutionalism of the anti-Socialists and the I.L.P. will be tested.

THE COMINTERN

REPORTS are now to hand regarding the wonderful congress of the Communist International recently held in Russia. It is the usual superficial Labourite who looks upon the Communist International as being a Moscow affair. Every other day one hears of a moderate reformer who proudly asserts that he would not allow "Moscow" to dictate to him. This type is generally one who permits himself to be carried in the pocket of some Labour renegade.

To protest against the dictation of Moscow because the headquarters of the Communist International are situated there is as stupid as refusing to obey the instructions of the Two-and-a-half International because Bauer lives in Vienna, or to pay no heed to the Second International for the reason that its secretary lives in London. As a matter of fact, the Communist International is the only international Labour organisation which has its whole Executive Committee, drawn from every Communist Party in the world, in continual session. It is the only group in the world-wide Labour movement which insists that its Executive members must be continually replaced by comrades direct from the arena of the class struggle. In this way the Communist International keeps in touch with the struggling masses in every part of the world.

The Communist International is both Communist and international. As an international body it demands unity of action by all Communist Parties throughout the world. Because it insists upon this it has been opposed by some of its own members who had been used to the Second International, which permitted every country to do what it liked and wherein every member acted as he pleased. It was this crazy go-as-you-please sort of thing that enabled the leaders of the Second International to hound on the workers of each country against one another in the fateful days of 1914. It was this form of idiocy that tolerated German Socialists, like Schiedemann, to back up the Kaiser, and Belgian Socialists, like Vandervelde, to stand beside his beloved King, and Henderson to sit, like Albert Thomas in France, in the Cabinet of the warmongers. The Communist International is hated by the waverers because it has cut out all that sort of rot.

The fact that the Communist International is compelled to meet in Moscow is a most damning indictment regarding the so-called freedom of speech and of meeting which is supposed to exist in democratic Britain or in social-democratic Germany. The Executive of the Communist International would like to meet and hold its annual Congress in Berlin, in Paris, or in London. These cities require the ever-watchful Comintern much more than Moscow does. The Comintern is forced to hold its annual Congress in Russia because that is the only country in the world where the workers dare invite and welcome a real revolutionary gathering of

the proletariat. The shallow prigs, therefore, who prate about dictation from Moscow reveal themselves as mere babbling charlatans.

THE BRITISH FASCISTI

FASCISM is undoubtedly spreading to this country. The organisers of the notorious American Klu Klux Klan, which has been responsible for the murder of many Labour enthusiasts, intend to extend their activities to Britain. Those organs of the capitalist Press which have always denounced direct action, when practised by Labour, are now openly complimenting the White Terrorists of Italy and America. At the present moment there are various organisations in the land that are seeking to put tactics into operation, against the Labour movement, which will make the violence of the Fascisti and the Klu Klux Klan seem mild in comparison. When once their economic interests are seriously endangered there is no class in the world so callously brutal as the God-fearing, capitalist democrats of Britain. So long as the parliamentary game and the pretensions of democracy operate in their favour, they will tolerantly and smilingly chaff their opponents, but when these fail them there is no crime they will not commit to smash their enemies.

It is one of the legends of British history that our ruling class is predisposed to settle its social differences within the orbit of the constitution. Our friends of the I.L.P.—particularly those middle-class leaders who are anxious to teach the Die-Hards the marvels of parliamentary custom and etiquette—have met the Communists' contention that the capitalists will fight, most violently, to protect their class interests, with the bland and innocent reply that Britain is saturated with parliamentary democracy. Newbold, in his very first speech in the House of Commons, tore down the thin and shoddy veil of parliamentary democracy when he declared that no country in the world had used the weapon of civil war so freely as had the British propertied interests.

We must not confuse past class conflicts in Britain with the great struggle that is now about to take place between Capital and Labour. Bitter as have been the fights between rival economic and political factions in the past, these have always been between opposing propertied interests. The new feature in the modern class struggle is that it is a combat between the propertied interests and the propertyless masses. We must recognise that, up to the present, despite all the great strikes, lock-outs, and political agitations which have taken place, these, important and necessary as they have been, were mere skirmishes as compared with the big struggles that are now facing us. In that conflict the workers will speedily discover that the Constitution will not help them in their war upon the propertied interests. Leaders like Mr. J. R. MacDonald do not seem to understand that the British Constitution has been created to protect property. To understand the full implications of our modern public law is impossible without a knowledge of the law of property;* likewise, the growth of parliament itself is also bound up with the institution of property.† Even when abiding by *their* Constitution the propertied interests

* This is admitted by all the historians of the Constitution; see, for instance, Maitland's *The Constitutional History of England*, p. 23.

† *History of English Law* (p. 37) by Maitland and Pollock.

are in much stronger position than the proletariat. But the capitalist enemies of the working class are so eager to beat down all moves aimed against them that they are always the first to violate their own Constitution and to meet the peaceful demands of Labour with violence.

The violence of the Fascisti in Italy, organised and led by leaders bred in the Second International, was the reply of the Italian propertied interests to the militant working-class movement. The Klu Klux Klan, in its modern form, came into being when it was found that A.F. of L. Labour leaders, like Samuel Gompers, could no longer blind the American workers to their real interests. In Germany there are several secret physical force organisations financed and maintained by the wealthy reactionaries for murdering the boldest spirits of the revolutionary masses. Now that the British workers are about to enter a period of intensified class struggle, it is only natural that the imperialist and capitalist preachers of democracy should be putting the final touches to their plans for creating secret organisations to oppose the Labour movement by the use of violence and physical force. We have had experience of such things in the past, in a small way. We need only recall the terroristic gangs organised during the war, it was said, by such people as Havelock Wilson, Captain Tupper, etc., and other notorious figures of the trade union world. Indeed, the most sinister thing about the Fascisti, Klu Klux Klan, and the German terrorist bands is the infamous part played in them by influential leaders of the moderate Labour movement. The Italian Fascisti found many Labour leaders of the Right Wing who were willing to join up against the militants of the Left Wing. The same thing has taken place in America. In Germany, the Eberts, Noskes and Schiedemanns—leading members of the Second International—utilised the junkers' secret murder brigade to assassinate Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and many other Communists. Nor must we forget that in this country the moderate Labour journals, which used every pretext to insult Soviet Russia, have had very little to say against the Fascisti dictatorship in Italy.

The propertied interests do not intend to give up their privileges without a desperate struggle. They do not fear eloquent and sonorous perorations delivered against them in the House of Commons. If that was all that was opposed to them they would remain smiling democrats for all time. But they know that the masses are becoming restless under the lash of unemployment, low wages and hunger. They know that they are chafing under the defeats which they have experienced on the industrial field. And they also see that the old Labour leaders are now afraid to organise further retreats and that these must stand and fight. The capitalists see the importance of the bigger fight that must be fought outside of parliament, in the workshops and in the streets. This is the fight they are preparing for; and this is the fight that the *Daily Mail* has in mind when it publishes its articles on the virtues and remarkable achievements of the Fascisti over the workers in Italy.

The Communists are neither surprised at nor afraid of the British Fascisti. We have never allowed ourselves to be misled regarding the democratic and constitutional pretensions of the ruling class. We know the nature of the beast we are fighting;

our friends of the I.L.P. and the Labour Party, it would seem, do not. When the fangs and claws of the British Fascisti rend them they may know better. Regarding this menace, we say that here, once again, is an occasion when the whole Labour movement must unite. We must smash the physical force agents of capitalism whenever these appear in the struggle against us.

IRELAND

WHEN Mr. Lloyd George realised that his Black and Tan campaign of murder in Ireland had failed he made overtures to the Irish rebels for a peaceful solution to the problem. At the time when negotiations were first suggested, we warned our readers that the British Government would never yield to Ireland a peace settlement that would benefit her people.* We also said that the Irish struggle against British imperialism was developing a Labour movement which many of the middle-class Sinn Feiners were getting more afraid of than the English enemy. We said that these middle-class Irishmen would rather yield to the English State than to Irish Labour. In Mr. Lloyd George they met a man after their own heart and one who was an adept at straightening out such Labour difficulties as those that were looming up in Ireland.

When Mr. Lloyd George met the Irish delegates he was quick to realise that the Irish rebellion could easily be undermined by setting the various groups against each other. What he had been unable to achieve by blood and iron was to be attained by internecine strife in Ireland. In August, 1921, we warned our Irish friends that middle-class statesmen seldom defeated their enemies in open combat; "it was always achieved by insidiously *undermining* their political opponents."

At a time when the moderate Labour movement was applauding Lloyd George for settling the Irish question, the Communist Party was alone in pointing out the dangers inherent in the so-called settlement. One need only compare Ireland to-day with what it was in 1921. During 1922 the country touched the depths of humiliation. It was left for a "free" Irish Government to use the arms supplied by the centuries old enemy to shoot down the heroes who had held the British army at bay.

The "solution" of the Irish problem stands out as one of the most terrible warnings in recent times regarding the treacherous character of middle-class politicians who hope to solve important problems by compromising with capitalist statesmen.

WM. PAUL.

* "The Irish Situation." Vide COMMUNIST REVIEW, August, 1921.

Push the new

"COMMUNIST"

BRITISH CAPITALISM IN 1922 by M. H. Dobb

DECEMBER, 1919, was in the heyday of British capitalism's self-confidence and aggressiveness. Labour had just been given its first "snub" in the railway strike of October. The organs of the business world were exulting in the false expectations of boundless markets and unprecedented prosperity. Shipbuilding firms were reported to have contracts on hand which would keep them occupied for three or four years. Mr. Lloyd George was preparing, with sunny smile, that series of disagreements with France, which was to culminate in a definite "breach in the Entente."

In December, 1920, bitter disillusionment had come to the British business world. The tide had turned in April, and was in full ebb by the autumn with tumbling prices and dwindling profits and bankruptcies and gloom.

By December, 1921, British capitalism had recovered partially from the shock of its sudden fall. It was raising its head to scan the horizon for signs of a break in the storm clouds. It had begun to realise some of the follies of the Peace of Versailles; and Mr. Lloyd George's wrestle with France to promote British interest in Central Europe and the Near East had begun. At Washington the first clash of swords had sounded at the mention of the magic word "submarine."

And now with the close of 1922 we witness a new scene unfolding before our eyes. Mr. Lloyd George and the glory that was his have passed; he now sits on the Opposition Bench with Mr. Asquith. On the western horizon America shows signs of a break in the clouds—signs that the depth of the depression has been reached. Talk of "trade revival" floats through the air; and every "straw" is eagerly seized upon in the business world to find whether the wind of economic forces blows yet from a more favourable quarter.

The year 1922 has been one of struggle on the part of capitalism to attain stability and to set capitalist production going on the upward grade once more. At home this has taken the form of the reduction of productive costs by wage reductions, the removing of taxation burdens on the business community by an economy of state expenditure, and a reduction of taxation on the capitalist class. Abroad it has taken the form of an attempt to revive markets for British trade outside Europe and especially within the Empire.

The most significant event in the political sphere has been, of course, the fall of Mr. Lloyd George, and the shrinkage of the political group which supported his policy to a mere 50 in the present House of Commons. There is no doubt that the little "man who won the war" had, in a high degree, the qualities essential for the Prime Minister of an active aggressive imperialism. He was possessed of a charm and personality which went straight to the hearts of the bourgeois public. His smile no doubt endeared him to hosts of petit-bourgeois readers of the picture press or devotees of Pathé's "animated gazette"; and perhaps this smile played no small part in his transitory popularity. He was possessed of the gift of

touching his every utterance with just that degree of emotional idealism which the middle class soul delights in as balm to its troubled conscience. He was quick-minded and astute to the point of cunning; he was versatile and adaptable to the point of sacrificing principles ever on the altar of expediency—or so his personal enemies always say. Mr. Maynard Keynes, in describing him at the Versailles Conference, refers to his “swiftness, apprehension, and agility,” and sketches him “watching the company with six or seven senses not available to ordinary men, judging character, motive, and subconscious impulse, perceiving what each was going to say next, and compounding with telepathic instinct the argument or appeal best suited to the vanity, weakness, or self-interest of his immediate auditor.”

The crisis in the Near East, which developed in September, was the crowning point of the policy which Mr. Lloyd George had been pursuing for three years since the Treaty of Versailles. In the heyday of capitalist optimism and prosperity in 1919 the aggressive and progressive elements in British capitalism, which made Mr. Lloyd George their spokesman, were supreme and almost unchallenged. These were the days of unbroken dreams of post-war millenniums, of which the consummation would be complete so soon as labour “extremism” was effectually quelled and fettered. These were the days of reorganisation, amalgamation, and the growing power of the big combines in British heavy industry, such as Vickers, General Electric, Cammell Laird, John Brown, Harland and Wolff, Armstrong Whitworth, and the rest of them. And the Federation of British Industries, in which British heavy industry is predominantly represented, had scarce a prouder moment than when it had its own Prime Minister as honoured guest at its annual dinner in 1920.

But no sooner had British heavy industry begun to rejoice in the overthrow of its chief rival, Germany, than it began to feel dimly apprehensive of having hoisted into the saddle in the process a new rival—the heavy industry of France. With the turning of the tide of trade prosperity in March and April, 1920—largely owing to the cessation of the temporary “replacement boom” in orders from Europe, which had mainly been financed by borrowing—the “price” which British capitalism had to pay for the crippling of its pre-war rival proved indeed to be a heavy one. As a consequence British policy veered more and more round in the direction of leniency towards Germany, a stabilisation of the mark exchange by a reduction of reparation demands, and a rehabilitation of the Central European market. On the other hand, the depression was causing French heavy industry, through its instrument the *Comité des Forges*, to cast more and more frequently covetous and lustful glances on the luscious beauties of German’s chief industrial region—the Ruhr Valley. French heavy industry, by the acquisition of the ore and plant of the Lorraine, had increased its position greatly since pre-war days. Its disadvantage was that the Lorraine blast-furnaces and steelworks depended on coke supplies from the Ruhr Valley. The tendencies which universally drive heavy industry to vertical combination, especially during a trade depression, was driving the heavy industry of Lorraine to covet control of the raw material supplies, rival firms, and complementary processes of the Stinnes, Thyssen, Haniel, and Krupp combines. If French heavy

industry could link up with Lorraine the industrial region of the Ruhr, it would be dominant in Europe; the Comité des Forges would virtually constitute an European oligarchy. For instance, out of Germany's pre-war steel production of 19 million tons, 10 millions was produced in the Ruhr; of her 19 million tons of cast iron, 9 millions was produced by the Ruhr blast-furnaces, and 8 millions in Silesia and Lorraine. France's pre-war production of steel did not exceed 5 millions, of cast-iron 6 millions, and coke $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions. The Stinnes combine in the Ruhr, however, *alone* produces $4\frac{1}{2}$ million tons of coke, $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions of steel, and 2 millions of cast iron.*

Consequently, since 1920 the policies of British heavy industry and French heavy industry—between Vickers and its associated firms on the one hand and the Comité des Forges on the other—have increasingly diverged. Britain wanted a settlement of the reparations question, a reconstruction of Central Europe, and a check on further French expansion. France wanted to concede not one jot or tittle of the Treaty of Versailles. It wanted every guarantee and sanction it could secure to strengthen its stranglehold on that coveted industrial region. The more bankrupt Germany became, the greater the chance that the Comité des Forges would be able to force Stinnes and Thyssen to strike a bargain on its own terms. And so the chain of conferences from Cannes to the Hague reflected this divergence of tendencies. At Cannes Mr. Lloyd George tried to conclude a "pact" with M. Briand over reparations and the question of the Ruhr. But the attempt failed, and the wrath of the Comité des Forges was a substantial factor, according to M. Delaisi, in the downfall of M. Briand. One after the other the conferences failed to bring stability to Europe; for the policy of the Comité des Forges was:—

"To show them (the Stinnes') the impotence of Supreme Councils, the vanity of European Conferences, until, tired of the struggle and driven by the ruin of the exchange into an inextricable situation, they agree to treat directly with their French rivals" (*Reconstruction in Europe*).

Entwined in the tangled skein of these conferences was the big question of oil. A French writer stated: "Spa etait la Conference du Charbon. San Remo fut la Conference du Petrole; et Genoa continue San Remo" ("Spa was the conference of coal. San Remo was the conference of oil, and Genoa is the same as San Remo"). That it was the question of oil which made sterile the Genoa Conference was stated with amazing frankness in an article on "The influence of Oil on the Genoa Conference" in *Reconstruction in Europe*, No. 4 (*Manchester Guardian*).

"American apathy in the proceedings at Genoa was soon turned into anxious interest by reports of an agreement between the Royal-Dutch-Shell combine (British) and the Soviet Government. . . . There are good grounds for reaching the conclusion that *Standard Oil (U.S.A.) and French financial interests were working together in regard to the oil developments at Genoa.* . . . America once more officially declared for the 'open-door policy,' and unofficially her oil interests—that is to say, the Standard Oil interests in Paris—backed the

* Report of M. Dariac to M. Poincaré. See *Manchester Guardian*, Nov. 2nd, 1922.

French and Belgian attitude with regard to the terms of the Allies' Note to Russia. . . . This interest of the great oil trust was sufficient to hamper the negotiations and limit the achievements of the world conference at Genoa."

As the policy of conferences failed, and its failure received graphic expression in the spectacular slump of the mark in the late summer and again in the autumn, confidence in Mr. Lloyd George began to wane. As the trade depression continued, British heavy industry suffered a sapping of its strength; for it was heavy industry which had expanded most during the boom of 1919, and now that a general slump in values was taking place, it found itself heavily over-capitalised. On the other hand, as deflation proceeded—as values fell and the pound sterling approached its pre-war parity with gold and with the dollar—the strength of the banks, the finance houses and the bondholders began to increase. For, whereas inflation by depreciating the purchasing power of money benefits the debtor (the active entrepreneur or business man) at the expense of the creditor (bondholders and bankers), deflation, on the other hand, by causing an increase in the purchasing power of money, benefits the creditor at the expense of the debtor. Moreover, it is during a period of trade slump, when bankruptcies are plentiful, that the entrepreneur finds himself most economically dependent on the banker.

The result was that, when a crisis in the Near East shook the whole of European credit, and the hourly imminence of war became the subject for fervid discussion on the Bourse and in Threadneedle Street, the star of Mr. Lloyd George and of the policy which he stood for quickly waned. The Near East was the home of many of the hopes of British heavy industry. The name of Sir Basil Zaharoff, and his close association with Vickers, is a byword even in the capitalist Press. It was at Athens that the Federation of British Industries held its great Trade Fair in 1919, and where it appointed its first Overseas Trade Commissioner. It was in Palestine that the economic worth of a League of Nations mandate was showing itself in valuable concessions to British heavy industry, such as the Cowdray concessions for harbour construction work at Jaffa. In the background—across the desert—was oil. These were all factors superadded to the strategic aspects of the Straits, of Egypt, of Persia and Mesopotamia as the approach to India. It was here in the Near East that the interests of British capitalism and French capitalism first crossed so seriously as to produce a crisis, which *The Times* described as the most serious since 1914. The bellicose note sent to the Dominions framed for capitalism, as a whole, the crucial question: Was it prepared to risk a war and to send troops to support the interests of British heavy industry in the Near East? The conservative element in British capitalism—the bondholders, the banks, and the financial houses—answered the question in the negative, and so, on November 15th, Mr. Bonar Law floated into power to the gentle strains of tranquillity which sounded from the august dignity of "The City." As Radek has expressed it, "The Conservatives are willing to give up the magnificent intellect of Lloyd George for the price of a man with a strong hand but with a stupid head." The political change is one of degree rather than of kind. Imperialism is still the dominant creed in Downing Street. It is an

Imperialism in which there has been a reshuffling of its elements: it is an Imperialism of consolidation and tranquillity rather than of militancy and progression.

What, then, of the economic current which lies behind these political "excursions and alarms?" We have said that 1922 has been marked by the eager searching of the horizon for a breaking of the clouds, by the continual attempts to "Couléise" a revival of trade. The main reason why the business world acquiesced in the rupture of the Coalition and the revival of Conservatism was because it had despaired of a trade recovery through the reconstruction of the Central European market, and hoped that the securing of tranquillity by a reduction of commitments in Europe and the Near East and a development of Empire trade was more likely to satisfy its yearnings. And the hopes of the business world were not without foundation.

Throughout the year there have been, now here, now there, portents of revival. In recent years great strides have been made in the statistical investigation of the phenomena of the trade cycle or industrial crisis. The Research Committee of Harvard University (U.S.A.) led the way with its investigation of trade fluctuations over the last 30 years, correlating carefully the facts investigated as the basis for future forecasts. The Harvard Committee now publishes monthly a Barometer of Trade Conditions with the object of modifying some of the maladjustments of the "anarchy of production" by enabling business men to base their judgments on sounder forecasts of the future. Its example has been followed recently in England by the preparation of a similar "Chart" of trade conditions by the London School of Economics under the direction of Prof. Bowley and Sir William Beveridge. Another move in this direction has been the preparation of a new Index Number for recording changes in general prices by *The Economic Review*. The *Review* Index Number is, however, based exclusively on ten commodities which enter into international trade, such as pig-iron, wheat, cotton, coal, etc.; and the theory is that when this Index Number rises above the Board of Trade Index Number of internal wholesale prices, a trade revival is imminent. For, a steady rise in the prices of the commodities on which the *Review* Index Number is based will imply an increased buying, e.g., of raw materials, between countries, and this is always the preliminary stage to a revival of production.

Now, since the beginning of the year, the Harvard Barometer has shown several of the signs, which the Harvard Committee assert to be forecasts of trade revival. For instance, according to the Harvard Committee, a boom in industrial securities—i.e., a heavy buying on the Stock Exchange and a rise in the price of shares—is likely to precede by about nine months a general trade revival. This occurred both in the U.S.A. and in Britain in the early spring of this year. Other forerunners of trade revival are: increases of coal output, increased volume of bank clearings, and increased imports of raw materials. A considerable rise in British exports took place towards the end of 1921, largely consisting of pig-iron and coal; and coal output and exports have maintained their recovery. The leather trade, an important index of the general economic trend, has been fairly active; and there has been a mild recovery of shipping freights. British imports of raw

material have been increasing steadily; and *The Economic Review* Index Number of prices in international trade has risen above the Board of Trade Index Number. In December a considerable increase of exports has been announced. On the other hand, no rise of general wholesale prices has yet taken place, except for a slight rise in May and June, followed by a relapse; and unemployment has shown no signs of diminution.

In the U.S.A., however, 1922 has shown pretty definite indication of reviving trade; and it would seem that this tendency might have been more pronounced had it not been for the cautious Bank Rate policy of the Federal Reserve Board, which controls the American banking system. The reason of this cautiousness is the fact that the U.S.A. has attracted large masses of gold, and in the event of a trade boom this large gold reserve would provide the basis for an immense credit expansion. Such inflation of credit, once started, might well get beyond the power of the Federal Reserve Board to control it. These indications are various. There has been a sharp fall in the number of business failures since March. The volume of bank clearings has increased; as has also the volume of "freight car loadings" on the railroads. There has been considerable activity in the building trades and in the iron and steel trades, checked only by the coal strike of the summer. Unlike Britain, the general level of prices has been moving definitely upwards. Bradstreet's Index Number showed its lowest point in June, 1921, and an advance of 14 per cent. since then. The Bureau of Labour Index Number shows an increase from 138 in January (100-1913) to 155—an increase of 12 per cent.

Now, it seems probable that the failure of the tendencies to revival to ripen in Britain is due to the European situation. If a trade boom starts in the U.S.A., however, it is bound to have a sympathetic effect on Britain. But even the U.S.A. is finding the succession of political crises in Europe to have a disturbing effect on industrial conditions across the Atlantic. Both British and U.S.A. capitalism consequently favour a reconstruction of Central Europe, a stabilisation of the mark exchange, and a curtailment of the imperialist aggressions of France.*

It will be asked, "If these tendencies to revival ripen to maturity, will it imply that the post-war crisis of capitalism has been solved, that capitalism has secured stability, and will take once more the ascending path to the heaven of its dreams?" To jump to this conclusion is to confuse a purely *temporary* revival of trade and production, due to factors as transitory as those which produced the short-lived boom of 1919, with a *permanent* revival on normal, pre-war lines. Such confusion is common both to capitalist writers and to writers in the Labour movement; the former citing evidence of better times as proof that the troubles of capitalism are over, the latter denying the possibility of a temporary revival, because the chronic disease of capitalism still remains. For instance, the article by "E.B." in *The Labour Monthly* of October showed no appreciation of this important distinction: in fact, the conclusions of the article were based on an analysis of present conditions of so superficial a kind and so devoid of apparent grasp of the real factors involved in a trade depression, as

* How far, on the other hand, American financial interests are linked with French, the writer is not in a position to say.

to make those conclusions almost worthless. And "E.B." is a very able writer!

We cannot here discuss the factors involved in the present capitalist crisis. They are summarised in the final chapter of the forthcoming *Plebs Economics Textbook*, and to this reference should be made. Suffice to say, that so long as those fundamental maladjustments, which characterise post-war capitalism, remain, a revival of trade within the Empire and with countries outside Europe cannot be other than short-lived; and the inflation of the boom-period is likely to produce a more profound reaction in the deflation of the ensuing period of depression. Moreover, even if a partial reconstruction of the European market is achieved, it will only be at the expense of the Africanisation of Central Europe by France,* and probably of the whole of Europe by the U.S.A. This new phase of imperialism seems likely to bring "not peace, but a sword," not a stable Europe, but a succession of crises, to which the recent Near East crisis may well seem a mere diplomats' "tea-party." Not all Mr. Bonar Law's prayers for tranquillity will avail when the hounds of imperialism are in full cry, and they who cry peace will cry "peace when there is no peace," when British heavy industry has recovered some of its lost strength, and has discovered that it has vanquished its German rival only to set a more formidable competitor in its place—French heavy industry, laughing triumphantly astride the Rhine, with one foot planted in Lorraine and the other foot planted 'mid the rich resources of the Ruhr.

And there is another important factor, which our study of the present position of capitalism has brought to light. It is a point to which Mr. Phillips Price drew attention in *The Labour Monthly* about a year ago. It is the divergence of interests between the financiers and bondholders, on the one hand, who tend to favour deflation, and the industrialists, on the other hand, who tend to favour inflation. We have drawn attention to it in Britain. We see it in Germany underlying the opposition between Stinnes and the Cuno Government. We have seen it exemplified in the U.S.A. in the cautious bank rate policy of the Federal Reserve Board.

To summarise:—

1. 1922 has seen the attempt of British capitalism to stimulate trade revival by a policy of development of trade outside Europe, and a withdrawal of British commitments in Europe, with the object of reducing burdensome expenditure and avoiding political crises which disturb the financial world. This is the meaning of the Conservative revival.

2. 1922 has shown signs of a revival of trade and production in the U.S.A., and a few signs which indicate this probability in Britain. 1923 may quite well see these tendencies mature; and capitalist expectations are focused in this direction. It is this that is dominating the foreign policies of the British and U.S.A. Governments. Such a revival, however, is not likely to be any more than temporary—probably not more than one and a-half to two years. In the U.S.A., inflation is in danger of going ahead to a greater extent than in 1919, and inflation in this country will follow as a necessary effect. This will tend to increase the anarchy

* The writer has developed this point in an article in the current issue of *The Plebs*.

of production and the maladjustment arising therefrom in the same way as did the inflation of the boom period of 1919. If this is so, the disorganisation at the end of it will be greater than in 1920, and the ensuing depression consequently more severe.

3. Inflation accompanying a trade boom would revive the disharmony of interests between the banks and the industrialists; and British heavy industry, recovering some of its former strength and confidence, might well put Mr. Lloyd George with an anti-French policy at the helm again. This would mean fresh international crises in the political sphere. The intervention of U.S.A. finance-capital in Europe, which is already beginning, is pregnant with new imperialist struggles, compared to which the pre-war rivalries over the Bagdad Railway, Persia, Morocco, Egypt, and the Sudan were but puny, sickly infants.

RED PETROGRAD

By Charles Ashleigh

PETROGRAD, NOVEMBER, 1917—1922.

FIVE years of the revolution! Five years of the Soviet Republic. We knew that the revolution had lived five years; we knew that this was the Red Week, the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution of November, 1917. We knew it because everywhere, in store windows, in great red signs against the fronts of houses and upon the walls of public buildings the fact was blazoned. Wherever you went, there was the great red "V," standing for the five years of struggle, under the hammer and sickle. It was all over Moscow before we left, in the long special train for Petrograd, where the opening celebration of the Communist International was to be held, on November 7th, the anniversary of the birth of the workers' republic.

We knew it because, wherever our train stopped, the stations were hung with evergreens and red bunting; and working men and women and Red Guards stood on the platform, with their band, to greet us. Ours was a red train. In fact, there were two trains—we were too many for one. It was a first-class train, because honour must be paid to representatives of the workers from other lands. The only people on our special were delegates to the Communist Congress, the Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions, the Congress of the Young Communist International, and party workers and Labour journalists.

Nobody slept on the long night's journey to Petrograd. Nobody ever seems to sleep in Russia. You attend Congress all day and committees half the night. You get supper at about eleven, and then you write an article and some letters, and discuss matters with other delegates until about five. Then you go to the room you share with four others and do some more talking. And then you have to get breakfast and go to the Kremlin for the morning session. Perhaps you sleep a little, somewhere in between all these things, if you are lucky. Probably you don't. But you don't mind it a bit.

From the station in Petrograd we went to Smolny—Smolny the dynamo station of the Petrograd uprising. The late genteel finishing school for young ladies had been rudely jolted from its

accustomed routine, when the workers', peasants', soldiers' and sailors' deputies began tramping its long corridors in their heavy high boots, and the machine-guns and armed lorries rumbled up its prim lawn to guard it against the soldiers of Kerensky. But it seemed now quite resigned, and as if it had been all its life a centre where rudely-clad rebels worked sixteen hours a day at making a revolution.

The great hall of Smolny was where we dined. Then our names were called out from the presidium. Two hundred meetings were to be held that evening—in factories, workshops, government offices, barracks, universities, and naval stations. As their names were called the delegates went up to the platform, were formed into little parties under the care of an interpreter, and despatched from Smolny in motor-cars. I went with Albert Rhys Williams, who has written a jolly good book about Russia, and Jack Johnstone, of the Chicago Federation of Labour, and a Czecho-Slovak, and two Turks, to Stestoresk, thirty miles away from Petrograd, where we had a most wonderful time. And we all had splendid meetings; and those who got back in time went to the opera; and some of us may have gone to bed. And the morning of the next day was the Seventh of November.

Red Petrograd! Womb of the revolution—heroic city of conflict and achievement! There was a stir early next morning in Petrograd. The workers were assembling. Red banners came down the streets, bowing and lifting over moving masses of men. Bands came, and flags, and ever more flags, and long lines of workers; converging from a hundred different points into one great stream.

The rain came down upon the banners, and wet them so that they looked as though they had been soaked in blood. The snow began to melt, and we stood in the slush, ankle-deep, in the grey keen morning. The unevenly cobbled streets began to run with streams of water; they flowed over our frozen feet; and the rain and hail beat down upon us as we stood, for an hour, waiting for the start, as the tributary processions poured in, to join our main parade. For we weren't riding in motor-cars to-day, we honoured foreign visitors. We walked with the other workers, on the feast day of the Red City of Petrograd. No one suggested we should ride, of course; but God help the man who had done so!

We started, walking in rows of twelve, in the centre of the street. All traffic was stopped on our route. As far back as you could see there were banners; and as far forward as you could see.

We came to the great Uritsky Square, where the review was to be held. The delegates were hurried ahead of the procession, so that they might gain the reviewing-stand on the Square, past which the workers could march. But first we stopped—at the Place of the Dead. Here, at this mound, covered with flowers and red banners and ribbons, where were buried the Petrograd workers who had died in the revolution, we stopped to pay our tribute. The jests and comradely chaff died upon our lips. We stood there for a few minutes in complete silence. And then the bands played the Revolutionary Funeral Hymn.

Oh! Petrograd, your dead lived that day! They lived in our hearts and in our wills. Oh! Petrograd, your dead are immortal! Not in the trashy immortality of a priestly heaven, but for ever in the dynamic impulse of man to shatter and to create. The guns of Petrograd saluted a hundred and one times. Red banners

swept the dark sky, and the bands sobbed out their mourning music. The rain fell upon our uncovered heads as we stood at the place where you lie, oh! fallen comrades of ours! And your dust lived again and was our flesh; your words became our words; and your will was renewed in us, who shall carry forward your fight until that for which you died has conquered the world. Dead workers of Petrograd, heroes of poverty, we salute you, brothers; and go on, to fight, as you have fought, that the workers may all be free, and that we may be worthy of you and your deeds! Farewell, warrior comrades, we go to battle; and, if we die, may our end be as yours!

In the gigantic Uritsky Square a stand had been erected for the delegates. We took our places, and the march past began.

They came in at one end of the square, marched past the stand, and left at the other end. As they passed us they saluted and cheered. We stood there, our hats in our hands, receiving the greetings of the Petrograd proletariat who had come out, on their national revolutionary anniversary, to salute their comrades of the Communist International.

Wave after wave the mass came on. Bands and banners, the Internationale throbbing through the air. Communist Party branches, labour unions, factories, mills, schools, universities, workers, men and women, workers, workers, workers! They had been up since about five in the morning, getting everything ready; they were soaked to the skin; they had stood in the puddles of slush for hours. But they were laughing and cheering and singing. These men and women and children, poorly dressed, toil-stained, and haggard with the sufferings of the five years' blockade—they sang, and they marched erect, and hope was in their faces, and courage; and their march was a march of victory! And I remembered how Bill Haywood used to quote the words: "Beware of an army that sings." Yes, beware, you well-fed ladies and gentlemen in other countries, smug and secure in your palaces and parks, for their songs are sung not only in Russia, but are echoing round the world!

They passed on and on for hours. And their faces were raised towards us as they passed, and ever they cheered. And we cheered back. We were hoarse and cold. Our arms were so tired with waving back at them that we could hardly raise them. And, after a while, I no longer saw the individuals in the crowd—I saw only the crowd. Their identities melted, fused into one. They were no longer proletarians, they were The Proletariat. They were the mass become conscious and creative. They were Solidarity, one and indivisible, precursors of a new state of consciousness, which shall one day be realized as the final fruit of accomplished revolution, mass consciousness, articulate, and self-realizing.

From the Square we went to the hotel for a hurried meal, and then to the opening session of the Congress.

The great hall was full. We sat there for some time waiting. Then suddenly everyone stood up and cheered, and the band played the Internationale. Zinovieff came in and took his place at the red-covered table of the Presidium. And then Clara Zetkin, the white-haired heroine of the German workers. One after the other the leaders in the world class struggle took their places. Then there was silence. Zinovieff rose. Keen and sensitive, he stood for a moment facing the immense audience. Then:

"The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International is opened," he said simply, and took his place again.

There were no discussions at this opening session. This was the fraternization of the working classes of the world, through their representatives. Speaker after speaker rose and delivered the message of the workers of his country to the workers, peasants, soldiers and sailors of Red Russia. "We are with you, comrades of Russia," they said. "We are doing all we can to help you; and we are doing all we can that the workers of our own land may overthrow capitalism, as you have done." Some speakers had tales to tell of persecution, of imprisonment, and the White Terror; some had news of victories, of the organization of great Communist parties; others told how the movement, in the land from which they came, was still small, but that the comrades were loyal, and were working hard to win the workers from the errors inculcated by treacherous leaders. All mentioned the great capitalist offensive which had swept all countries. But they all sounded the note of hope. Revolution came to Russia, and the workers were freed. Revolution was possible. Working-class revolution was no longer a Utopian dream, but a definite thing to which the world, shattered by the great war, was inevitably tending. And, already, the workers were rallying from their post-war defeats, and were forming ranks to face the capitalist attack. The subject peoples of the East were arousing, and were preparing to enter upon a struggle with imperialism on a greater and more vigorous scale than ever before. Large numbers of organized workers in many countries had lost faith in their compromising union leaders, and were rallying to the Red International of Labour Unions. In Czecho-Slovakia and Germany great advances had been made along this line; and Great Britain and America were also securing gains.

It was a meeting of the General Staff of militant Labour. One after the other the representatives stood up, and gave the report of their sector of the world-wide fighting front. And they did not speak as mawkish sentimentalists, whining their cheap sympathy for the sufferings of the poor, nor as romantic dreamers, uttering pale longings for a vague Utopia, nor as smug politicians, bartering rhetoric for votes—but they spoke as soldiers in the midst of war, who had come to deliberate the next strategies in a conflict which would be hard and long enough, indeed, but of whose final victory they were assured.

The next day, the military parade. A long fleet of automobiles stood outside the hotel—the Hotel Europe, which was reserved entirely for us. This hotel, by the way, was leased from the State by its workers. It was run by the waiters, clerks, elevator boys, cooks and chambermaids. And when they were asked by the Comintern as to whether they would put us up, they agreed, and promptly gave their guests—speculators, bourgeois, foreign and native—respectful notice to quit within 24 hours.

I saw car after car leave, full of delegates, for the Uritsky Square. I did not know what was coming, so I wondered why we did not go by tram. My turn came. I climbed into a seat next to the chauffeur. Four comrades got in behind me, and we started.

How shall I describe that ride—that breath-taking cruise around the shores of an army?

Picture to yourselves the enormous Uritsky Square. Trafalgar Square would look like a back-yard next to it, and Union Square

would be lost in it. It was a great oblong, and in the middle of one of the long sides was the reviewing stand. And drawn up on the other three sides were soldiers. But soldiers were not just in the Square. In the boulevards which led from the Square there were more soldiers; so that the machine entered the Square, skirted the three sides, left by one boulevard, passed by a cross street into the other boulevard, and so back to the Square and to the stand.

That was what we had to face. As we got near the Square our driver motioned to us to stand up. We did so, but did not know why. We saw the comrades on the car in front of us also stand and take off their hats as they entered the Square. But we did not know why. We soon knew. We were to receive the salute of the Red Army.

Our car ran into the Square. We went on at an easy run, passing soldiers drawn up in perfect order, their officers standing at the salute. And as we passed each unit they cheered. And so a great deep-throated cheer rolled on from battalion to battalion, regiment to regiment, with us as we went. Infantry, artillery with their machine and heavy guns, cavalry with their lances fluttering with crimson bannerettes, armoured cars, tanks, mounted infantry, aerial corps, sailors, soldiers of every branch of the service—in their well-made, well-fitting and perfectly clean and new-looking uniforms, red flags to each company, and great red banners to each regiment—an ocean of brown, picked out with red. And still we went on, past half-a-mile of brown-clad youths, cheering, smiling—different from all other soldiers I had ever seen: not cowed nor stiff and lifeless like automatons, but, with all their strict formation, like a lot of jolly boys, enjoying what they were doing, and knowing they were free men. They had their representatives on all the local Soviets, these free soldiers, and on the Pan-Russian Soviet; they had a voice and a vote in matters military, and in the general running of their country. And they knew that they were fighting for Communism; and they knew that we were fighting for Communism. And so they liked us, and let us know it. Their faces were not expressionlessly rigid, like capitalism's conscripts, or the poor professional mercenaries of imperialism, for they looked up at us, as we went by, smiling broadly, with a youthful and exuberant friendliness. And their cheering was real cheering.

Out of the Square, along the boulevard, and past more soldiers. And the great cheer rolling on with us, dying as the car ahead of us passed, and then swelling again as we came by. Here was the young army, an army born in the struggle, and a young army in every sense, for there did not seem to be a soldier above twenty-five, and most were about twenty. And they were ours! They were for the defence of the people, and not of kings; they fought for the workers, and not for profits. Their hundred thousand bayonets were not made to conquer markets, but to free oppressed peoples. They were the new Crusaders, with armour and lance, who would wrest from the swinish rulers the New Jerusalem and establish it for ever.

They were our army—and I loved them! They were youth, smiling, gallant and gay, and ready to go through Hell for the revolution. They were guarding Russia, while the workers built her up. They stood on guard with their lives, while the workers built the new world. They, and the surging shabby parade of

the day before, were one great army—they were part of the new, cleansing wonder in the world, which is revolution. They were the Armed Proletariat, the word of power made flesh.

I felt awfully ashamed of myself. I was standing up in full view of these thousands. I was trying to smile back at them, but it must have been the rush of the wind which brought water to my eyes. It was very embarrassing. At a military parade one would look rather martial, I should think, when receiving a salute; and, at least, one should appear cheerful with all these smiling persons gazing at one. But then I was only a poor worker, tramp, sailor, reporter, who had been knocked on the head more than once and slammed into jail here and there, so I wasn't used to military reviewing—and then the wind was pretty strong. I looked at the auto ahead of ours. I could see my pal Harry, from England. He was standing up, of course, but was acting in a most unmilitary way. He held his hat in his left hand, and, with his right held stiffly to his forehead, was saluting! This was terribly wrong. One simply mustn't salute with one's hat off. But then Harry was probably perfectly unaware that he was saluting, or that his hat was off, or both. I know how he felt. I looked round at the fellows in my car. There was a young Turk there I had often chatted with. He was crying, openly and unashamedly. With a sense of relief I gave up trying to look martial.

And then we got back to the reviewing stand, and stood there for hour after hour, while the boys marched past.

That evening we became part of a legislative assembly. In other words, we had a joint session with the Petrograd Soviet. We marched into the hall, with its semi-circular rows of seats and desks, and mixed up with the members of the Soviet. The Soviet Presidium and the Comintern Presidium sat at the scarlet-draped table. The inscribed red banner of the Petrograd Soviet was held by a Red Guardsman, who stood with fixed bayonet. Workers, soldiers, peasants and sailors—deputies of the people—sat with us, fraternizing.

Speakers exchanged greetings. Soviet members told us of the value of that organ of power, the Soviet, the means by which the proletariat exercises its political will. We told them of the struggle of the workers in our countries, and that, one day, we hoped to see the representatives of the Russian workers received by the Soviets of our lands.

Then Clara Zetkin stood up and presented to the Petrograd Soviet a banner made by the Communist women of Leipzig. The long, scroll-like banner was unfurled, and, during the rest of the session, two Red soldiers stood below the Presidium holding, so that all might see, this flag which German working women had made with such love in the scanty time spared from factory and housework for the working class of far-away Petrograd.

We received presents from the workers of Petrograd, boxes of cigarettes—"Workers of the world, unite!" on the box in four languages—and useful notebooks for our work at the Congress. "We have not much ourselves, and cannot give fine presents," said the trade union speakers of Petrograd. "But what we can give, we give with love." And they spoke truth, for, through all, there shone that strong spirit of simple comradeship—that affection which somewhat puzzles me, for I cannot quite decide whether

it is a distinctly Russian trait, or whether it is a thing which the revolution will produce in all peoples.

And, then, from the Soviet session to the train for Moscow, where great doings were to be held next day.

Good-bye to Petrograd: the journey to the station in red-festooned street cars. The cheering workers at the station and the Red Guards' band playing the Internationale as our two trains steamed out.

Good-bye to Petrograd, flaming with red bunting, battle-scarred, suffering yet from hunger, deprived of so much by blockade, yet working heroically.

Good-bye to Petrograd, where your sacred dead lie sleeping in a red-flowered grave; and where your valorous living are working, with scarred hands and shining eyes, to build a world in which we shall one day live, prouder than kings, wiser than grey teachers, and as simply gay as young children.

THE HERITAGE OF THE BOLSHEVIKS

By G. Allen Hutt

(Very few people are aware that one of the important factors that impelled forward the Soviet revolution was the complete breakdown of Russian economic life in 1917. This fact has been carefully concealed by the White reactionaries and the Pink Labourists of the McDonald-Snowden type. The following informative contribution is based upon data furnished by the most unrelenting critics of the Soviet Government.—Editor of COMMUNIST REVIEW.)

OVER five years ago the Bolsheviks, the revolutionary vanguard of the Russian working class, backed by the general sentiment of the Russian toiling masses, seized power. The seizure of power involved the administration of the economic system of a vast country. In what condition was that economic system when the revolutionary working class became responsible for it? Were things all right, comparatively, before November, 1917, and did collapse come with the advent of the Soviet Government—as the bourgeoisie and their hangers-on, the Snowdens and such fry, would have us believe?

In formulating an answer to these questions it will be interesting—and will add strength to our answer—if we can draw our evidence from non-Bolshevik sources. Accordingly, the facts in this article are taken from two chief sources—the official British Government Report (Russia No. 1, 1921) and a book written by a gentleman named M. Nordman, called *Peace Problems: Russia's Economics*.* This M. Nordman was Director of the Economic Section of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Government, and lecturer in Political Economy at the Russian

* A sympathetic study containing valuable material for the subject of this article is Michael S. Farbman's *Russia and the Struggle for Peace*, published in 1918.

Naval Academy—altogether a most respectable person. His politics were probably liberal (of a sort), and he thinks the Bolsheviks are terrible people. If from the facts that he cites we can draw conclusions favourable to our Russian comrades, we shall indeed be proving our thesis out of the enemy's mouth.

Note first the *size* of Russia, coupled with the fact that vital raw materials were in far corners of the country—Donetz coal and iron, Turkestan cotton. Again, the centres of manufacture were far from the sources of raw materials—great metal works (*e.g.*, Putilov) being in Petrograd, textile factories in and near Moscow, for instance—sufficiently far from the Donetz basin or from Turkestan. So the various regions of the country were economically interdependent to a striking degree, with consequent vital importance of transport, particularly railway transport. The railways were rightly described as “the arteries of Russian economic activity.” Railway stoppages were like blockade to a maritime country. Even in pre-war times the seasonal overcrowding with freights at harvest time, and the resulting congestion of goods at railway centres, gave rise to great anxiety. Economically, then, Russia was an indivisible whole, an organic whole.

For manufactured goods Russia was dependent on foreign sources—to the tune of some 450 million roubles: and out of this total the Central Powers (Germany especially) were responsible for over 300 millions. So that when the war came its first effect was automatically to deprive Russia of nearly three-quarters of her imports of manufactures; and though the Allies to some extent filled the gap so far as military requirements were concerned, they provided nothing for the needs of the civil population.

The outbreak of war found Russia in an economically unstable position—the standard of living of the masses very low (the peasants' bread averaged half the army ration), and an extreme dependence on foreign imports both for the maintenance of industry and for the satisfaction of the needs of the population. Just before the war, in July, 1914, grave movements of discontent among the masses almost came to a head in something approaching a revolutionary crisis. The war brought the Baltic blockade, and the stoppage of supplies from the Central Powers. It also meant that, roughly, the whole Russian railway system west and south-west of Petrograd and Moscow passed under direct military control, and that all over Russia military transport (at first chiefly mobilisation) came first, and purely economic traffic was enormously reduced. Petrograd itself had to draw the supplies for its factories and the food for its swollen wartime population over *one* railway, the Nicholas Railway, from Moscow to Petrograd—which, it should be noted, was before the war reputed to be the most congested railway in the world. The war frantically overworked this already overworked line. To put the finishing touch to the appalling disorganisation of transport that now loomed before Russia, the numbers of skilled railway workers were very considerably reduced by their draft into the Army, sometimes for specialist units, sometimes *en bloc* into the ranks. Says the British official report: “The increasing demands of the Army were satisfied without regard to the importance of retaining the services of the highly-trained administrative staff and railway workers.” In a similar way skilled engineers were deflected in large numbers from the railway shops to munition works. So begins the tragic theme that runs on to, and through,

the March and November revolutions—the weakening and gradual decline of the Russian railway system. The most overwhelming example of the incredible way in which this decline was hastened is the story told of the rushing of reinforcements to some critical sector of the Russian front in trains running abreast on the up and down lines—two parallel streams of trains, trains racing neck and neck, train after train after train. There was no means of returning the empty trains when they had reached their destination, and more trains were continually coming up. So locomotives and coaches were toppled off the lines into the fields by the railway. The story is unbelievable: but it is true. The derelict locos. can be seen in the fields to this day.

As may be imagined, the War Department burdened production generally—as well as the transport system—with excessive demands: and the phenomenon common to all the belligerent countries, of the civil population going short for the sake of the needs of the Army, was witnessed in Russia—only far more acute in nature. The situation was rendered desperate by follies such as the slaughtering of thousands of cows for the Army meat ration.

The vast Russian mobilisation—so vast that the General Staff never knew how many men were actually, or nominally, under arms (the numbers were not less than 15,000,000)—was in effect a vast mobilisation of peasants: and this had great economic significance. It meant that Russian agriculture, primitive and wretched as it mostly was, deprived of much needful agricultural machinery by the blockade, was seriously depleted of the necessary man-power. Consequently, the difficulties of agricultural production increased tenfold. The price of corn began to rise. Commodities ran short in the villages, and they were much enhanced in price. The towns received preferential treatment at the hands of the authorities, notably in the distribution of butter supplies. The beginnings of a bitter antagonism between town and country began to be perceptible. The supply of rural produce to the towns was reduced; and by 1916 they were feeling the pinch badly—food got scarcer, prices rose higher—and war-weariness grew apace.

Russian industry proved quite inadequate to satisfy war needs, let alone the general needs of the population. The irrational system of mobilisation, already mentioned in the case of the railway workers, had a disorganising effect over the whole of industry—hundreds of thousands of workers, as the British Official Report admits, being drafted out of industry into the Army, where there was insufficient accommodation and neither arms nor equipment for them. Some wages rose, but they were soon passed by prices. While the paper industry was seriously embarrassed, metal works (as was only to be expected) did well. A few 1915 dividends, quoted by M. Nordman, show a remarkable increase on 1913: 8 per cent. became 18 per cent., 10 per cent.—25 per cent., 16 per cent.—42 per cent. With this growth of dividends went certain capital increases. The Petrograd Bourse was very active. In commerce, there took place an enormous increase of speculative trading. But these signs of activity were pathological—they manifested a feverish and unhealthy condition of the economic system.

The terrible disaster of the Russian forces in Galicia in 1915 drew attention to the vital need for industrial reorganisation if the

Russian defence was not to crumble entirely. So began the so-called mobilisation of industry. The net result, though at first some improvements were effected, was to make confusion worse confounded. The crude collectivism which was introduced never surmounted its initial defects in organisation, and the general incompetence and corruption are admitted by the British Official Report itself. The mobilisation of industry chiefly meant, as Michael Farbman has remarked, the heyday of the profiteer. Fabulous profits were quoted. It is true the Archangel railway was improved and the Murman railway constructed: but they were clogged by military supplies. Even when by superhuman efforts the military supplies improved, "the state of the civil supply," says M. Nordman, "was progressively deteriorating."

Then came the revolution of March, 1917—preluded by bread riots among the workers of Petrograd. On the surface, economic considerations were thrust into the background by the political struggle—the frantic attempts of reaction to recover itself, and the ever left-ward movement of the masses in the Soviets. But behind the shouts and the party cries the economic decline continued, and the downward rush to economic collapse was hastened.

The political weakness of the Provisional Government, the so-called "paralysis of authority," reacted perceptibly on the functioning of the economic system. Quite briefly, it meant that the attempts of the Provisional Government to organise the national economy were so feeble that they defeated their own ends. The masses were in a rising temper: and disputes of all kinds adversely affected production. Further, the masses, under the influence, as was only to be expected, of more or less syndicalist ideology, forced on the employing class scheme of workers' control which were haphazard and unco-ordinated. There was nothing of the "Single Economic Plan" that the Bolsheviks were later to emphasise so strongly: and casual, promiscuous, almost anarchist workers' control did not increase the productive efficiency of industry. The increase in prices became a mad soar higher and ever higher. By the end of 1917 the cost of living was five times as much as in 1916. Daily the food question grew worse. The dissolution of the army and the continuous stream of deserters from the front dislocated still further the unhappy railway system. And Nekrassov, the Minister of Ways and Communications, was foolish enough to introduce, at this highly critical period, when efficient centralisation was essential if the railways were to continue working at all, a system of devolution in railway administration. A typical result of this was that the Kazan Railway declared itself independent, and refused to take any orders from Petrograd! Industries were therefore starved of raw materials simply because the railways could not handle them. In September it was the opinion among railway officials that the condition of the railways was so appalling—so many locomotives were sick, etc.—that by the winter they would not be running at all. So the optimism of some capitalists, even in the summer of 1917 (and it must be admitted that, owing to the scarcity of goods, large profits were still rolling in), was a pretty hollow affair. The fundamental factors of decline were operating with increasing fatality.

The financial position was acute. M. Nordman admits that "without a decided reform, even by the middle of 1917 it was impossible to carry on Russian finances." Of the colossal military

budget only about sixty per cent. was covered by loans: all the rest came from over-issues of paper.

From the early days of the March revolution the peasants began to seize the estates of the landowners. This seizure was, even more than the beginnings of control in the factories, promiscuous and haphazard: its immediate result was a decrease in the area of land under cultivation, and a fall in the supply (already utterly insufficient) of agricultural produce. "The peasants," says the British Official Report, "ceased bringing their grain to the towns as a result of the fall in production and the great rise in the prices of manufactured goods," and further, "the disturbance of the balance of exchange between town and country was a general result of the events accompanying and following the February (March) revolution." It is sometimes supposed that the Bolsheviks were the first to antagonise the peasant by a policy of requisitions at fixed prices: as a matter of fact the Provisional Government initiated this policy, and the peasants were growling with discontent at it long before the Bolsheviks seized power.

To sum up: in Russia the old economic system was just ceasing to work. The machinery of production and distribution—railways, industry, agriculture—was clanking and groaning to a standstill. The antithesis that historic forces were called upon to solve, as an able review in the December (1921) *Labour Monthly* pointed out, was "Collapse or Communism?" To that inexorable demand of history the Bolshevik seizure of power gave answer. They inherited, as this article has tried to show, a bankrupt economic system. Whatever faults their worst enemies can ascribe to them, the overwhelming fact remains that they have maintained power with conspicuous success for five years of unheard-of struggles. To-day those same worst enemies can be heard whispering among themselves that without the Bolshevik revolution Russia would have passed into utter ruin and chaos.

FIVE YEARS OF REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA

By Clara Zetkin

I. Historic Importance of Soviet Revolution

AS five years ago, so to-day the Russian Revolution stands before us as the most formidable historic event of the present period. Scarcely had this giant stretched his mighty limbs, and had plunged into the stubborn and passionate struggle for his existence and further development, than cleavages occurred within the working class of all countries, which were more acute than they had ever been before. "Long live Reform," "Long live the Revolution!" Such was from all sides the reply to the call of the Russian Revolution. This situation gives to the Russian Revolution a quite definite and far-reaching significance. About the middle of the nineties of the last century a definite political orientation had arisen within the working class which was, so to speak, the ideological sediment of the imperialist capitalism and of its repercussion on the conditions of the working class. Theoretically, we called this orientation—*Revisionism*, and

in practice it was *Opportunism*. What was its nature? Its opinion was that the revolution had become superfluous and avoidable. The revisionists, the reformists of to-day, asserted that capitalism produces within itself the organisational forms which overcome or at least palliate the imminent economic and social conflicts, thus neutralising the theories of impoverishment, crises, and catastrophes. According to their conception, capitalism itself no longer created the objective factors of an indispensable and inevitable revolution. Owing to the same conception, another social factor of the revolution—the workers' will for revolution—was eliminated. It was asserted that democracy and social reform gradually undermine capitalism, that society would emerge from Capitalism into Socialism. This conception was repudiated in theory at the party conferences of the Social Democrats, the leading party of the Second International. It was rejected in 1903 and 1906 at the International Congresses in Paris and Amsterdam. Nevertheless, it became more and more the practice within the parties of the Second International. This was already apparent in the attitude of the Stuttgart, Copenhagen, and Basle Congresses on the questions of imperialism, militarism and the impending world war.

The world war broke out. The bourgeoisie of the belligerent countries philosophised with machine-guns, tanks, submarines and with aircraft, from which death and destruction was spread broadcast. During the course of the war it became quite evident that it was nothing less than a supreme crisis, that it would end in a terrible catastrophe of world capitalism. It is the bitter irony of history that during the process of the development of affairs, the majority of the organised working class of the highly developed capitalist countries clung to the anti-revolutionary theory, the theory of Reformism. This, on the outbreak of war, led to the ignominious failure of the Second International. The proletariat did not respond to the lesson of the world war by an International alliance for world revolution and for a general settlement of accounts with capitalism. On the contrary, it responded by the alliance of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie of their respective, so-called, *Fatherlands*. When at the conclusion of the world war, capitalism proved itself incapable of overcoming the catastrophe, when the bourgeoisie showed that it was unable and unwilling to reconstruct the world out of the chaos which had been created, the opportunist leaders of the working class clung all the more tenaciously to their theory of reformism. They said that Socialism and Communism will arise not out of the collapse of capitalism, but out of its reconstruction and its revival. They said that the evils and the sufferings of the war would be overcome and society restored not through revolutionary class struggle, but only through co-operation, through harmonious collaboration of the classes, in fact, through the bourgeois and proletarian coalition. Their slogan is not revolution for the establishment of society on a Communist basis, but an alliance with the bourgeoisie for the reconstruction of capitalism.

In this stifling atmosphere the Russian Revolution acted like a thunderstorm. The Russian proletariat was the first, and unfortunately is still the only one (apart from that in the small Soviet Republics which sprang up within the former Russian Empire) which drew logical and practical conclusions from the imperialist war and from the collapse of capitalism. The Russian Revolution commenced the actual liquidation of Revisionism, of

Reformism, the liquidation which will be finally accomplished by the World Revolution. The Russian Revolution has expressed quite clearly the will and determination of the proletarian masses to put an end to capitalism once and for all. It is the first mighty action of the world revolution which is the supreme judgment over capitalism.

The Mensheviki, the Social-Revolutionaries and their brothers outside of Russia have certainly assured the world that they represent the theory that the Russian Revolution is nothing but a small national affair, and must be kept within the limits of a purely bourgeois revolution. The aim must be reversion to the February (March) Revolution. There is no doubt whatever that the Russian Revolution gave expression to the historic conditions which, on Russian territory, made for the destruction of Tsarism and for the establishment of new political forms of government. At the same time, from the first day of its existence, the Russian Revolution proved itself to be not a small national affair, but rather a big affair of the world proletariat. It has shown that it cannot be forced into the narrow limits of a mere political bourgeois revolution, because it is the party of the powerful proletarian world revolution. The Russian Revolution has not only given expression to revolutionary social factors, the objective and subjective tendencies of which sprang up on Russian territory. It also gives expression to the social and revolutionary tendencies and forces of international capitalism and of the world bourgeois society. This is evident from the fact that the Russian revolution was an outcome of the world war, which was not a casual event, but the inevitable consequence of the economic and political world conditions under the domination of finance capital and of imperialist capitalism. The Russian revolution gives expression to all the economic, political and social conditions which were created by the imperialist world capitalism in Russia itself, as well as in other countries. Moreover, the Russian Revolution is the embodiment and the crystallisation of the proletariat of all countries. International revolutionary socialism, the spiritual and moral forces, were aroused by and are active in the Russian Revolution.

Thus, the Russian Revolution is to the world proletarian masses the supreme expression of the life, the strength and the firmness of the social factors of historic development, of the conscience, the will, the action and the struggle of the proletarian masses for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Communism. It has been asserted that the fact of the Proletarian Revolution having begun is due to the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie. It is said that it is only owing to the weakness of the bourgeoisie in Russia that the revolution has taken the formidable and menacing form it has. This is true, comrades, but only to a certain extent. I venture to say that the strength of the revolutionary will and of the revolutionary actions of the Russian proletariat, which, imbued with the revolutionary spirit, and having received its ideological training from the Bolshevik Party, became the arbiters of the world's destiny, were more important factors in making Russia the birth-place of the revolution than the weakness of the bourgeoisie. My conception is borne out by the fact that the Russian proletariat was certainly able, at the outbreak of the revolution, to overpower and overthrow the comparatively weak Russian bourgeoisie. The further triumph of the revolution, its continuance during five years, every day of

which was a day of struggle against the powerful world bourgeoisie, is a proof that there was something stronger and more decisive operating in the Russian Revolution than the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie; it was the strength, the passionate determination, the perseverance, in fact, the determined will for revolution which inspired the proletarian masses under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

It was clear from the beginning that the Revolution in Russia could not be a bourgeois revolution, in view of the character of its most important social factor, the proletariat, and of the nature of the revolution itself. Louder and louder was the demand: peace through revolution! the land for the peasants! workers' control of production, and, above all, the slogan: all power to the Soviets! Such demands are incompatible with a bourgeois revolution. It is true that these demands were kept in the background at first, and did not attain their full significance during the February (March) Revolution. But they gained ground, became more influential, and from mere propagandist watchwords they evolved into objects for struggle.

The bourgeoisie was prepared for this revolution. It was strongly organised in the Zemstvos, the Dumas of the large towns, and in many economic unions and leagues which sprang up during the world war. The Russian proletariat, on the other hand, had no revolutionary fighting organisation. It created them in the course of the revolution in the shape of Soviets. It is significant that the Soviet did not at first initiate the struggle on a revolutionary basis, for revolutionary aims and with revolutionary determination. In the beginning the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries played the most important rôle in them. They fostered within the Russian proletariat the spirit which makes for reformism and for the voluntary relinquishing of power to the bourgeoisie, viz., the fear of responsibility and lack of confidence in its own strength. It is significant that the conference of 82 delegates of workers' and soldiers' soviets, which met in Petrograd in 1917, brought forward a resolution which said that the struggle between capital and labour must take account of the conditions created by the war situation and by the still incomplete revolution. The form of the struggle must be determined by these conditions. The faintheartedness of the Russian proletariat, even of its best elements, those who are organised in the trade unions, was expressed in the Third Conference of the All-Russian Trade Unions which took place on the 20th of June of that year. This conference revealed the growing influence of the Bolshevik Party, as the revolutionary party of the proletariat. Among other radical demands was that for working class control of production. But, they added, the proletariat cannot alone accept the responsibility for the control of national economy. This task is so difficult, so complicated, that all productive elements, all sections of the population must be drawn into its workings. This position of the organised workers is a sign of the coalition policy between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, which has been carried on by the petty bourgeois, reformist, Socialist, and Social Revolutionary parties since the March revolution.

This was in truth and in deed bourgeois politics, the democratic expression of capitalist class rule. Instead of peace, they had the June offensive, instead of satisfying the land hunger of the pea-

sants they were shooting down the rioting mujiks ; instead of control of production for the restoration of national economy they had the renunciation of all social reforms, and the exploitation and sabotage of industry through the capitalists and their opposition to the demand for *All Power to the Soviets*. The democracy in its struggle against the revolutionary working class soon revealed what value it placed upon its principles. It revealed itself more and more as the undisguised class rule of the bourgeoisie, merging into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The coalitionist, socialistic, petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals, allied with the bourgeoisie, did not wish to go beyond the limits of a bourgeois political revolution; this brought us to the verge of a dictatorship, even in the month of September. And behind the dictatorship, whether it be a militarist one or one of Kerensky—it matters not—there loomed the restoration of Tsarism.

In this moment the proletariat, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, sprang into the arena. They chased the beautiful government of "pure democracy" to the devil, and centred all the State power in the Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Soviets, through whose representatives a Provisional Government was established. In this decisive historical moment, the proletariat proved that it had lost its doubt in its own power and gained courage with which to assume the responsibilities of carrying out the tasks of destroying an old world and building up a new one.

II. Daring and Doing

The Russian proletariat was the first, and until now the only working class which has ceased being the object of history. *It no longer suffers history to mould it, but it creates history.*

The seizure of power by the proletariat, under the leadership of the Bolsheviki, taught us one great lesson. It is the necessity and the significance of power during a revolution, even by a minority. But this lesson of the Russian Revolution draws a very sharp distinction. It shows how wrong historically are our little book-keeper politicians, those who want to reduce the revolution to a sum in addition and subtraction, those glib talkers who believe that the struggle for the seizure of power by the working class should only be undertaken when conditions "allow," namely, those who wish to secure such a majority for the revolutionary struggle that its result is a foregone conclusion. This conception reduces the idea of revolution to that of an insurance company in good standing which pays promptly, and in gold at that. These misconceptions were shattered by the Russian revolution.

But the revolutionary action of the proletariat of Petrograd and Moscow also excluded all romantic putsch adventures. It was not the act of an intrepid little party which, without any close connection with the proletarian masses, launched revolutionary slogans and formulæ into the void. No, the revolutionary acts of the Bolsheviki was the heroic deed of an organised minority party which had already assured itself of contact with the masses on an extensive scale, and which was deeply rooted in the masses.

In history the seizure of power by the Soviets under the leadership of the Bolsheviki, appears as a brilliant isolated deed, as though it were accomplished at one stroke. But such was not the case. This intrepid deed was preceded by months of the most zealous and tenacious propaganda and organisation work by the

Bolsheviki among the masses. Not only was the support of the broad masses assured them through this struggle, but the Bolshevik war-cries were understood by the masses, and they made them their aims of struggle.

So the act of revolution was not a revolutionary acrobatic feat of a daring little party, but a revolutionary deed of the great revolutionary masses.

The most decisive factor was the daring; whether it would be victory or defeat could in no way be foretold. But they neither could nor would forgo the attempt. He who wishes to postpone a revolutionary act until the victory is certain, postpones victory to the days of St. Never, since he thus not only declines the revolutionary struggle, but actually renounces the revolution. The revolutionary work of a party can be ever so skilful and its propaganda ever so diligently spread among the proletarian masses, yet victory is never assured. *One must dare in order to win.* The Bolsheviki, the revolutionary proletariat, won the fight in the Russian revolution in their first daring uprising only because they had the courage to dare.

That is the lesson of the Russian revolution, which the workers of all countries must take to heart.

It is well to look before you leap, but don't be so occupied in looking that you forget to leap. The preliminary period of preparation before the Revolution is only for the strengthening of our forces, so that we may advance.

As soon as the Russian workers, supported by the Russian peasants, had seized political power and were proceeding to build up their dictatorship through the Soviet system, another historical truth came to light. It was the truth which Engels expressed in a letter to Bebel of December 11th, 1884, in complete refutation of the babblings of the reformists of all countries—that democracy is the only road by which the emancipation of the proletariat may be attained. Engels knew that on the day of the revolutionary crisis and after the revolution, the proletariat could have no more furious and bitter enemies than the “pure democrats.” But let me read this quotation to you:—

“Pure democracy, in the period of revolution, may assume new importance as the last safety anchor. That is why the so-called feudal bureaucratic forces (in the period from March to September, 1848) supported the liberals, in order to keep the revolutionary masses down. In any case, our only enemy in the day of crisis and afterwards will be the reactionary forces grouped around the pure democracy; and this, I believe, should not be lost sight of.”

It is remarkable that the reformist gentlemen—those gentlemen who are so busy in using Marx and Engels to oppose the Russian Revolution and the conception of the proletarian revolution, those gentlemen who are so busy singing in many tongues the praises of democracy—these gentlemen seem to have forgotten completely this particular view of Engels. The Russian revolution has plainly shown how correct Engels was. Even on the very day of the revolution and in the time immediately following the establishment of Soviet Power, the democrats came forward as the bitterest enemies of proletarian class rule. This “pure democracy” was regarded by

the Russian proletariat since the revolution as the class rule of capital, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

The solution advocated by the democrats in their struggle against Soviet rule, was the *Constituent Assembly* as opposed to the Soviets. The democrats, opposed to the Soviet power which was the creation of the revolution, demanded the Constituent Assembly.

The democrats had had about eight months in which to elect and assemble the Constituent Assembly. But they did not do this, neglecting to carry into life what they had characterised as the purest expression of the will of the people. Why? The Constituent Assembly could not have assembled without raising the menacing spectre of the proletarian and peasant revolution. There was the spectre of the agrarian revolution in the form of the peasants' cry for land and peace. There was the danger of the proletarian revolution in the control of production. Therefore, the democrats continually postponed, first the election of the Constituent Assembly, and then its convocation.

Then suddenly, the demand for the Constituent Assembly was made the battle cry of the pure democrats, in order to overthrow the Soviet power. The Constituent Assembly was declared to be something sacred, the only way by which a proper system of government could be created. The petty bourgeois socialists, the reformists, in alliance with the bourgeois parties in all countries, were not the only ones to demand the Constituent Assembly. This demand found an echo even in our own revolutionary ranks. I wish to remind you that no less a person than the great theoretician of Communism, Rosa Luxemburg, at one time put forward the same demand, namely: the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets as backbone of the proletarian State. The significance of this demand may be seen from the fact that it made its appearance again a short time ago. During the Kronstadt uprising a section of the Social-Revolutionaries, and even the leader of the Cadets raised this cry for a Constituent Assembly and the Soviets—but naturally Soviets without Communism, in other words, without action. . . .

But, aside from this, what was the situation after the conquest of power by the proletariat? Is there any justification for the opposition to the revolutionary government which still exists in certain circles of the working class on account of its having disbanded the Constituent Assembly when it first met in council on January 5th? Let us examine the circumstances carefully. The Constituent Assembly declared from the very start that it did not intend to co-operate with the Soviets, but to oppose them. It denied the right of the Soviets as a state power, thereby denying the revolution itself. The Social Revolutionists, the Menshevik and the bourgeois majority, refused to recognise the Soviet Power. They even refused to discuss the question. The Bolsheviki in the Constituent Assembly, and with them the Left Wing of the Socialist Revolutionaries, answered this arrogant declaration of war as it should have been answered. They left the Constituent Assembly, and the Soviets declared the Assembly dissolved and had it dispersed.

Many critics of the Russian revolution among the European and American proletariat acknowledged the correctness of this policy of the Bolsheviki which was really the policy of the revolution.

The Soviet power was justified in dispersing the Constituent Assembly, which had been elected under different conditions and no longer represented the views and the will of the large masses of the working class. The subsequent elections to the Soviet proved this definitely. But, said these critics, the Soviet Government should at once have proceeded with new elections. New elections, however, were not to be thought of, not only for technical reasons which were then advanced, such as the bad state of the means of transportation, the disconnection between the centres of political life, and the far-off districts of the country, and the resulting impossibility to elect an Assembly which would really represent the will of the people. There were other reasons of deeper historical and political significance against it. To call a Constituent Assembly, and to place the decision as to the form of Government in its hands would have been nothing less than to deny the right of the Soviet Power and of the revolution itself. What could possibly be the role of the Constituent Assembly acting beside the Soviets? Should the Constituent Assembly be merely a deliberating body and the decisions left in the hands of the Soviets? This would not have agreed at all with the demands for a "pure democracy." The "pure democracy" would not be content with an advisory capacity, it wanted to rule. But the Soviet Power could not allow itself to become reduced to an advisory body. The Russian proletariat could not have shared its power with the bourgeoisie after the revolution had placed it entirely in its hands. Such a dual government could not exist long; this dualism would have led inevitably and very soon to a struggle for power between the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets. The work of the revolution would have been endangered. The existence of the Constituent Assembly beside the Soviets would have given the counter-revolution a rallying point to carry on its illegal and legal work against the revolution. Therefore, down with the Constituent Assembly, all power to the Soviets! This was the only possible slogan if the political power were to remain in the hands of the proletariat.

Another measure of the Russian revolution aroused the indignation of the critics of the Russian revolution, namely, the Soviet Electoral Law. This electoral law, as is well known, limits the right of suffrage in so far as it denies it to all exploiters. Employers of labour can neither vote nor be elected to office. Outside of these, all workers, be it with brain or with hand, above 18 enjoy the suffrage right. This limitation of the suffrage right was necessary for the political expropriation of the bourgeoisie. The Soviet regime places the State power in the hands of the working masses. In shops and in all villages, they elect representatives of the Soviet. Since the bourgeoisie can neither vote nor be elected to office, there was no danger that they might regain any portion of the political power.

Some people have said that the refusal of the suffrage right was a petty measure which deterred many creative talents from working for the reconstruction of the new order. Of course, the number of bourgeois who lost their suffrage right was very small; but its social and economic power was still considerable. The proletariat, in fighting for power, could not give to the bourgeoisie even the smallest particle of its political power and political rights.

Furthermore, the denial of the suffrage right was a brandmark of social contempt. He who did not work, he who existed as the exploiter and parasite in society, had no right to decide upon the political and social structure of the new regime.

There is another consideration why the Soviet power deprived the exploiting class of the right to vote. The suffrage right is the political and legal expression of the character of a society. The right to vote shows the economic basis of the society, the right and power of its various classes. The spread of suffrage into the bourgeois order after their revolution meant only that political rights and political power passed from the old feudal land owners to the capitalist exploiters. It suffered property, income and tax limitations. The introduction of universal suffrage meant that a new class was rising besides the owning class, that of the producers. Universal suffrage means that in addition to property, human labour and the social services of the individual are also rewarded by political power and political rights. The Soviet Regime, however, does not base its social order on the division of power between bourgeoisie and proletariat, between the owning and labouring classes but upon the working class alone. In accordance with this character of the Soviet Government as a workers' government, the suffrage right could be granted only to the workers, but not to the employers.

III. Rise of Red Army

It was not sufficient that the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the Soviet Republic, be created on paper in so and so many paragraphs. It had to become an actual fact. This could be achieved only in the fight against the bourgeoisie, and the counter-revolution. The Soviet State had to defend itself from the very first day of its existence, not only against the Russian bourgeoisie, but also against the bourgeoisie of the whole world. It had to fight the counter-revolution at home and on all fronts. The young proletarian power had to be defended against both internal and external enemies.

The first word of the Soviets was the word of peace. But not peace in a pacifist sense, as I will show later. Soviet Russia demobilised, retired from the world war.

But what was the answer it received to its word of peace? The armies of the German Imperialists, in whose ranks were the Social-Democrats, with the Erfurt program in their knapsacks, hurled themselves on Petrograd and invaded the Ukraine and other territories. The Entente launched an attack upon the Soviet power and rendered political, financial, and military assistance to the counter-revolution.

A Red Army had to be created if the Soviet power was to be saved. It meant the organisation and use of force against force.

Besides the Red Army, which was one of the forms of the force called for the defence of the existence and independence of the Workers' Government on the battlefield, there was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the Terror. Both these forms of force were an unavoidable historical necessity, as harsh weapons of self-defence if the Soviet State was to survive and develop.

Because of the influence of reformist leaders there are still large masses of the working class who do not understand the historical necessity and the real nature of Terror. They abuse the Red Army

as an expression of Soviet Imperialism; they were especially indignant over the "barbarism" of the Terror. But let us look at things as they really are: The Red Terror was the answer of the Russian revolution to the White Terror of the more powerful bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie not only attempted to destroy the political power of the workers by plots and insurrections, it also used its whole influence to prevent the reconstruction of the social and economic life of the country. The Soviet Terror was nothing but an unavoidable policy of self-defence. The task of the Russian revolution was that which Karl Marx had designated in his treatise "*The Class War in France*" as the first duty of any revolution; it had to destroy its enemy. Besides destroying the enemy, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Terror had still another task—to discourage the counter-revolution, to rob it of its last hope of ever re-establishing the rule of the exploiters.

A revolution is not a young maiden wandering in white robes with a green palm in her hand. It could only come armed with shield and sword to oppose its enemies.

The acts of terror of the proletarian dictatorship are not arbitrary acts of the revolution. They had a big purpose. It was an evil to prevent a worse evil. The Terror was a necessary act of self-defence. Some weep over the hundreds, the thousands who have fallen in the civil war as victims of the Terror. Some tear their hair in despair over the strangulation of democracy, and bourgeois liberties by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, by the Terror. But no one speaks of the tens of thousands who have fallen as victims of the counter-revolution. No one speaks of the tens of thousands more who would have met the same fate had it not been that the counter-revolution was defeated by force! None of the reformists mention the fact that were it not for the severe measure of the revolution, millions and millions would still be suffering from the barbarian capitalist oppression and exploitation, the prey of misery and death.

The Soviet power could not possibly dispense with the use of force for its defence and maintenance. Utterly erroneous, however, is the contention of our reformist and bourgeois opponents that the Soviet power exists thanks to force alone. The State cannot maintain power for long with the aid of bayonets. The eight months of coalition government in Russia, and especially the months of the Kerensky régime of Social-Revolutionaries, gave ample proof of this. The statement applies especially to an epoch of revolution, in which days count as months and years as decades or centuries. The Soviet Power had to justify its existence by an active policy.

The international trend of Soviet policy occupies the foreground in this connection. It secured unequivocal expression in the attitude of the Soviet Power towards the problems of war and peace. Peace was the first demand of the proletarian state. Doubtless the cry for peace was largely rooted in the poverty the war had engendered; it was under the pressure of poverty that the peasant and proletarian masses clamoured for peace. But another, and certainly quite as strong a factor in the demand for peace, was the consciousness of the international revolutionary solidarity of the workers of the world. In *The Class War in France*, Marx wrote: "The Social revolution was proclaimed in France, but it could not be achieved there. The Social revolution, speaking generally, cannot be achieved inside of national barriers."

From the very outset this conviction was the leading motive of the Russian revolution, of Bolshevik revolutionary policy. Among the first decrees of the provisional government came an appeal to other governments and nations on behalf of peace. This appeal made it perfectly plain that those who issued it were not under the spell of bourgeois pacifist illusions, but were demanding peace as a revolutionary act of the first step to the World Revolution. In particular, the workers of Germany, Great Britain and France, were reminded that they had already done great and valuable services for humanity, and that it behoved them, therefore, to do their duty now by the deliverance of mankind from the miseries of war.

The appeal of the Soviet Republic for peace by way of the proletarian revolution was lost in the void; peace and the revolution will never again be obtainable upon such easy terms as were then possible, had there been in other countries a prompt continuation of the Proletarian revolution. A whole year of crimes, of horrors, of the wastage of life and property, would have been spared. Most important of all, the proletarian masses were then in possession of armed power, which they could have turned with deadly effect against the exploiting class.

Peace, however, was not brought about by the World revolution. The Soviet Republic was forced to make peace with the Zweibund—the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. This Peace greatly accentuated the difficulties of the internal situation of the young proletarian State. The Social-Revolutionaries, the most compactly organised power of the counter-revolution in Soviet Russia, made this peace the pretext for scandalous incitements against the Soviet Power, declaring that the Soviet Power was responsible for the military collapse.

But what was the real state of affairs? The young Soviet State had to pay for the crimes and follies of the Kerensky Government's June offensive by accepting the severities and humiliations of the Brest-Litovsk Peace. It had to pay for the imperialism of "pure democracy." A more specific attack on the part of the Social-Revolutionaries, the counter-revolutionists, was their assertion that by the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, the Soviet Power had strengthened German or Hohenzollern militarism at the expense of the "democracy" and "Kultur" of Entente Imperialism.

In reality Brest-Litovsk was for German imperialism the direct route to Versailles and the Peace of Versailles. The victory mania of German imperialism flamed fiercely. All the forces of the Central Powers were staked upon the war. Then ensued the collapse of German militarism and German imperialism. Now, among the forces leading to this collapse we must unquestionably include the Russian revolution, and its example, as one of the strongest factors in undermining the will to war of the German and Austrian armies. When the German proletarians began to refuse to be bled any longer upon the battlefields for the benefit of the German bourgeoisie, the first halting word expressive of a renunciation of the war was the demand for soldiers' councils. When the military collapse culminated in political revolution, the first words of the German revolution were "Workers' and Peasants' councils." Whence did the working masses of Germany take this watchword of revolution? They had learned it from the Russian revolution.

Unfortunately these revolutionists were content with the first

letters of the revolutionary alphabet. The German proletariat had not as yet learned to read the book of revolution fluently. It had not learned what the Russian workers and peasants, "backward and illiterate," had been taught in eight months by the capitalist policy of the coalition governments. Four years later, the lesson is still unlearned. The German workers handed back to the bourgeoisie the political power concentrated in the councils. Instead of the dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy was established, in other words, the class rule of the bourgeoisie. For the time being, therefore, there was no fulfilment of the hopes of the Russian revolutionary leaders that the world revolution was going to run a rapid course. The counter-revolutionaries twitted the Bolsheviki for their conviction that the Russian revolution was merely to be the prelude to the imminent world revolution.

Mockery is easy enough, but there is no justification here for the jibe. The leaders of the Russian revolution recognised very clearly the trend and the aim of the incipient world revolution. As to the tempo, they may have been mistaken. Why? The aims and the trend of any historical development are plainly discernible. They are displayed by the working of the objective forces of society. But the tempo depends mainly upon the subjective energies of the historical process; that is to say, in the case we are now considering, upon the revolutionary consciousness and activities of the proletarian masses. In the estimate of this factor so many improbabilities are concerned that it is impossible to prophesy confidently concerning the tempo of the world revolution. But what the wisecracks of universal history stigmatised as an error of calculation has become one of the strongest motive forces maintaining the persistent energy of the Russian revolution. This error of calculation has been ten times, a hundred times, more fruitful in its influence far beyond the boundaries of Soviet Russia than all the would-be clever recipes of the self-satisfied calculators. The inviolable conviction that the world revolution must progress, that it would complete what had been begun on Russian soil—this conviction gave the Russian proletarians the confidence, the religious faith in the world revolution and in the revolutionary solidarity among the workers of all lands which still keeps the masses of Soviet Russia fresh, enthusiastic in the fight, eager for work, bold and resolute, after five years of fierce struggle.

IV. Economic Reconstruction

Let us pass from the peace policy of the Russian revolution to its economic policy. The economic policy was to create the steadfast energy of the revolutionary proletariat. It was to revolutionise society.

From the first the revolution turned its proletarian side outwards. Its economic policy had to manifest a tendency towards the Communist goal. If the political Soviet power aims at realising Communism, it must abolish private property in the means of production. Nor would this suffice. It must reorganise the whole economic structure of society, purposely in the Communist direction. This was a mighty task, and the attempt to solve it has exposed the tragic side of the Russian revolution. The tragedy lies in this, that there is a contrast between the clear and passionate will to realise Communism here and now, in all its perfection, and the

weakness and backwardness of the existing economic and social conditions under which this will have to operate.

If we wish to understand the economic policy of the Russian revolution, we must form a clear mental picture of the economic and social forces that were available for achieving a Communist transformation of the proletarian State. What were the forces upon which the Russian revolution could count for the economic transformation of society into a Communist society? In contradiction to Utopianism, Marxism starts from the view that the foundation of the social revolution must be supplied by the highest attainable economic-technical development, which shall have brought about a titanic growth of productive energies, and shall have created the most perfect instruments and methods, for the performance of productive work. On the other hand, economic evolution must have brought into being a proletariat comprising the immense majority of the population, a proletariat of hand and brain workers that shall be competent to fulfil the economic and social tasks of effecting the transformation of capitalism to Communism.

What was the position of Soviet Russia in these respects? The Soviet State, in its economic and social structure, may be compared to a pyramid which the revolution has inverted and balanced upon its apex. This pyramid is supported by a youthful, backward, poorly developed system of machine industry; and by a proletariat which is likewise youthful, comparatively, numerically speaking, little trained, young in capacity to deal with the apparatus of production, to manage and guide it, to use its productive powers to the full—and comparatively inexperienced, likewise in the management of affairs of state. This apex of the inverted pyramid has to support the enormous masses of a peasant agriculture, a peasant population continuing to till the soil by methods which (as Rosa Luxemburg once said) “date back to the days of the Pharaohs.” And, of course, these peasants have a mentality appropriate to the tenor of their lives.

When we realise the state of affairs, we cannot but say, “It is a miracle that this inverted pyramid is still standing, although for five years all the powers of the counter-revolution have been endeavouring to overthrow it.” In the long run, however, the position may be untenable. The most expert juggler could not save such a pyramid from falling unless perhaps the heavy masses of the erstwhile base should crush the slender apex beneath their weight.

There would seem to be only two ways of saving the situation. We might hope that the narrow support of the proletariat should undergo a growth so rapid and extensive as to enable it to withstand all the pressure from above. Or, again, the narrow support might be buttressed from without by the progress of the world revolution by the establishment of Soviet republics outside the Russian Soviet State. Let us suppose that the Russian proletariat were in a position to find other Soviet States with the highest degree of economic development and (to use bourgeois phraseology) at the highest possible level of culture; suppose that the world proletariat in fraternal solidarity with Soviet Russia were able speedily to expand and to consolidate the same apex on which the inverted pyramid of Soviet Russia stood, it could thus have accelerated the transformation to Communism.

This did not happen; no such Soviet State came into being.

The result was that the Russian revolution and the Russian proletarian State which the revolution had created had to come to terms with the foreign capitalists. This *modus vivendi* is the New Economic Policy, and when we are appraising it we must never forget the peculiar Russian conditions under which it came into being. We must not judge it as if the measures that have been adopted formed part of an elaborated plan for the social revolution, carefully thought out in some professor's study. The criticism of our judgment must be whether these measures are suitably adapted to circumstances which were not freely chosen, but were given as such; whether they are steps likely to lead in the Communist direction; whether the measures are taken with Communism as their goal.

It is, above all, from this point of view that we must judge the Bolshevist agrarian policy, which has been so adversely criticised by the reformists and by bourgeois adversaries, but has also been sharply criticised by some members of our own party.

I must dwell for a moment upon this matter of the agrarian policy. It is, of course, impossible here to go into details, but an understanding on broad lines is essential to an understanding of the Russian revolution, and is, moreover, of extreme importance as an aid to the solution of the problems which the world proletariat will have to face everywhere after the conquest of political power—although under somewhat different conditions from Soviet Russia. Logical enough, after their fashion, are those Mensheviks who condemn the Russian revolution on principle because of its agrarian policy. Whether they are justified in calling themselves Marxists is another story.

When we appraise the Bolshevik agrarian policy, we have to remember that capitalism, despite the manifold means at its disposal, has hitherto been powerless to make an end of petty peasant agriculture and to replace it by higher forms. Capitalism has proletarianised, to a great extent, the petty peasant farming of extensive regions and even of whole countries. But petty peasant agriculture has persisted none the less. I do not think only of the Balkan lands, whose characteristics are still predominantly those imposed by petty peasant agriculture; nor is the assertion applicable solely to the petty peasant masses in Italy and France. In Germany, a country where industrial development is far advanced, there is still an extensive stratum of small peasants. Even in the U.S., there are numerous small peasant farms, though, of course, here when we speak of "small farms" we must apply an American, not a European, standard.

Now, then, can it be expected that in the Russian revolution, that the Bolshevik agrarian policy, should in a moment succeed in making an end of petty peasant agriculture? In view of the numerical strength of the peasant population of Russia, it is impossible for the Revolution to make good without an agrarian policy that should commend itself to the peasant masses in Russia, where 80 per cent. of the population are small peasants, nine-tenths of whom are estimated to be working peasants. The revolution, the seizure of political power by the proletariat, would have been absolutely impossible in defiance of the will of those peasant masses. I will go further: a revolution would have been impossible without the active support of those masses. Whoever desired the proletarian

revolution in Russia must perforce swallow the Bolshevik agrarian policy. You could not have done the one without the other.

One of the decrees of the Provisional Government was the abolition of private property in land. The right to till the land was conceded to all persons without distinction of sex, who themselves worked as cultivators. There was a period during which the great estates were being broken up by the peasants in a wild chaotic fashion ; at this time the farming implements and the farm stock of the large landed estates were distributed in like fashion. There came a period when an attempt was made to carry out land distribution in accordance with fixed rules, to avoid the parcelling of large estates, and to effect the deliberate transformation of petty farming into a general system of national farming. This was one of the phases of War Communism, "with its requisitions," etc. Land hunger had made them strong supporters of the Soviet power. The consequences of this agrarian revolution were not those which Rosa Luxemburg had feared, namely, that the Russian mujik would succumb to political indifference. He did not sit down by his fire-side as soon as he had secured his little plot of land. His land hunger satisfied, he became the heroic defender of the Soviet Republic. He defended his plot of land within the Soviet State against any possible return of the landowner. At the same time the expectations of the leaders of the Russian revolution were not realised. The distribution of land did not contribute toward intensifying class contrast in the rural districts, and did not bring over the poor peasant masses to the side of the industrial proletariat, for common action in the class conflict between the capitalists and the workers. A large class of middle peasantry arose whose interests soon came into conflict with the policy of "military Communism." These middle peasants held in their hands the food and the arms, and thus they forced the introduction of the New Policy, the chief characteristic of which is the food tax in lieu of the compulsory delivery of all agricultural products, minus the necessary existence ration. They forced the introduction of free trade, and in connection with it the other well-known innovations.

It has been said that the Bolshevik agrarian policy is not Communistic, that it leads away from Communism, and that it is in direct opposition to the task of the Soviet State, which should consist in preparing and carrying out the Communist revolution ; worse still, the critics contend that it is barring the way to this revolution. What is the real state of affairs? First of all, was it possible to carry out an agrarian revolution resulting in the preservation of large land estates tending towards large scale farming and the introduction of the modern methods of agriculture? Those who assert this do not know what they are talking about. Agriculture in Soviet Russia is characterised by the small peasant farms. At the beginning of the revolution, big agricultural concerns worth mentioning were to be found only in Poland, in the Baltic provinces and in some parts of the Ukraine. What does this mean for the solution of the agrarian question as recommended by the old socialist prescriptions? There was no apparatus for agricultural production capable of carrying on agriculture on a large scale. Moreover, there was no real modern rural proletariat capable of manipulating and managing such an apparatus of production. It is very characteristic that in Russia we hear continually of a "poor peasant-

try," but never of an agricultural proletariat. Such a proletariat, in the true sense of the word, does not exist. Big agricultural estates that did exist were managed by the land owners according to the old feudal system, and not according to the methods of modern capitalism, with the exception of a few estates owned by "liberal" members of the nobility. Thus it was out of the question that the agrarian policy of the Russian revolution should be initiated by the establishment of large scale agricultural production. As things stood (taking also into consideration that the Central Power was not very strong at the beginning)—the agrarian reform had to be, strictly speaking, the work of the peasant masses themselves, and could not help being chaotic.

Is it true that the Bolshevik agrarian policy is putting unsurmountable obstacles in the way of the development of agriculture in the direction of Communism? I cannot admit this. It is true that the "ingrained ownership psychology" is still prevalent among the small peasantry in Soviet Russia. In many cases this psychology has been strengthened and consolidated; for how long, that is another question. This alleged ingrained petty bourgeois peasant mentality was not the only factor in the rebellion of the peasants against the measures of military Communism. The land hunger turned the peasants into adherents and defenders of the Soviet State. The unsatisfied hunger for manufactured goods drove them away from Communism and made them counter-revolutionary. In what form did Communism present itself to them? Not as solidarity between town and village, between the industrial proletariat and the small peasantry; but as "military Communism," which took away everything from the peasantry without giving it the necessaries of existence and agricultural production. Therefore, we are justified in assuming that the Soviet economic policy will not be confronted with an unsurmountable anti-Communist opposition on the part of the peasants, if industrial production is raised. In judging of the small peasant psychology, we must not leave out of consideration that the old traditions of primitive village Communism have not yet died out among the Russian small peasantry. These traditions have been preserved and strengthened by a primitive, religious attitude regarding property as belonging to God, as God's property. This belief has been encouraged by the propaganda of the Tolstoyans, the Social-Revolutionaries, the Narodniki, and of many religious sects. These relics of a Communist orientation are systematically nurtured and furthered by the measures taken by the proletarian State. Notwithstanding the new policy, the land has not become the private property of the peasant. It has remained the property of the proletarian State. The peasants receive it for use, but can neither sell it nor leave it to their heirs. The exploitation of hired labour is prohibited. Moreover, the small peasant farms have been linked up with the general national economy, not only by the food tax, but also by a number of decisions, regulations and instructions concerning the agricultural exploitation of the land. The Soviet Government is deliberately and systematically directing the development of agriculture along co-operative lines. This is also partly done by the initiative of the peasants themselves who, under the pressure of last year's famine showed inclination to establish artels and co-operative societies. Neighbours' Leagues have been formed for the joint purchase and

use of machinery, horses, etc. The Soviet Government is also endeavouring to establish a number of Soviet estates and to encourage the establishment of co-operative estates and agricultural concerns. It is true that the Soviet estates and co-operative concerns, with up-to-date agricultural organisations, are like small islands in a huge ocean of small peasant farms, which are estimated to number twelve millions. However, they can play an important rôle as industrial, technical and social model institutions, and there are proofs that they have already to a great extent fulfilled this rôle.

One more thing must be taken into consideration. We must not be led to look upon the Russian agrarian revolution in the light of the French peasant emancipation, in spite of the many outward analogies between these two mighty events. We must not forget that the French peasant emancipation was closely connected with the bourgeois revolution, a characteristic of which was the watchword: *ownership and individualism*. The Russian agrarian revolution, on the other hand, is linked up with the proletarian revolution, the leit-motiv of which is *work and solidarity*. This creates a quite different social atmosphere for the development of the small peasant ideology from that which prevailed during the French revolution.

Above all, the Russian small peasantry will learn by experience that its welfare is bound up with the development of industry and with the raising of the proletariat to higher forms of economic and social existence. The peasantry cannot put its production on a more rational basis if it is not supported by a flourishing industry and by the achievements of the proletariat. In connection with this, I venture to say that the electrification of the Russian agricultural industry is the best agrarian programme and the most effective agrarian reform which the Soviet power has adopted and is endeavouring to carry out. It establishes solidarity between town and village and a community of economic and agricultural interests between the industrial proletarians and small peasants, which could not be attained in any other way.

This brings me to the following conclusion: Even though the Bolshevik agrarian reform has not been able to solve the agrarian question in a way leading to the immediate realisation of Communism, it has in no way turned the agrarian development away from the goal of a Communist society. On the contrary, it has introduced innovations which, economically, socially and culturally lead the small peasantry towards Communism, and will continue to lead it along the path. For it is self-evident that the psychology of the petty property holders will undergo a change as the conditions of labour and production become different.

The petty bourgeois reform Socialists treat the agrarian policy of the Russian Communist Party as if it were the Fall in the Eden of revolution. According to their opinion, through the agrarian policy, the hereditary sin of capitalism was introduced into the Bolshevik world, the sin which implies the revival of capitalism. I believe this point of view to be fundamentally false. Soviet Russia, apart from the Bolshevik agrarian policy, would perforce have to evolve a *modus vivendi* with capitalism, in order subsequently to attain to Communism.

The leading party of the Russian revolution has not forgotten the final aim of Communism in economic policy. It still maintains the road which leads to Communism. Therefore, the Bolsheviks in

their economic policy, always aimed for immediate ends, which were in the direction of Communism. Lenin summed it up in 1917. What, he asked, were the immediate economic tasks after the conquest of State power? They were the socialisation of the great industries, the means of transportation, the banks, the State monopoly of foreign trade, and the control of production by the workers. And the first decrees of the new government did not go against these demands. The thing progressed slowly. Step by step, broader measures were taken for the elimination of private property in the means of production, in land, etc.

The proletarian revolution went forward, perforce, after the April slogan:—Workers' Control of Industry! Why? A large number of the capitalists responded to the measures taken by the Soviet State either by sabotage or by the closing down of their enterprises. There was therefore nothing else for the workers to do except to take over these enterprises and to use them, if they did not wish the national industry to cease altogether or to be shattered.

There was also another reason for this. Soviet Russia had to equip and maintain the Red Army, while surrounded by hostile armies which were equipped by the highly developed industries of the whole world. That could not have been accomplished if they had limited themselves to the primary economic measures demanded by the circumstances of the young revolution. It necessitated the confiscation and use of all means of production and wealth, the utilisation of all productive power. Besides, the bourgeoisie, although deprived of its political power, was still in the possession of strong social influences which it did not hesitate to use against the workers. The bourgeoisie had to be attacked at the root of its power, private property. This was accomplished through the nationalisation of all the existing means of production and the land.

Finally, there was another consideration. The defence of Soviet Russia against the attacks of the counter-revolutionaries caused unheard of sufferings among the broad masses. But the masses bore this with rejoicing, because a certain—how shall I express myself?—kind of rough, primitive Communism had been introduced. Thus the Russian revolution was carried far beyond the limits of its immediate aims.

When people now whine that the revolution is beaten, that it is in flight, it is untrue. The Russian revolution has retired to its initial position in good order, retaining all the advantages which it originally wished to possess. Certainly, capitalism returns; that capitalism whose might was broken, which was exiled from the Eden of Soviet Russia for ever. It returns not merely in the form of the petty proprietor, but also of the lessee and concessionaire. It is obvious that these gentlemen have no disinterested desire to take part in the progressive Russian economic life, to build it up and to serve it through cultural methods. They follow a "realistic" aim, that of making profit, the greatest possible profit. But, comrades, the capitalist returns to Soviet Russia no longer the absolute master of his own enterprise. And why not? Because he is no longer master of the State. The profit lust of the concessionaires and the lessees will be curbed through the laws of the working class State, through the administration of these laws by means of the Soviet Power. Of course, in the arena of the New Economic policy, the opposition between capital and labour will be revealed in all its sharpness and violence. The Soviet State reckons itself as the

trustee, appointed by the proletariat, of all the means of production, all natural resources, and all human labour power. The interests of the proletariat are supreme law to the State. By legal conditions the State renders it impossible for foreign or home capitalists to plunder natural resources. The capitalist is also prevented from increasing his profits, however large they may be, through extreme and inhuman exploitation. The proletarian State is fully conscious that the greatest wealth of Soviet Russia is its toilers, who produce all values. It is fully conscious that the Russian proletariat is not going to stay at its present level of living and working. No, it will raise to a far higher level its physical, spiritual, and professional capacities, and its ethical and cultural activity, in order to become the creators and the defenders of the complete Communist Society.

Therefore, in the inevitable conflicts between capital and Labour in the leased and concessional industrial concerns, the trade unions and co-operative organisation will play again a very important rôle as the fighting organs of the proletariat, and will carry on a very fruitful activity. What, on the other hand, happens in the non-Soviet countries in which the capitalists are also political masters? In such countries, the State power is an obstacle to Labour in the conflicts between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and this interference always benefits the capitalists, unless the working class be strong enough to hold the State power in check. In Soviet Russia, on the other hand, the State power will be always at the back of the trade unions and of the co-operatives in all the conflicts of the workers with the industrial, trade and usurers' capital.

There is yet another side to State capitalism which we must take into consideration. The Soviet Republic does not only carry on State capitalism as a leasing and concession giving power; it must also be a "State capitalist" in its own industrial concerns. Only a part—and hitherto only a very small part—of the Russian industrial and economic organisations are, so to speak, hired out to the capitalists for exploitation. The other part, and not the least important at that, the heavy industry, the transport, etc., has remained in the hands of the Soviet Power. The Soviet Power, the workers' State itself, is the greatest employer in Soviet Russia. But what does this mean under present circumstances when the Russian economic system finds no allies in other States which are on the way to Communism, but form a link in the chain of the capitalist economic system which exercise a certain influence upon the shaping of conditions? The Soviet State, in its capacity of employer, will have to take into consideration, in the interests of the class which it represents, the "rentability" of the various industrial plants. I will go a step further. Even when the transition period will have to come to an end and when pure Communism will have been established, society will have to produce and accumulate surplus value in the interests of its higher economic and cultural development. What is the conclusion to be drawn from this? That the workers' State, as employer, may at times get into conflict with the demands and interests of certain workers and groups of workers against which it will have to defend the present and future class interests of the proletariat. It goes without saying that such conflicts cannot and must not be settled in the momentary interests of individuals or separate proletarian groups, or even of separate branches of the economic system. On the contrary, they will always have to be settled in the interests of the proletariat as a class.

It is self-evident that such conflicts are likely to occur in Soviet Russia. The reasons are as follows: at present the Russian proletariat is not yet able to raise from its own ranks sufficient forces to fill the posts of managers and organisers in the industrial concerns. These posts are occupied to-day by people with a high economic and professional education and experience but lacking Communist ideology. On this field the trade unions and co-operative organisations have a great task to fulfil, not only as constructive but also as educational organs which must carry on their work in the lower as well as in the upper strata, if you will allow me to say so. In the lower, in order to raise the proletarian masses, in their capacity of producers, to the higher form of efficiency. At times the proletarians might resent this as a hardship. But with respect to this hardship as well as the backwardness of which Comrade Lenin has said that we must bear one thing in mind; outside Russia, in the highly developed capitalist States, the proletariat has for centuries past gone through the hard school of capitalism before it reached its present productive efficiency. The British workers have gone through this hard school, and even to-day the whip of hunger and the scorpions of class exploitation and class domination are brought into play against them. The workers' State of Soviet Russia, with the assistance of the trade unions and the co-operative societies, will educate its working masses for Communism by milder and more humane methods. But in any case, the workers' State must educate the proletariat, and must get it accustomed to labour discipline and skilled work. This being so, conflicts between the State and the workers might occur.

The workers' State, with the assistance of the trade unions and the co-operative organisations, will educate a staff of clerks officials, managers and administrators who, imbued with the spirit of Communism, will change the whole present economic system as rapidly and thoroughly as possible. The officials and administrators must be made to realise what it is to be the representatives and the trusted servants of the workers' State.

There is one more fact. I venture to say that Soviet Russia is to-day, notwithstanding its poverty and the disorganisation of its economic system, the State with the most advanced labour protection and social welfare legislation and not only on paper. Trade unions and co-operative organisations, in conjunction with the Soviet organs are entrusted with the supervision of the proper application of the labour law and of social insurance, and also with their improvement and development. They are the real executors of the social reforms. The activity of the trade unions and co-operative organisations with relation to social reform, was formerly considered by the reformist gentry as a means to bolster up capitalism and to prevent revolution. Present events show that we, the radical element, were right in asserting that effective social reforms with the assistance of the trade unions and co-operative organizations, are out of the question before the conquest of political power by the proletariat. It is only after the conquest of the political power by the proletariat that the activity of these organizations can be used as an effective means for leading the entire economic system towards Communism. Social reform receives a different aspect and another significance with the advent of proletarian political power. From being a bulwark for the protection and defence of the proletariat against capitalism, social reform becomes a means for

building up Communism. The conquest of political power by the proletariat, and the establishment of its dictatorship in a Soviet State are a milestone on the way towards a higher development of the new social order.

I need not refer to the influence of the new policy in other directions. Comrade Lenin has done this in a most illuminating manner. However, I thought it necessary to emphasize this side of the new policy, as it forms an illustration of two facts. Firstly, that by the conquest and consolidation of the political power, the proletariat has not yet crossed the stream, but that it has only reached its banks. The proletariat will only get into the promised land of Communism by means of the general policy, and especially of the economic policy of the proletarian State power. Out of this arise a number of problems: the problem of the relations between town and village, the problem of the political power of the workers, as embodied in the Soviet State and the economic organizations of the proletariat—the trade unions and co-operative organizations. There is also the problem of the relations between the producing workers on the one side and the employees and officials in the industrial concerns on the other side, as well as of the relations between the bureaucracy of the central Soviet institutions and that of the local institutions. The proletariat of every country will have to pay great attention to these State problems after the conquest of political power.

For this reason we have a good deal to learn from the striking developments of the Russian Revolution, and that not only from those things which appear to be right, but also from those which either appear as being wrong or are so in reality. Above all things, however, we must remain clear with regard to the main problem. This is the seizure of political power for the transformation of society into Communism by the hands of the proletariat itself. All other problems are subordinated to that of the mastery of the State power by the proletariat and for the proletariat. If proof were necessary of the extraordinary importance of the possession of political power for the transition to Communism, this proof is furnished by two classical instances. The first is Soviet Russia; and the second is Germany under the coalition government. In Soviet Russia we have the proletarian political power; socialisation of large scale industry; the development of laws for the protection of the workers; the maintenance of the eight-hour day, and the consistent struggle against overtime—it being permitted only in such cases where it is an absolute necessity in the interests of the workers themselves—the development of social welfare activities; in spite of meagre resources, a development of the social system such as has taken place in no other country: all in all, some advances in economic life, and a beginning of economic reconstruction; and—the most important of all—a slight, but quite distinct improvement in the situation of the proletariat.

On the other hand, we have in Germany a proletariat without political power; a coalition government made up of elements ranging from Stinnes to Scheidemann, and even to Hilferding and Crispian—in short, instead of socialization, the rule of Stinnes, the breakdown of the bourgeois government; the undermining of social welfare institutions, the schools handed over to the churches, the proletarianization of the middle class under conditions of terrible poverty, the economic breakdown which becomes daily more

intensified, and increasing impoverishment of the proletarian masses which will mean literally the death of millions. I believe that these facts show more clearly than anything the significance of the maintenance of State power in the hands of the proletariat. But it is not merely this aim alone that has led Soviet Russia to the new economic policy as a "necessary evil" produced by conditions specifically Russian. I am more inclined to see in the new economic policy the only way by which, under the present circumstances, we can pass over from capitalism to Communism.

V. Recapitulation

But Soviet Russia's progress towards Communism is not conditioned solely by the New Economic Policy. As an auxiliary of this stands the intensification of Communist knowledge, the most potent flowering of the seed of Communist idealism, the crystallization of the high cultural values which Communism implies and which must be brought to their fullest fruition. Therefore, together with the new policy of raising economic life to a new and higher level, must go the broadly-planned work of popular education, especially the education and training of the young. And this education and training must be in the direction of Communism.

I should be trespassing beyond the limits of my subject, if I attempted here to describe in detail the important labours accomplished by the Russian Revolution in the particular field of cultural activity. The Russian Revolution is a bearer of culture, a veritable power for culture, such as may be found nowhere else. Recall to your memory all the measures which have been taken in the field of popular education and art. In this connection I will instance only the important cultural factor which the Red Army has been. The soldiers of the Red Army, who have passed through the schools of revolutionary "militarism" return to their villages as disseminators of culture in the truest sense. Comrades, in the five years of its existence, the Russian Revolution has verily accomplished a titanic task in the cultural field. If one were to judge it only by this standard, its fame would still be immortal. But how should we have attained this without the seizure of political power by the proletariat? Upon what assumption can we base our reliance that Soviet Russia will continue as a power to transform society, economically and culturally, to Communism? I consider it to be an absolutely essential preliminary condition for this, that the Communist Party, the directing revolutionary class party, maintain a profound and organic contact with the broadest proletarian masses who are outside this Party. Out of this strong unity was the Russian Revolution born. Thanks to it, it has been maintained until to-day. But, besides this, it will assure us of a Communist future. It must be a really organic unity of the Party and the masses, which is not the result of the carrying out of a mechanical scheme from above, of a power which is imposed upon the proletariat, but comes from a spontaneous mass force flowing from the masses themselves. The existence and methods of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia is the complete and dynamic expression of revolutionary knowledge and revolutionary will, the revolutionary self-consciousness and initiative of the proletarian masses. The life and will of the masses flow in a rich current from them into the Party; and streams from the Party back to the masses by a thousand invisible channels. We hear murmurs of a crippled and dying dictatorship in Soviet Russia, of a party clique. These are slogans

which are nothing more than the echoes of the old anti-Bolshevik lies and libels about the conditions in that country where the proletariat has not only seized power, but is still guarding it and will nevermore cower under the lash of the bourgeoisie. What a contrast is Russia to the social and working life of the proletariat in bourgeois countries! What a burning thirst for knowledge! What a cultural inspiration! What activity of countless forces which were previously slumbering!

The Soviet power, acting under the influence of the Communist Party, brought out in the working class its most beautiful latent capacities: it has brought to the light most beautiful ethical and æsthetical productions. Look at the Soviet organs, look at the various social organizations. Everywhere we find anticipation and expectation and activity as in no other country in the world. The masses struggle forward and upward. Their heart and their head is the Communist Party. We who come from foreign lands see much suffering, many sorry defects. But in spite of all that, what a strong intellectual life here, to work here, yes, to die here, if nothing else remains!

I recapitulate. Looking at the achievements of the Russian revolution, those so-called friends of order, such as wish to avoid a revolution at all costs, those who hate it, or fear it, or accept it only as a cheaply won "beautiful" revolution, will say: Was a revolution necessary to produce this; could it not have been brought about by reforms, along the peaceful ways of democracy? No, I answer. For without the revolution, there would have been no Soviet regime, no creative political change, no workers' government, no dictatorship of the proletariat; and without this decisive change, a new, higher, liberating spiritual life could never have been born.

The Russian revolution need feel no shame at the alleged smallness of its accomplishments. What it has done is amazing, incomparably great. A proletarian revolution has a far greater, much more extensive and far reaching work to accomplish than any bourgeois revolution. The bourgeois revolution creates a new State apparatus, it revolutionises the political relation of forces and all that goes with it. It produces nothing creative in the field of economics. Nevertheless, it took a hundred years after the great French revolution to secure its greatest accomplishment, the Republic. It was the insurrection of the Commune which finally did it. The proletarian revolution must do more than "hammer the old, senile capitalist State into the new Soviet government"; it must revolutionise the whole basis of social economics, and with it the whole of society. This is a gigantic task; it cannot be accomplished overnight, nor by the work of a few great personalities. It must be the work of the whole proletarian class, and it will take many decades before the work is accomplished. Karl Marx wrote in his controversy with Max Stirner that we should not grow discouraged if the proletarian revolution should last for many decades. Its task is not only to create new social conditions, but also to educate man, the new man for the new society. This is what we must remember when we look at the first proletarian State in the world.

The Russian Revolution has accomplished more than any revolution before it. It has not remained stationary; it has developed far beyond its original purpose. With fire and sword, Russia has

been cleansed of its old feudal institutions, with a thoroughness which no bourgeois revolution has known.

Look at England. In spite of the bourgeois revolution, in spite of long years of bourgeois class rule, there still remain strong traces of the old feudal order.

Look at Germany, the country of the latest bourgeois revolution. The first victory of the revolution, the Republic trembles before a Kapp-Putsch, or an Orgesch-insurrection. In Soviet Russia, Czarism could never return; nor such a modern capitalist State as is the dream of the reformists and petty bourgeois. The proletarian revolution has brought into the consciousness of millions so many germs of a new productive life, that this life can never be destroyed. Soviet Russia will remain a proletarian State. It is the first type of a proletarian State in this period of transformation from capitalism to Communism. As such, all it does and does not do; all its accomplishments as well as its mistakes and its weakness, are fruitful with lessons for the world proletariat and for the world revolution. The proletariat of Russia and the Russian Communist Party have paid dearly to learn how political power is conquered and maintained. They must suffer now to learn how a proletarian State, abandoned by the world proletariat, can transform itself slowly into a communist society. The policy of the Bolsheviks has great significance in this connection. Some regard it as nothing but a vague fishing in the dark, a series of mistakes and inconsequential actions. Just the opposite is true. The policy of the Russian Communists appears, as a whole, to follow a straight, unified, and consistent line. This policy is the first to attempt in the history of the masses to apply the theory of Marxism to practical facts: it is the historic attempt of the proletariat to become a subjective factor in the history of the world; it is the first willed attempt to make history. It is the conscious attempt to direct historical forces, to make history and not suffer it as a play of blind objective forces, as in bourgeois society.

Comrade Lenin said that we still have much to learn, both here in Soviet Russia and outside of it. He said that we did not understand Russian sufficiently abroad, to comprehend the resolutions of our Third Congress, conceived and expressed in Russian.

In a way, Comrade Lenin was right. The foreign proletariat has not yet sufficiently learnt to read Russian, i.e., to act as Russians. Just as the Communist International is the centre of the world revolution, so should it be our university for reciprocal experience. Learn, and save time! This is Lenin's call to us. And he who wins time, wins all!

Time, comrades, not in the sense of wasteful, idle and listless waiting, but in which every minute is exploited in passionate activity. Let us use it here in Soviet Russia, to learn the use of the art of creation of the proletarian State. Let us use it outside of Russia, to learn to handle the sword with which to conquer political power.

So is forged the sword of the world revolution, which will free mankind. From the ruins of the world war let new life flourish. In this period, the highest, most powerful, most fruitful and most creative form of historical development is the revolution, the expression of the proletarian masses.

FRANZ MEHRING

By J. B. Askew

FRANZ MEHRING, who was perhaps the most famous in Germany of that little body of brave spirits who founded the Spartacus League during the war, is less known in England than either Karl Liebhnecht, Rosa Luxemburg, or Klara Zetkin, and who with him signed the first message that was sent to England from those German Socialists who had not bowed their knees to the Moloch of Militarism. The reason why Mehring's name was not prominent outside of Germany was because he was no orator and hardly ever—I doubt if ever—spoke on a public platform, and was practically unknown at Congresses. I don't think he was ever present at a Congress of the Second International; for their proceedings he had no great respect—a contempt which I am sorry to add has been more than justified by the subsequent course of events.

Mehring's strong point was undoubtedly his command of the pen. As a reviewer and a journalist he had no superior—he was universally admitted to be among the first two or three writers of his time in Germany. He had a most extensive knowledge of German history—and few people had their scholarship so much at their command. That made him a most formidable opponent in discussion as well as an invaluable fighter in the ranks of the Party—since no matter what the opponents might bring forward he could always effectively counter it with some damaging facts often from the history of the Prussian Government. His knowledge of literature was very extensive, and by no means confined to German. He wrote, among other things, works on Lessing and Schiller—and a series of articles by him, *Aesthetische Streifzuege* (Aesthetic musings) in which he applied the Marxian methods to the study of literary and aesthetic questions aroused much attention. Mehring was much too clever a man to judge aesthetic work, or indeed anything else, by cut and dried standards, and he always insisted that what is known as the Materialist Conception of History was to be regarded as a key to solve questions and not as a procustean bed into which the facts *had* to be fitted. Above all, he was against any mechanical application of the method. With Engels he felt that the best defence of Historical Materialism was to be found in its application to the solution of actual problems rather than in abstract discussions on the subject; thus the most brilliant achievement in applied Marxism has been the work of the Russian Communists. Mehring's works are certainly brilliant examples of what the Marxian historical method may be made to achieve in the hands of a competent workman, and however little men might agree with his writings, they were never dull, or prosey.

No one, indeed, had a greater scorn than he for the long-winded works of the German Professors. Their servility to the powers that be, their pompous arrogance as well as their great parade of learning—to say nothing of their ponderous dullness—roused no less his righteous ire than his savage humour. Writing of those people who consider that in order to be scientific, history must necessarily be dull—he remarked in the preface to his *Life of Marx*: “I confess to my shame that I do not hate bourgeois society so

thoroughly as those more rigid thinkers, who, in order to revenge themselves on Voltaire, consider a tedious style of writing the only permissible one. Marx was himself in this respect not above suspicion; together with the ancient Greeks he counted Clio among the Nine Muses. Of a truth only he neglects the muses who has himself been neglected by them." To sum up, history must be both art and science, and in the best sense of these words.

Despite his brilliant gifts there was no one more deeply mistrusted than Mehring in the Socialist Party. For many years he had to struggle with this prejudice till finally it culminated in a series of most dramatic scenes at the Party Congress at Dresden in 1903—when a set attack was made on him from the members of the Right Wing. They hailed him, not without reason, as the most formidable of their opponents. Even within the ranks of the Left Wing itself he had few real friends and not a few who heartily disliked and mistrusted him. The reason was that having joined the party as a very young man, towards the end of the Sixties, he wrote a work in answer to an attack by Treitschke on the movement. Some three or four years later he came into conflict with certain elements in the Party and, with all the impulsiveness of youth, left the organisation and published some bitter attacks against them. These attacks appeared about a year before the Anti-Socialist Law, and did some little damage to the Party and were never forgotten by the old leaders. The true nature of Franz Mehring was revealed during the cruel Anti-Socialist laws introduced by Bismark. He set aside his grievance with the opportunists and rejoined the Party at the moment when it was dangerous to do so, but when it needed assistance. This was a bold course to take, because at that time Mehring was editor of one of the most important Berlin newspapers. Needless to say he lost his job. A feeling of mistrust survived, and was skilfully played upon by the wirepullers of the Right Wing till when 25 years later, they nearly succeeded, at the Congress in Dresden, 1903, in getting him expelled from the Party.

Whatever attacks Mehring may have made against certain tendencies in the Party when he was a young man, the manner in which he rejoined, and the critical moment at which he decided to do so should have been sufficient to have shielded him after the lapse of so many years. But gossip had so poisoned the minds of comrades, and the fact that Mehring had lost a good position because of his championship of the Party would seem to have been forgotten. Still, however, when that gossip came into the open in 1903 so that Mehring had something to reply to, he did so most effectively, and nothing more was heard of the matter. Nevertheless, on the occasion of his death, 16 years later, a well known writer quoted, with approval, Bebel's description of him as a psychological riddle—though whether Bebel would have repeated that after Mehring's statement is more than doubtful. In any case, however, it is absolutely certain that Bebel spoke in an atmosphere which was full of suspicion regarding Mehring. At that time comrades, even belonging to the Left Wing, could be heard saying, "What if Mehring now loses his job—will he not turn and rend us once more?" And a certain apprehension as to what his brilliant talents were capable of was undoubtedly fairly universal. That was the atmosphere. No one really trusted Mehring; he was felt to be a brilliant writer, but one who could write on both sides—if one side did not or would not pay, he would go to the other. As a matter of fact, during the next

few years he voluntarily "threw up" more than one job and faced the uncertainties of existence without thinking of changing his coat. And when in 1914 the acid test came—which Bebel was never to witness—this "psychological riddle," the presumptive "turncoat" of 1903, dauntlessly stood with Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and Klara Zetkin in the attempt to raise the red flag out of the mire into which Mehring's traducers allowed it to fall. Where were they? With a few exceptions—the Intellectuals and other leaders were either silent, or like Kautsky, they contended that the International was not dead—none of its members had denied their principles; they argued that the International was and is in the main an instrument of peace, not for war time; and during such a war period the Labour leaders could go on leave from their principles and beat the war drum—which, indeed, the majority did, and that very vigorously, to the applause of the bourgeoisie and the military authorities.

There was another important matter in which Mehring's strength of character was revealed. In his monumental work on the history of the German Social Democratic Party he had to choose between writing what he felt was the truth and the possibility of conciliating or not offending powerful personages in the party by slurring over or avoiding expressing an opinion on the historical controversies between Marx and Lassalle, the Eisenacher and Lassalleaner, etc., Mehring never hesitated to say what he thought—however damaging that might be to his personal prospects—and I am fairly certain that neither Bebel nor the elder Liebknecht—Wilhelm Liebknecht, the father of Karl Liebknecht, who died in 1900—ever forgave him for what he said about Schweizer or Lassalle. It was, I cannot help feeling, the prejudice born of Mehring's attitude on this question, which, unbeknown possibly to Bebel himself, influenced his judgment and caused him to look on Mehring as a "psychological riddle," much more than reckless charges of an impulsive young man—who, after all, had only done in his twenties what many others have done in their forties and fifties, with this exception—that the older fools have, as a rule, not the strength to recognise their folly as folly and to reverse engines!

It might have been better for Mehring's relationships with the old leaders had he, in his History, spared their feelings and sacrificed the truth. The prejudice against Mehring came once more to the front when the chief editor of *Vorwaerts*, Wm. Liebknecht, died. Everyone in the Party knew that the ablest man for the job was Mehring, and yet he was passed over. The important post was handed over to a committee of editors, with most disastrous results.

Certainly, Liebknecht's editorship was a standing joke, as he was only a figurehead. His editorship, despite an army of subordinates, satisfied no one. Wm. Liebknecht had too many tasks to accomplish to make a good editor, and his death afforded an opportunity of placing the paper upon a new editorial basis. This step was not taken. Mehring was declared to be impossible, though no one disputed his pre-eminent qualifications for effecting an improvement. Shortly after this the editor of *Leipzig Volkszeitung* died. The Leipzig comrades, who then formed the advance guard of the Left Wing, desired their organ to continue to be what it had been from the beginning, the best-edited Socialist paper in Germany; even to-day it might be used as a model for any Labour Press. As the Leipzig comrades realised that the best way to control their

paper was not by a committee, but by appointing a good chief editor and giving him a free hand, they offered the job to Mehring. He accepted conditionally on being allowed to continue to live in Berlin, and to visit Leipzig from time to time when necessary. The Leipzig comrades accepted this, so anxious were they to get Mehring, and the high traditions of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* were certainly quite maintained under his editorship. After a few years he felt that the task of editing a daily paper at a distance equal to that of, say, from London to Manchester, was too great for him, and he gave it up. I have no doubt that he was not what is called an easy man to get on with, but, after all, you don't get brilliant men in a party without having to pay your price for them; so long as they stand for the principles and conform to the party discipline there must be room for all kinds of temperaments—even the hot-headed ones. There is no doubt in my mind that the Party would have enormously gained had Mehring been appointed the editor of their central organ in Berlin. That by the way, Mehring's scrupulous attitude as a historian, to which I have referred above, was that in regard to the historical disputes of the Party—the historian had to approach these from an historical point of view. While in general pointing out the correctness of the Marxist policy, Mehring shows how often Marx and Engels were unjust to Lassalle. He also points out that both Lassalle and Schweizer had on many occasions shown a more correct appreciation of the tactical needs of the situation in Germany than did Marx and Engels, who were living in London; the latter had themselves been forced to recognise, on several occasions, that William Liebknecht had misled them. He also shows how completely the latter had misunderstood the general situation in Germany at that time. Bebel's attack on Schweizer, in his *Memoirs as a Police Agent*, Mehring dismisses as completely unfounded. He also endeavoured to do justice to Proudhon, Weitling and Bakunin, while showing a complete appreciation of the theoretical weaknesses of their position—as also of those of Lassalle's. Bakunin he clears from the charges which were made against him, and he shows how Marx came to believe them. In regard to the famous letter written by Marx to the German Party, at the time of the Gotha Congress, he shows very conclusively that it was based on a misconception of the real state of affairs in the Party. The legend which has found a place in the introduction to the English translation of that letter, that, had the German comrades then listened to Marx, the spirit of reformism would not have found an entrance to the Party, is shown to be completely fallacious. There was not that dividing line between the Lassalleaner and the Eisenacher—the Eisenacher were not so far advanced as Marx thought they were, nor were the Lanalleaner as far back. In respect of the knowledge of Marxist principles, there was at that time not much to choose between them—which certainly did not prevent a bitter fight between the "Sects," and Marxist principles had, I gather, not much to do with that.

When the question came forward regarding the editing the literary remains of Marx and Engels, as well as the letters of Lassalle to Marx, Madame Lafargue, Marx's only surviving daughter, entrusted Mehring with the task, although she knew very well that he had criticised the action of her father in regard to Lassalle. The various explanatory articles and notes contributed by Mehring to those volumes are admittedly the best introduction that could be

found. All the same, when Mehring announced his intention of writing Marx's Biography, every possible obstacle was put in his way by Kautsky, and others, on the ground that he had calumniated Marx. Mehring, so far from calumniating him, considered that Marx owed his greatness not to being a sort of plaster saint without human weaknesses, or, shall we say, the possession of an infallible judgment which guided him on every occasion—even in letters written on the spur of the moment and without a thought of publication—against the possibility of error. On the contrary, Mehring tried to explain Marx both in his strength and weakness. Marx was, above all things, a man who, despite colossal obstacles, despite long years of exile, persecution, poverty, illness and misfortune; despite the boycott which was extended to all that he wrote by the bourgeois Press and public, who contrived to do an enormous work and to found a system against which all the weapons of bourgeois critics for fifty years have been tried in vain, and which now, after all those years, at length begins to win recognition, even in bourgeois academic circles. In setting forth this conception of Marx, Mehring certainly succeeded as no one else could have done. Mehring's *Life of Marx* is one of the finest works which has appeared in the last few years, and is certainly *the* life of Marx par excellence.

Mehring's great brilliance and scholarship may be seen in the weekly leading articles which he wrote for the *Neue Zeit*. Short, pithy, and to the point; topical and couched in everyday language without being vulgar, clear and easily to be understood without remaining merely superficial, they rarely failed to hit the nail on the head, and, without being pompous or pedantic, to point out the deeper significance of the events of the week. Above all, they were eminently readable, however little the reader might share the writer's point of view. I well remember his article at a time when war had been brought very near on account of Morocco. Mehring, in masterly fashion, referred to an old world legend of a knight who has fallen asleep on horseback and who suddenly awakes to find that he has just passed, on a narrow plank, over a deep and fathomless abyss. As applied to the then position in which the Workers of the World found themselves, the illustration was a splendid one. In 1914, however, the frail bridge broke and hurled the masses into the abyss.

Mehring's courage was again tested and not found wanting during the war, particularly in his heroic work as a leading Spartacist. When one reads the daring "Letters of Spartacus," one is compelled to admire the superb courage of that little band inspired by Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg, Klara Zetkin and Karl Liebknecht. Their fight was not only directed against the brutality of imperialism it was also aimed at the Second International and its leaders, who treacherously betrayed the masses during the war. Neither in Britain nor in France was there anything published to compare with the outspokenness of the Spartacus Letters. In these, no less than in the "Junius Pamphlet," as it was called, written by Rosa Luxemburg, and the even more daring pronouncements of Karl Liebknecht in the pamphlet, *The Class Struggle against War*, the attitude of the leaders of the Second International was trounced without mercy, and the policy of the government described in language which, though it was equally necessary in this country, was, so far as I know, attempted by no one. During the war our

literature was all "legal," and the Spartacists did not bother about a legality which they knew they had no chance of getting.

In Mehring, as in Marx, we have one of those rare combinations of intellect, will power, and moral courage, which enables a man to resist all temptation to turn away from his path under the influence of those tempting generalisations which have enabled so many to cover up the betrayal of their principles, and we have in Germany to-day the melancholy spectacle of intellectuals abandoning the struggle and appealing to the historical materialism of Marx to justify their betrayal. Certain Russian Marxists were, I believe, the first who made the discovery that Marx could also be used to defend capitalism. The war has shown us, especially among the German Marxists, how it is possible to misuse Marx, and that in a way which was enough to make the old man turn in his Highgate grave. We have good reason to congratulate ourselves that those sturdy henchmen of British capitalism, *The Times* and the *Morning Post*, are both so utterly blinded by their hatred of Marx and his teachings that this idea of falsifying them, in the manner now popular with the intellectuals of the Second International, has not occurred to these journals. After the revolution Marxism was further applied to justify the resetting up of capitalism in Germany on the ground that as capitalism had brought everything to ruin, so capitalism must be forced to rebuild ere it could be taken over. "We cannot socialise bankruptcy" was said to have been the sage utterance of Kautsky, who cherished the idea that it would be possible to arrange matters so that the capitalists would hand over their concerns in full working order and without any attempt at sabotage. Till then we are not ripe for Socialism. This idiotic idea is also the plea of the MacDonalds and Snowdens. Small wonder that Kautsky is now so popular with these ignorant traducers of Marx!

With a Marxism of the Kautsky brand Mehring would have nothing to do. While it is true, I believe, that he did not share in the sanguine expectations of his friends, Rosa Luxemburg, Klara Zetkin, and Karl Liebknecht, regarding the immediate prospects of Socialism, he felt that the fight for Socialism was going to be a much longer one than they thought; but that would have been no ground for him to work for the re-establishment of capitalism. Those who are inclined to despair of the Russian revolution would do well to compare it with the revolution in Germany and Austria. The Russian comrades have fought a superb fight against difficulties which would have overwhelmed any other group. The German Party, at one time the pattern for the whole Socialist and Labour Movement, threw up the sponge before they had even begun the fight. When at the beginning of their revolution the Russian comrades offered to make an international alliance with them, the German Socialist leaders, including the Independents, declined, because they looked for the help of the Western Democracies. The Western Democracies, and in particular the British Labour Party, let them down badly. Since then the German Social Democratic Press has grossly maligned the Russians who had offered them genuine revolutionary assistance. This same Press was positively unable to hide its indecent glee when it rashly assumed that the Soviet government had had to capitulate to the capitalists. As if that would have been a cause for rejoicing for any conscientious

Socialist, even were it true. Apart from that, it would be well for the German leaders to leave off preaching to the Russians, and consider the crushing defeat they have suffered, unfortunately, at the hands of Hugo Stinnes.

Mehring did not live to see the failure and fruits of the Scheidemann-Haase-Kautsky policy. He died, as Fuchs says, on the funeral-bier of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. The indignation caused by that brutal act of cowardly murder, plotted and carried out at the instigation of the Noske-Ebert regime, compelled him to leave his bed, when he was ill with influenza, and wildly pace his room—presumably in a more or less state of mad anger. The consequence for him, with his body weakened by his imprisonment and general privations, was an attack of pneumonia, to which he succumbed.

That the German reactionaries and the Socialist renegades who helped them were well advised from their point of view in murdering Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg—of that, unfortunately, there can be no doubt—but not even they could dream that they were to be so lucky as to strike down Mehring at the same time. Fortunately for us, that dauntless old fighter, Klara Zetkin, escaped the fate of her three great comrades. The loss that was inflicted, not only on the Communist Party of Germany, but on the whole Labour Movement of the world, by the death of the dauntless three, cannot be estimated. Apart from Russia, there is certainly no one in the entire Labour movement of to-day who can be compared, in the realm of intellect, with Mehring and Rosa Luxemburg. Their death was our common loss.

DISCIPLINE AND CENTRALISED LEADERSHIP ❀

By Bela Kun

THE time has not yet come to write the history of the five years of the Russian revolution, and even if it had, it would not be the task of the Fourth World Congress to write that history, although it has been a first rank and file participator in the making of that history. All the more reason for us, therefore, to carefully and discriminately collect all the experiences of the Russian Revolution and to take judicious views of these experiences in our revolutionary struggle. All of us who have fought in the Russian revolution and have led in revolutionary fights outside of Russia have built up some more or less faulty generalized theories. Almost none of us has avoided these errors. We ought to avoid Utopianism of every kind, applying our experiences with the utmost discrimination in regard to West European conditions. We ought to endeavour to inaugurate, on the basis of the experiences of the Russian revolution, a similarly realist revolutionary policy in the West, as the policy of the Russian Communist Party has always been and continues to be.

It is now my task to point out the subjective factor of the proletarian revolution, to describe the rôle of the Russian Com-

munist Party in the proletarian revolution, even if only in fragmentary outline. Permit me in this connection to draw a parallel between the great Russian revolution and the abortive Hungarian revolution. On looking back at the history of these five years we have to confess that a miracle has happened.

The power of the Soviets is alive and strong to-day in spite of the offensive of the now defunct German imperialism, the united offensive of the capitalists of all countries, and the vicious activities of Russian and the international Mensheviks. The invincibility of the Russian revolution, of the Russian Soviets, is due to factors, the absence of which in Hungary was the cause of the collapse of the Hungarian proletarian dictatorship.

I do not intend to enlarge upon the international and internal political causes which were favourable to the Russian revolution, and which, on the other hand, were detrimental to the Hungarian revolution. I shall only point to the fact that in Hungary we failed to provide, not only what Comrade Lenin described as a plan of retreat, but even a line of retreat. In regard to the Russian revolution, I think that the circumstance which has belied all the Thermidor prophesies about Soviet Russia was the following:— In Russia there was a centralized, disciplined and self-sacrificing Workers' Party in the shape of the Russian Communist Party. The absence of such a Party or of anything approaching it in Hungary was the cause of the inevitable collapse of the proletarian revolution, notwithstanding all the sacrifices and enthusiasm of the Hungarian proletariat and poorer peasantry. Apart from military defeat at the front, the downfall of the revolution was accelerated by the vacillating influence of the social democracy upon the Hungarian working class. The Russian proletariat and its glorious Red Army at that time and afterwards sustained a number of defeats on the various counter-revolutionary fronts. There were moments in Russia when, in the midst of great dangers, the Russian working class began to waver. There were times when the state of mind of a section of the working class was, if not positively, at least passively, counter-revolutionary. There were times when the wavering, starving and tired working class gave to the superficial observer sufficient reason for prophesying a Thermidor to Soviet Russia. It is enough to recall the period of the Kronstadt mutiny. Yet all the effects of these waverings of a part of the working class were neutralized.

We, in Hungary, did not have the benefit of a mature Communist Party, and I am safe in saying that at the time we could not have such a Party. We had no mature Communist Party that could cling to the helm of State at the most critical moments, in spite of the wavering of the working class, in spite of the passive, and at times even hostile, attitude of part of the working class. In Hungary influence was brought to bear upon the masses of the proletariat by the fusion between the class-conscious active and determined minority and the social democracy, which, together, led the masses to the conquest of power. On the other hand, in Russia there has been, and there is now, a Communist Party with years of fighting experience, whose influence in the critical moments of the Russian revolution was enormous. This party, whose class character stands out in prominent relief during these last five years of revolution, has become the party of the Russian people. The German Social Democratic Party, at the Goerlitz Conference,

finally discarded its class mask, declaring itself the " Volkspartei " (People's Party), instead of the greatest class party in the world, which it was as the German Social-Democratic Party. It is now really the party of the petty bourgeoisie, and, as such, it has become the servant of the big bourgeoisie of Germany. As against this, the Russian Communist Party, having strictly maintained its class character during the entire period of the dictatorship, has truly become the party of all the toiling elements of the Russian people. This will not be believed in social democratic circles, and there are even communists who doubt it. But I will quote just one instance which will suffice to show that the Russian Communist Party is really the party of the Russian people and that every Communist is, so to speak, the spokesman of the toiling elements of the Russian people. Last year we had a party cleaning of the Russian Party of elements that were undesirable. This cleaning was conducted at public meetings of non-party workers, in the presence of the entire mass of the unattached factory workers. Every non-party worker and every non-party peasant had the opportunity to object to any member remaining in the Communist Party, and the non-party workers and peasants made full use of this right. To be a Communist in Russia—let me repeat it once more—is to be the spokesman of the people. This makes the Communist Party in Russia a real party of the toiling people, although it has strictly maintained its proletarian character throughout the five years of the revolution.

This is the real reason of the wonderful development of the Party. It rests, naturally, in its revolutionary policy and in its wonderful flexible tactics. Nevertheless, we must ask whence did the Party obtain such a policy and such an influence over the working class. What is it that enabled the Russian Party not only to gain a majority at the time of the October revolution, but to retain it throughout the vicissitudes of the revolution? The secret lies first of all in the close organization of the Party. No other party, bourgeois or proletarian, had such a carefully picked and strongly welded nucleus, or to use a favourite military metaphor of Comrade Bukharin, a uniform ideological general staff, as has the Russian Party.

This party, this General Staff, this nucleus, this fundamental group, was built up during the long years of struggle. During these struggles the opportunist elements were swept out of the Party, not only mechanically, but also by deliberate elimination. All elements that were unsuitable to the close circle of fighters were weeded out of the ranks. On the other hand, the Russian Communist Party, in the course of its struggles, not only developed its nucleus, but also brought new elements into the movement which became welded to the nucleus. It has become a party really capable of organizing and leading the masses, not hangers-on, not intellectuals who refuse to submit to party discipline, but real workers. The characteristic feature of the five years of the Russian revolution was that all the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary elements who were really faithful to the workers and to the working class were gradually absorbed by the Russian Communist Party. There was nothing left in the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary Parties but a few intellectual scribes who had nothing whatever to do with the Labour movement; who were, so to speak, guests, and not leaders of the working class. The influence of the Communist

Party over the large working class masses, with the State under Communist control, is naturally exercised not only by means of propoganda, but also by the authority of the State and of the administration.

In this way, wherever workers go, wherever workers are occupied, you can meet a Bolshevik, a Communist. The Soviet institutions, the Soviet administration offices, may be as faulty as Comrade Lenin has said they are. Nevertheless, thanks to the Communist Party, they have become a kind of proletarian democracies. The Soviet organs, through the Communist Party, have become the organs of proletarian democracy, and not vice-versa. A comparison with the history of the Hungarian Soviets will show this clearly. In Hungary we have had Soviets—such Soviets as Gorter or the German Independents would have them—but without Communist leadership. The organs elected by the suffrage of the large masses of the proletariat did not really become the organs of the working class. They were not the expression of the will of the proletariat. Here, in Russia, where the Mensheviks demanded free election to the Soviets, where all reformist elements from Martov to Miliukov united for free Soviet elections against the Bolshevik dictatorship, the Soviet organs are much more the organs of the proletarian democracy than the freely elected ones of Hungary which were not led by Communists.

In Hungary there was no united Communist leadership of the Soviets and the Trade Unions. The Trade Unions claimed the leadership of the State because they were much more proletarian than the Soviets, which contained non-proletarian elements. It was a struggle between the Soviets and the Trade Unions, and the Trade Unions could claim with right that they represented to a greater extent than the Soviets the opinions of the large masses and the class character of the proletariat. There resulted a conflict between the reformistic, social-democratic Trade Union leaders and the Soviets. The workers went more willingly into the Trade Unions, which were led by Labour leaders, even though reformists, than into the Soviets, where no Communist leadership existed. In Russia, with the help of the Communist Party, the Soviets became a real popular institution, an organ of proletarian democracy. In Hungary we could not achieve this because there was no Communist leadership. But how is it possible to achieve united action in such a large country with so many State organs, with so many labour organizations? How is it possible, in a country where there are single districts much larger than France, Germany and England together, to find a unified party leadership which could be felt even in the smallest village?

How is centralization at all possible in such a country as Russia? I would like to answer this question by a comparison. In Germany the social-democracy, having attained power, was practically dissolved as a party organization. The governmental organs influenced the social democracy much more than the latter influenced the government. The deciding factor in the social-democracy is the governmental social-democratic bureaucracy which originated from the old party bureaucracy. It is just the opposite in Russia. The Russian Party always saw to it that the leading elements of the Party should influence the Soviet organs, and not vice-versa. To bring this about something was required from the Communist Party which is still not understood by many persons otherwise well

acquainted with the Russian movement. This is what I said yesterday to one of the comrades of our Party: Russia is not a Prussian sergeant, and we are not recruits. Moscow represents the best leadership of the world revolution. Those who do not understand the significance of centralized discipline as the experience of the Russian Revolution created it are not good recruits of Communism or of the Communist Party. The leadership of the whole State apparatus by the Communist Party in a country as vast as Russia is a most difficult task. The history of the last five years shows that the forces of the Party are to be totally regrouped to meet the new task which the revolution put before the Party. Such a weapon as the New Economic Policy could not possibly be applied without a strict discipline in the Communist Party. It was only by a radical regrouping of the forces of our Party that we were able to carry out this policy without any great crisis in our Party.

How can we explain this discipline? Of course, there is the story that old-time Bolsheviks were an organization of conspirators under the leadership of Comrade Lenin. I am sorry to say that I was not a party to such conspiracy, and do not know what sort of conspirators they were. I know, however, that these conspirators have become the best leaders of the masses. Why? Because during this conspiring period of the Russian revolution a strict discipline was created and the members of the Party were trained in this discipline. Naturally, this discipline comes not only from the masses, but mainly from the leaders, and it requires therefore a great confidence in the leaders. This leadership is really the heart of the Russian Communist Party, the authoritative body of the whole Communist movement. Allow me to quote these few words from the Austrian poet Anzengruber:—“*Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother, but they must be worthy of it.*” The leaders of the Russian Revolution have gained the confidence of the masses and of the Communist Party because they have been worthy of it.

The iron discipline of the Russian Communist Party was what made it possible to carry on their elastic policy. I do not intend to say why this policy is elastic. The cause and source of the elasticity is well known to all. There is no body in the world where Marxism has been so completely incorporated as in the Communist Party of Russia; but the best Marxian analysis remains only an historical document when there is no organization sufficiently elastic to act in accordance with this analysis. Without a strict discipline, without well-organized cadres, the accomplishment of such a policy would be impossible. At the present time, in the sixth year of the revolution, the Communist Party of Russia is being faced with its greatest problem since the beginning of the revolution. It is, how to apply the Economic Policy under the leadership of a working class political party so that the realization of this policy might not bring into the Party certain petty bourgeois elements. The Communist Party of Russia has stood the test, thanks to its discipline and its elastic organization. Centralization and centralised discipline are the greatest lessons which we have been able to learn in the Russian Communist Party. Some of the best theses of the Comintern, it seems to me, are those of the Second Congress on the rôle of the Communist Party in the proletarian revolution. These theses have had the same effect, on a less intense scale, than the Communist Party of Russia has had in the Russian

revolution. The activity of the Communist Party of Russia should be a subject of study for every leader and organizer of the Western parties so that they may make critical use of the Russian experience in the Western situation and prepare their parties for the conquest and maintenance of power. The application of this experience is not the least problem of the International Revolution.

I am far from being an adherent of the free will doctrine, but I believe that for a realization of the prospects of a world revolution, the subjective factor of a Communist Party is one of the most important. We cannot determine the objective factors, at most we can influence them through the Communist Party. Nevertheless, I believe that if we had had Communist parties like the Russian one in 1919 in every country, at the time of the demobilization crisis, we would have been able not only to seize power, but also to have held it. The importance of the Communist Party as a subjective factor remains the same even in this period of comparative apathy. The question before us is: Considering the prospects for a world revolution, how can we build up such Communist parties which, in Western circumstances, perhaps through different means, can gradually win over the majority of the proletariat, before the revolution and after the revolution? Is it possible to create such Communist parties? I believe so. I have been working within the Communist Party of Russia, and I can say that the masses of its membership do not stand on a higher intellectual level than the German proletariat. I might even say that the masses of the German proletariat stand higher in culture than those of the Russian Communist Party. Of course, behind the Russian proletariat are five long years of experience in revolution; it is this experience which has made possible the elastic policy of the Russian Party.

But such elasticity is possible in all parties. I believe that the main problem in building up such subjective factors of the world revolution is the creation of basic revolutionary cadres. I believe that if we are able to form these cadres, these vanguard troops, we will be able to lead the Western proletariat to the conquest of power, and retain this power after we have gained it. That is why this is one of our chief tasks, and the lessons which the Russian Communist Party has given us from five years of experience in the Russian revolution are most important.

SURVEY of the **CLASS WAR** By **G. Zinoviev**

Report of the President of the Communist International, on behalf of the Executive Committee, to the Fourth Congress.

I. The Retreat of the Workers

COMRADES, first of all I must report on the activity of our Executive during the period intervening between the Third and the Fourth Congress, and then discuss the future activity of the Communist International.

I have embodied the facts and figures concerning the activity of the Executive during the past 15 months in an article which has appeared in several languages. Therefore I will not refer again to these matters.

We have two questions to consider: firstly, whether our

Executive has carried out the decisions of the Third Congress in the right way, and secondly, whether these decisions themselves were correct. This is all the more necessary since much material has accumulated during the 15 months, which we had not at our disposal before.

Let us now consider the situation at the end of the Third Congress, which was a determining factor in our entire policy. Immediately after the Third Congress, it became evident that world capitalism had begun a well organised and systematic offensive against the working class throughout the world. The working class was, so to speak, beating a retreat. A large number of very important strikes, on a large scale, took place throughout the world during the last 15 months of our activity. In examining somewhat closely the results of these strikes, we must admit that the majority of them ended in the defeat of the workers. These strikes were in the nature of a capitalist offensive. The economic organisations of the working class have become less numerous. There were in 1920, 25,000,000 members in the trade unions. In 1922 the trade unions had only 18,000,000 members, and I am not quite sure if even this figure is not exaggerated. This fact alone shows the difficult position of the working class during the period covered by this report.

The position of Soviet Russia during this period must be taken into account. I need not remind you, immediately after the conclusion of the Third Congress that famine on a large scale was beginning in Russia. This was not quite evident during the Third Congress, but immediately after its conclusion we had to address the workers of the whole world on behalf of the Executive of the Communist International asking support for the Russian proletariat during the famine year. This fact had enormous political consequences. You are aware that we have been accused of using the International as a weapon of the Russian Soviet Republic. There are even some "friends" who make this assertion. It is of course self-evident that there is and there ought and must be an interaction between the first proletarian republic and the Communist Party which is fighting against the bourgeoisie. From our communist viewpoint it is perfectly clear that the Communist International is of the greatest importance for Soviet Russia, and vice versa. It is utterly ridiculous to ask who is the exploited, who the subject, and who the object. The Republic and the International are as the foundation and the roof of a building, they belong together.

The situation with which we were faced during the last year, was taken advantage of by our opponents, in order to fight against the idea of the proletarian dictatorship in general. The entire Second International endeavoured to use the Russian famine for a campaign against the Communist International. A special feature of their campaign was the assertion that the Communist International was only a weapon of the Soviet Republic.

The Russian Soviet Republic is such a great international factor that no one can possibly ignore it. It is only a question on which side of the barricade one takes up his position. Let me give you as an illustration, from recent events, the letter of Clynes, the leader of the British Labour Party. I believe that most of you have read that letter. Mr. Clynes, one of the best known leaders

of recent years, addressed a letter to the Soviet Republic which has now been published. In this letter Clynes proposes that the Soviet Republic should endorse as soon as possible the agreement with Mr. Urquhart (which you all know) in order that the Labour Party should have a better chance of success at the coming general election. Mr. Clynes assured us that he was speaking not for himself alone but on behalf of all his colleagues. Though Great Britain is a big capitalist imperialist power, nevertheless the general election in that country is closely connected with the situation of Soviet Russia. The Labour Party, one of the important Parties, or rather the most important Party in the Second International, cannot ignore this situation in Russia, and must take sides, but on whose behalf, and on which barricade? The answer is—on the side of Mr. Urquhart, on the side of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, we think that when the Second International is accusing the Third International of being nothing but an appendix and a weapon of Soviet Russia we can justly say that neither can the Second International brush aside the Russian Soviet Republic, but must take it into account. The only difference is that the Second International is endeavouring to make use of the proletarian Soviet Republic for the benefit of the bourgeoisie and not for that of the proletariat.

As I said before, the famine in Soviet Russia served for the Second and Two-and-a-half Internationals as a starting point for an energetic campaign of all their parties against the Third International, and we are obliged to admit that this campaign was successful to a considerable extent. To the non-party workers, lacking in political training, to be faced with the fact that famine reigned in the first Soviet Republic and that the life of the Russian workers and peasants was one of suffering and hardship, amounted to a great disappointment in the revolution in general. One can be annoyed at this, but one cannot refuse to understand it. Considering the condition in which the working masses found themselves after the war, this was inevitable. It was certainly very dishonest on the part of our opponents to make use of our misfortunes, for they must have known the origin of the famine. They must have known that the traitors in the Second and the Two-and-a-half Internationals, and the entire tactics of imperialism were the chief culprits. It was evident, however, from the start that the Second International would make use of this in the struggle which it has been carrying on against us, and it has indeed done so.

To recapitulate, the position of the Communist International, as well as that of the first Soviet Republic has been a very difficult one this year, and our unscrupulous opponents, the Second and Two-and-a-half Internationals, endeavoured to make use of it to our detriment, achieved a certain amount of success in this attempt.

As already stated, the strikes were in the nature of an offensive of the bourgeoisie. I do not want to tire you with too many tables and figures (this can be done in a pamphlet), but I will use as an illustration a country which is of the greatest importance to us in the question of the united front, I refer to France. The French comrades were the most decided opponents of the united front tactics. Matters are different now. It seems to me, however, that if the comrades who so violently criticised the Communist International, had taken into consideration the figures I

am going to quote they would have certainly been obliged to express themselves in favour of the united front. The number of workers engaged in strikes in France which might be termed offensive strikes, i.e., strikes for raising the working class level of existence, for higher wages, etc., has been as follows: in 1915, that is during the war, only 8,000 workers in France participated in offensive strikes. In 1916 (still during the war), their number rose to 37,000; in 1918 to 131,000; in 1919 to 1,053,000; and in the first half of 1920 it dropped to 628,000. From that time the strike curve began to go down. In the second half of 1920 only 57,000 workers participated in offensive strikes, and in 1921, the year under consideration now, only 9,000 workers.

As against that we have in the first eight months of 1921, 160,000 French workers participating in defensive strikes. This means that in the years 1921-22, the offensive of capitalism was most acute and compelled the French working class to confine itself to defensive strikes, being too weak for an offensive against the bourgeoisie which had then launched its attack all along the line.

I am of the opinion that this was the deciding factor in France, as well as in other countries in the question of the united front tactics. If our French friends had paid attention to these figures and had studied the development of the strike movement in their own country a little more closely, I am sure that they would, from the beginning have relinquished their opposition to the united front.

Such was the general situation from the beginning of our activity and all during the period covered by this report. The Third Congress for the first time sharply repudiated the tactics of the so-called left elements, such as the K.A.P.—the semi-anarchist groups on the one hand, and of the right groups on the other hand. I want to remind you of the Levi group to which we had to devote some attention at the Third Congress. Then there was the Italian Socialist Party figuring very prominently at the Third Congress. We realised then that the formation of truly Communist Parties had only just begun. The Third Congress left us the well-known watchword "to the masses," and in the resolution on tactics it set before us the task of winning over the majority of the working class and rousing and drawing into the struggle the most important social sections of the proletariat.

The slogan of the united front first formulated by our Executive in December, 1921, was the direct outcome of this general situation. I believe, comrades, that now, after two sessions of the Enlarged Executive—which were in reality small world congresses—we have progressed so far that even in France the Communists, as well as the Syndicalists, gave up the opposition to the united front, so that a lengthy discussion of the matter will not be necessary at this Congress. It is clear that our Executive was right when, in December, 1921, it issued the slogan: "To the Masses," and adopted the policy of the united front. All our strategy has been nothing but the practical application of the united front to the concrete situation in each country. And I wish to state now that in my opinion this tactic will have to be adhered to during the coming year or coming years.

The united front was really the first international campaign which the International attempted on a large scale. You know that we have insisted that the Communist International must be

an International of action, an International of work, a centralised International Communist World Party, etc. This is an absolutely right principle, and we must abide by it. But we require years and years in order to carry it out thoroughly. It is comparatively easy to adopt a resolution to this effect, but it is a much harder task when it comes to practical work. Even the attempt to carry out an international membership week—an undertaking which really differs very little from similar attempts by the Second International—failed because our Parties are still too heterogeneous, because our Parties are in many cases not yet communistic, and have still much of the Social Democratic spirit in them, because their organisation is deficient, because it is a hard task generally to organise international action. During the past year we attempted several international campaigns, as the campaign for Famine Relief, the campaign in connection with the S.R. Trial. Among these the campaign for the united front was of special importance.

It has appeared that some groups in our Communist International are trying to bring too many of the customs of the Second International into the Third. I believe that we cannot regard what happened in France without protest. At the time when the Communist International should have been a centralised world organisation of the proletariat, when the International was starting a wide campaign against Amsterdam in connection with the united front, at that time an iron discipline, or, at any rate ordinary proletarian discipline should have prevailed in our ranks which however was not the case. I must say that what the French, and partly also the Italian parties have done was a hindrance to the International action which our organisation had planned. We should see this clearly and adopt the necessary measures to meet the situation. This campaign was politically very important, but it was not such as would vitally affect hundreds of thousands of comrades. But when campaigns such as these meet with so many hindrances there is cause to fear that in times of greater crisis similar disturbances may occur.

II. The Situation in Germany

Comrades, I believe that it will be best if in my report on the activity of the Executive I take country by country. Allow me to preface this by the following general observation. The greater the portion of the old social-democratic movement which we had taken over into our ranks, the greater the remainder of centrism and social democratism we have had to contend with in our party. You will be able to see that clearly from my review of the situation.

I begin with Germany. Germany stood in the centre of our debates at the Third World Congress. The situation of the German Party at the time of the Third World Congress was very difficult, as you know. Our enemies spoke of complete disintegration, too many of our friends were hypnotised by the temporarily difficult situation of the German Party. The Executive is proud that it has been able to render effective help to the German Party in the solution of its severe crisis. I believe that we can maintain in all truth and without exaggeration that our German Party is one of the strongest and best organised parties at this Congress (naturally, comparatively speaking), and has the clearest political outlook. This should give us encouragement to-day when so many of our larger parties find themselves in similar difficulties. The

French Party is the object of the greatest pessimism for many of the members of this Congress. I believe, however, that the example of the German Party should suffice to quieten the fears of this Congress, and I can say that if this Congress acts judiciously, we will be able to render help to the French Party and strengthen its position. The political situation in Germany is revolutionary, and favourable to the only true revolutionary party in Germany, that is, our Communist Party. The union of the Independent Socialist Party and the Socialist Party of Germany which we had predicted in Halle has become a fact. I remember that in Halle after the well-known historical vote, when we took the occasion in the concluding speech to say that nothing remained for the Right but to join the Social Democracy, a great deal of indignation was aroused. Everybody said that this was brazen demagoguery, etc. One need not have been a prophet to predict this. It was quite clear that at this period of civil war he who would not pass over to Communism must join Social Democracy. This is just what has happened.

Comrade Lenin was right when he said, in his telegram of greeting to the Congress, that the union of the Second and Two-and-a-half Internationals marks an advance in the revolutionary movement. Less fiction, less lies, fewer illusions are better for the working class. I believe that in Germany we will soon realise that this union has actually been an advantage for our movement. We know that for such old time revolutionists as Ledebour, in Germany, there are but two ways: either to join the Communists or the Social Democrats. The German proletariat will be able to see in a few months which way it will choose.

When I ask myself, what Parties have best applied the policy of the United Front, I find they are the German and the Czecho-Slovak parties—comparatively speaking, of course. We have often seen that our German Party did not always emphasise sufficiently the independence of our line of action; for with us the insistence upon the independence of Communist agitation is the main thing. It was not always successful in this. But in general, the German Party has applied these tactics. Strikes, such as the railroad strike in Germany, are a classical example of the right application of the policy of the United Front: this strike was also a proof that every economic strike usually grows into a political one. I have read an article of the German "International" stating that the Fourth Congress will have to say clearly what is coming in Germany next? Will it be a period of increasing economic conflicts or of political conflicts? To put the question this way is absolutely incorrect. The coming period will be one of increased economic conflicts, and also of increased political struggle. The railroad strike has clearly shown that almost every economic conflict may turn into a political conflict.

You have heard of the Shop Stewards Movement which has just begun, and which will doubtless have a great future. The social democrats have accused our Party of intending to call a Congress of the Shop Stewards, and then place before Germany an accomplished fact, as the Bolsheviki did in 1917 with the Congress of Soviets (the Bolsheviki, however, had already wrenched the power from the bourgeoisie). I am sorry to say that the German Party does not merit this accusation, or rather this compliment.

The Communist Party of Germany is not strong enough to be able to carry out what the Bolsheviki had done in 1917. But this campaign will be of the greatest importance for the consolidation of our ranks.

Our Germany Party has not grown very much numerically. It is one of the characteristic features of the movement, this year, that those parties whose influence upon the masses increased, did not grow numerically in the same proportion. There were various reasons for this, such as unemployment, the poverty of the proletarian who cannot afford to pay the minimum dues to the Party. There were also political causes which we may best observe in Germany. No one will deny that the influence of our German Party has considerably increased. Nevertheless, its number has not grown very much. I once said at a meeting of the Russian Communist Party that Germany must advance the slogan of raising its membership to a million.

But this will be no easy matter. I do not mean to say that the proletarian revolution should be postponed until we shall have attained that million. In this connection I recollect that the Russian Party at the outbreak of the proletarian revolution had at most 250,000 members; the German Party is already stronger, numerically, than was the Russian Party in 1917. But you may rest assured that the break up of the German Social Democracy will go on at a more rapid pace than some of us anticipate. It is true that differences of opinion still prevail in our German Party; there are still many questions to be fought out, such as the question of the programme, on which the last session of the Central Committee was not quite unanimous. But on comparing the movement now with what it was fourteen months ago we maintain that the German Party has taken a gigantic step forward. If events are not entirely misleading, the path of the proletarian revolution in Russia leads through Germany. Thus the healing of all feuds in our Party in Germany is of first-class importance. In Germany there are only two Parties: as to the Ledebour Group, we prophesy that within a few months it will either go over to the Communists or disappear altogether. We can afford to wait for events to decide themselves. The future shall belong to our Party.

Communication between the Executive and the German Party was of the best, if not ideal. There were many shortcomings, due in part to the fault of the Executive and partly to that of the German Party. However that may be, communications were fairly good, and practically no political event was allowed to pass without an exchange of views between the Executive and the German Party.

III. The French Movement

I now turn to France. We will yet have some special comment to make upon this subject. But I cannot pass on in my general report without touching upon it. A few months ago I wrote an article under the title of: "The Birth of a Communist Party." In that article I stated that the birth of a Communist Party was quite a difficult matter. Yet, on considering the course of events since the Party Congress in Paris, one must say that the birth of a Communist Party, in France, presents even greater difficulties than might have been anticipated. There you have the formula I made: "The greater the number of Social democratic elements

won over by us from the old Party, the greater are the difficulties that we have to overcome," in the most concrete form. This you will have occasion to observe also in Norway, and perhaps also in some other countries. In France we suddenly won over to our side the majority of the old Party, and it now requires a good deal of time before we shall have overcome all the ailments arising out of this. The situation was closely watched by the Executive and its representatives, some of whom, like Humbert-Droz, spent half a year in France. This observation goes to show—let us be quite frank about it—that we have to look for quite a lot of elements for a Communist Party in the ranks of the Syndicalists, in the ranks of the best part of the Syndicalists. This is strange, but true.

The tradition of the French movement is such that even now—in 1922, after two years of the existence of a Communist Party—we have to state that we have in France a good number of Communists who will be the best elements of our future Communist Party, and who are still outside the ranks of the Party, in the ranks of the Trade Unions. And I think it is one of the most important tasks of our Congress, and of the French Commission, to bring into our ranks these truly proletarian and truly revolutionary and Communist elements. The tradition in France is such that the Party is considered as a Party of "politicians," and it must be regretfully admitted that such view is not held without reason.

At the Third Congress we did not adopt a sufficiently critical attitude towards the French Party. It was so young at the time, and the Congress had much other work in hand. Perhaps it was a blunder on the part of the Executive; this might readily be admitted—nevertheless, it is a fact that we applied too little criticism to the French Party at the Third Congress, and it proved a disadvantage to the French Party.

As late as three or four months ago the leaders of the French Party maintained towards the Executive an attitude of criticism from the Left Wing. They criticised the tactics of the United Front as being opportunist. I do not know whether there were many members of the Communist International who were naive enough to imagine that the French Party was really criticising from a left point of view. I do not think so. It is a good thing at any rate that such times are gone.

The French Party had failed to apply the tactics of the Communist International in a country where it was particularly dictated by circumstances. I have already quoted some figures on the strikes in France. These figures go to show that when the Party understood the real movement of the masses, the real proletarian movement, it understood also the United Front, the tactics the advocacy of which should be made the point of contact with the masses. The bourgeoisie in France is conducting a systematic campaign against the eight-hour day, and it must be frankly recognised that the Executive failed in its efforts to induce our Party to initiate a systematic counter-campaign. Our attempts to inaugurate a campaign in France for the eight-hour day in the spirit of the United Front failed.

Let me recall to your mind the last general strike that took place in France. In this respect also we must freely speak our minds. It was our usual experience in France, in the course of

1918, to see a declaration of a strike on the Sunday and Monday of every week. But nobody took any notice of it. Those were in the worst days of Syndicalism, and I believe it should be one of the most important tasks of our Party to eradicate this tradition. Unfortunately, our Party has perpetuated this unwholesome tradition. The general strike to which the French workers were called a few weeks ago was forced by a very small group of anarchists. Our newspaper, *Humanité*, the biggest Labour newspaper in France, was made use of to urge the working class to declare the strike at a time when our Party was totally unprepared. We must draw the proper conclusions from the incident, and never again allow repetition.

The French Party has again at its last Congress confirmed the 21 conditions. I had somewhat forgotten these 21 conditions, and to-day I had occasion to read them over once more. The first of these 21 conditions stipulates that the Press should be truly Communist. I must declare it openly that this first of the 21 conditions has not been carried out in France. *Humanité* strives to be a Communist newspaper, but it is still far from being such. It has a very large circulation, and has rendered brilliant services in many respects—this should be admitted—but it is not yet a Communist newspaper, and the Fourth Congress should begin by enforcing this first of the 21 conditions, and I hope it will succeed.

In France, as you know, we now have three tendencies and two minor tendencies. I am not going to describe these tendencies in detail. Taken as a whole, they amount to centrism, or, as we have already said, it is a centre without centrists. This we have both said and written. Perhaps this is a little too complimentary to the French. They are not perfectly centrist, although a pretty good background of Centrism is there plainly enough. Thus we have both a centre and centrism. We must attempt to retain the centre while ejecting centrism. It is mostly the leaders who came over to our side from the old Party, who, while rendering great service to the Communist International, have not yet got rid of the old Adam of social democracy. On reading Comrade Marcel Cachin's latest articles on the Trade Unions one must say that these articles are not written any better than the article of Verfeuil, whom we expelled at the Paris Congress.

The second tendency pursues a middle course ; I refer to the Renoult Group. Here we must say that we find among them some very good proletarians, of whom many have criticised the tactics of the United Front from a sincere Left Wing point of view, but who eventually became convinced of the correctness of our tactics and will come back to us.

The third tendency is really Communist. We will accept everything that they have done, although at the Paris Congress they committed big mistakes.

Personally I regard the resignation of our responsible comrades of the Left as a big mistake, but we must say that this group deserves the moral support of the Communist International, and we will not deny it to them. This group began the fight for the United Front; they have made many mistakes, but they were the only ones who really defended the Marxist policy of the United Front in France and brought it to victory.

I must tell you, comrades, that from our first conferences with

our comrades we became convinced that a split was avoidable, and the Comintern will naturally do all in its power to prevent a split. But this example shows us clearly how difficult is the birth of the Communist Party. Just think of this, comrades: the French Party has not yet carried out a single mass action. Think of what will happen when they attempt one. I remind you of the fact that the first real conflict of the German Communist Party came after an action had been attempted. Whether the action was good or bad makes no difference; the fact remains that a real conflict began with a mass action. The action was a cure for the Party; it saved it: it was also the beginning of a new conflict within the party. Prophecies are out of place, but when it comes to a real movement, to a real mass action, when it becomes a question of life and death, then we will see a real crisis in the French Party, then we will see who actually belongs to the Communist Party and who does not.

IV. The Italian Position

I now come to Italy. The example of the Italian Party should be a classical example of the policy of the Communist Parties and the Communist International. If ever a true A. B. C. of the tactics of the Communist Parties is to be written, the most important chapter, the most important example, would be furnished by Italy. It is not the classical land for a Communist movement, but nevertheless we see much happening there with classical inevitability. From that we see that Italy is on the eve of revolution. In the fall of 1920 Italy presented the most advanced Communist movement. Our conflict with Italy at that time was not that we told the Italian comrades to make a revolution immediately. The Communist International has never demanded this of the Italian Party. Theoretically speaking, it was possible that if our party had won power in the fall of 1920 the case of Hungary might have repeated itself. I doubt it, but it was not impossible. We have never demanded from the Italian comrades that they must make a revolution. Perhaps it was true that the time was not ripe for the seizure of power. If the majority accepted this standpoint, we would not have been justified in treating with the Italian Socialist Party on that account.

The cause of the break was not that they did not want to seize power. Our standpoint was, that the situation was revolutionary, and that we must be prepared for all eventualities; the reformists had to be eliminated as a preliminary to the building up of a real revolutionary party. This is why we demanded the expulsion of those who sabotaged the revolution; but the Communist International did not, in the fall of 1920, demand that the Italian working class rise and seize power. Another claim is historically false. You know that D'Arragona has openly confessed that the reformists remained in the Party to prevent the revolution. That is why they had to be expelled. It was only a question of preparing the Party for a possible revolution, but not of making an immediate revolution.

As you know, the majority of the Italian Party refused to fulfil the demand of the International. They did not wish to build a revolutionary party or to break with these agents of the bourgeoisie. These words "agents of the bourgeoisie" have caused much excitement; our friends in Italy shed tears of blood over tactlessness because in a telegram I sent I called the reformists "agents of the

bourgeoisie" ; but after D'Arragona's confession I believe that this will be too mild an expression to describe these gentlemen. I can think of no more diplomatic way of describing them. The reformists, these agents of the bourgeoisie, remained in the Italian Party and did all in their power to prevent a revolution and to deliver the working-class to the counter-revolution.

Our Italian comrades do not agree among themselves as to whether what has already happened in Italy is a coup d'etat, or a comedy. It might be both. Historically, it is a comedy, in a few months this will turn to the advantage of the Italian working class, but for the time being it is quite a serious change, an actual counter-revolutionary act. The fault of our Italian comrades is not that they did not make a revolution in 1920 ; but that they have permitted accomplices of the bourgeoisie to remain in the Party to betray the working class into the hands of the Fascisti.

You know the policy of the Executive. You know that the question of whether the Party had acted rightly or not at Leghorn has been much debated at different congresses. I believe that it is clear now that we acted properly at Leghorn and in the following year. Our Italian Communist Party has often acted against the policy of the Executive on the Italian question. I believe, however, comrades, that we were justified, that at the moment it was necessary to break definitely with the Italian Socialist Party, for if we had not done so the Communist International would have been lost. But from the moment we saw that the members of the Italian Socialist Party recognised their faults and wished to rectify them, we could not but do everything to facilitate their return to the Communist International. It is quite clear that whatever happens the majority of the workers will leave the Maximalists and join the Communists in the coming months. And since they will belong to our Party, it is our duty to make it easy for them to return to the International. It is the function of the Communist International to treat a group which, having seen its error, wishes to return to our fold. Of course we must demand guarantees, and we will do so. The things that have happened in Italy must never happen again. We must have sufficient guarantees to that effect. Nevertheless, we must do everything to reunite with these comrades.

I hear that many comrades in France believe that it might not be such a dangerous act to break with the Communist International. "They may abuse us a little," they say, but they are sure to invite us again to the Fifth or Sixth Congress and to reunite with us. The comrades are thinking of the case of Italy. What shall we say to this? Those who speak so, forget that during such a period of time the Italian Party was destroyed and the Italian working class delivered into the hands of the Fascisti. These comrades see things only from the personal standpoint. They think: We shall be expelled to-day, but to-morrow or after a year, we will be able to return and begin our work again. The fact that in the meantime the Party and the working class may be destroyed is a minor point for them. I believe that this is the conception of only a few isolated persons. The majority of the French Party is incapable of holding such ideas.

The lesson of the Italian Communist Party does not consist in that one or another of its leaders had fought us for two years, and then came back to Moscow ; that is a secondary matter. The

lesson lies much deeper. The lesson is that if you give a finger to the reformists, they will take the whole hand. Those who commit such errors must lead their party to destruction, and cause the greatest harm to the working class of their country. We are certain to have differences not only with the Maximalists, but also with Italian Communists. In certain questions we are not of the same opinion. They have adopted a programme which is not Marxist. We have criticised and rejected it. Yet these conceptions are still deep-rooted in the Italian Party. It is still tinged with absenteeism. Our friend Bordiga has won great merits in the Italian movement. The comrades have fought bravely. Under most difficult circumstances they did everything possible to keep the banner of the Communist International flying. We must acknowledge these merits, especially of Comrade Bordiga; nevertheless, we must say that our opinions differ very much from theirs. The tinge of absenteeism still remains. Bordiga no longer advocates anti-parliamentarianism, he has given up these views, but the spirit of anti-parliamentarianism still remains. We see it in the manner in which the party conducted the United Front tactic.

The tactic of the United Front was conducted by the Italian Party from the standpoint that it was admissible only on the economic field, but not on the political. We consider this a mistake. The tactic applies to both fields. We were too late in applying the United Front tactic in Italy, and we were also late in raising the slogan of the Labour Government. I personally erred in not conceding to Comrade Bordiga's request to allow the discussion of the Italian question at the last meeting of the Enlarged Executive Committee. That was a mistake. There ought to have been an open discussion.

Nevertheless, we regard the Italian Communist Party as one of the best and bravest in the Communist International. It is precisely at this most difficult moment that the party will show of what it is capable. To-day I read an illegal manifesto issued by the Italian Communist Party, and I have also received the first illegal manifesto of the central organ of our party. This proves that the Italian Party has not laid down its arms, even in the most difficult moment.

We have appointed an Italian Commission. It will have to deal with two matters: (1) the unification of the Party, and (2) organisation of our forces during this epoch of Fascism. We do not know how long this epoch will last, but we must prepare for the worst.

V. Activities in other countries

Now about Czecho-Slovakia. In Czecho-Slovakia the Executive, of course, with the help of the Party as a whole, has successfully achieved unity. At the time of the Third Congress we had two parties and several groups in Czecho-Slovakia. It was somewhat doubtful as to whether unity could be organised in this country, where national problems play such an important part. But we have succeeded. We neglected certain opportunities in the Trade Unions. Nevertheless our party has succeeded in rallying the largest section of the trade unions under the Red Flag. We must say, that the United Front tactic has been most brilliantly applied by the Czecho-Slovakian Party.

If you study the bourgeois Press and follow the development of

affairs in the opposition Press you will admit that our Party has manœuvred skilfully and has succeeded in attracting the majority of the workers away from enemy organisations. We hope, therefore, that the practical application of the United Front tactic will be as brilliantly continued in this country. As you know, there is one point on which we disagree with the Czecho-Slovakian Party. (Perhaps this applies to other parties, too ; that we shall see later.) It is the exclusion of the so-called Opposition. We have set up a Commission which will examine this question. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from giving our point of view on this matter now.

Our Czecho-Slovakian Party, at its last congress, expelled seven members of the Central Committee, including its former president, Sturk, on account of breach of discipline. This came quite unexpectedly for the Executive, which had not been consulted in the matter. The Executive deemed it its duty immediately to annul the decision. This does not mean that the opposition had been found in the right. The Executive abides by the standpoint of the majority of the Party. We do not wish to describe the Opposition as the Left opposition, neither do we wish to back it politically, but we do say that the expulsion was hasty and that all the other means had not been exhausted. In the heat of the fight the guilt of this group was compared to that of Paul Levi. Their guilt consists in having published an appeal in spite of the Central Committee's veto. It was certainly a step that could not be approved from the point of view of Communist Party discipline. But to compare this breach of discipline with that of Paul Levi is altogether irrelevant. Levi had betrayed the working class at a moment when our brothers were being shot down. At that juncture he wrote a pamphlet to the order of the German Attorney-General. This was an act of treason to the working class, to which there was but one answer, expulsion. On the other hand the action of the Czecho-Slovakian comrades, although a grave breach of discipline, could not be in any way described as treason. We should do all possible to retain this group within the ranks of the party, on condition, of course, that there should be no further breach of discipline, and that the decisions that have been adopted shall also be carried out. We must have a disciplined party, but we cannot afford to expel members so readily, however small a group it may be, before all other means have been tried. And this has not been done in the present case. We hope that these comrades will understand quite clearly that the Executive did not invite them here in order to pat them on the back and say: You may tread discipline underfoot. Nothing of the kind! They have been invited in order that we may try to bring them back to the Party and convince them that party discipline is a necessary and admirable thing. Should it be shown that these comrades are unable to observe proletarian discipline, then there is nothing to be done for them. The decision of the congress must be law in this case.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that in Czecho-Slovakia we have already some 600,000 unemployed. The misery and despair of the working class is extreme. The masses are in an angry mood. Now, it is easy enough to form a Syndicalist group, then a K.A.P. or a K.A.P.C.-S. (Communist Labour Party or Communist Labour Party of Czecho-Slovakia) just now. These comrades should therefore understand quite clearly that they are not

to form any such groups which at best might last perhaps for six months, to the detriment of the working class. We have to see the situation as it is. In a country like Czecho-Slovakia, with such a huge number of unemployed, we must do everything possible to prevent the formation of a separate K.A.P. group. The Communist International must do everything to avoid it, and I hope we shall succeed.

I now come to the Norwegian question. I have already said that the more elements we get from the old movement the more difficult is the birth of a truly Communist Party. In Norway we have got the bulk of the old Party, with the result that we are experiencing great difficulties there, which I do not intend to conceal. The question is similar to that of France. Of course, there is some difference, but the source of the trouble is the same. In France we received a legacy of the old party traditions. In Norway there is a strong Federalist tradition and a peculiar method of organisation. The Party was hitherto built upon the trade union organisation. At Halle we had a conversation with Comrade Kirre Grep, the leader of the Norwegian party, and with other comrades who then promised to reorganise the Party. So far this has not been done. Even the name of the central organ has not been changed. The Norwegian newspaper still carries the old name *Social Democrat*. The provincial newspapers are also called *Socialdemokraten*. As you see, it is also high time to take action in Norway, so that the demands of the Communist International may be complied with.

We must not be afraid to admit that we are a Communist Party. Yet we have some parties which have not yet got rid of social democratic labels. To be sure, we were born in the lap of the Second International, and we have inherited some of its traditions, which cannot be outlived overnight. But when this night has lasted a couple of years, we must demand an acceleration of the process. In our Norwegian newspapers, for instance, you could read articles which lend support to the Scheidemannites against the German Communists. At the same time we have survivals which are syndicalist in the worst sense of the word. Comrade Tranael used to be in the I.W.W. and still retains some of the Syndicalist tradition. He cannot understand discipline. In an article he writes: "Discipline, discipline, I can't stand the word! It is something degrading to the dignity of a free man." And this is said by a comrade who is by no means an unregenerate highbrow, but an honest and sincere working class fighter, but here tradition sways the man. Tradition is so strong that it causes confusion in the mind of one of our best Norwegian comrades. There is also in Norway a band of intellectuals, similar to the Clarté group, publishing a magazine which advocates practically the same principles as those of the Levi group. And our Party tolerates this without taking action. This year we must act with determination. We have a delegation of the minority of the Norwegian Party here, and I am sure we shall succeed in solving our problems. Norwegian comrades! You must clearly understand that the Communist International will not countenance such conditions as those which have prevailed. We are well aware of the good qualities of the Norwegian movement, and we appreciate them. The Norwegian movement is at one with the working masses. It has comrades who are absolutely devoted to

the proletarian revolution. But it must, once for all, shake off the trammels of Social Democracy. It must understand that it will not become a real Communist Party unless it makes short shift of such evils.

I now turn to Poland. In Poland we have an illegal mass party. The policy of co-ordinating the legal with the illegal is a very important one, and the experience of the past year has shown, to my way of thinking, that this co-ordination is not quite as simple as we had imagined. The Russian Communists have the experience of 1905-1906. We were then of the opinion that when a legal movement is impossible, there should be co-ordination of the legal with the illegal, with the leadership in the hands of the legal organisation. Now we have to reckon with the experience of various countries, which goes to show that such co-ordination is not quite so simple. It was possible in Poland, and it was practised there. We have an illegal party there which at the same time is a mass party. We have almost no legal movement there. In Poland this is possible, because the Polish Party has already gone through a revolution, because in 1905 it led the working class, because the illegal leadership has already fought in the front ranks of the working class. The party is universally acknowledged. It has proved its reliability through its activities during the revolution. Therefore in Poland this method succeeds, while in other countries, e.g., in America, it is much more difficult, because the legal party there has not yet had occasion to work in the open, before the entire working class, in a leading capacity; because the leaders there are not so well-known. There the co-ordination between legal and illegal is of a quite different kind.

As I have already said, in Poland we have an illegal mass party, an old party with a glorious past behind it. Yet there are also important points in which the Executive of the Polish Party had certain differences of opinion, such as the agrarian question, the question of nationalities, and partly the question of the United Front. The agrarian question we shall discuss with our Polish comrades specially. Among our Polish comrades a conception of the agrarian question has prevailed for a long time, which in my opinion is out of date and almost social democratic. I must recall the stand that was taken by the Second Congress upon this question. At that Congress we adopted a platform wherein we proposed, in order to win over the peasantry, to include a statement of the problem of a redistribution of land.

We also met with some opposition from the Italian Socialists. The Fascisti have shown that they are able to make use of such a programme for their own demagogic purposes. This mistake of our Italian comrades has cost us much, and the same error may harm us in Poland and other countries. Fortunately the policy of the Polish Party appears to be changing, and we hope that we may be able to come to an agreement with them on the agrarian question and devise a programme of action which will draw the peasantry to the party. The Communist Party is a working class party: this does not mean, however, that we represent only the demands of the industrial proletariat; we represent the working class, but we must know how to draw into our ranks all the oppressed classes fighting against the bourgeoisie.

We also had a difference of opinion with the Polish comrades

on the question of nationalities. We hope that we have also disposed of this disagreement.

On the question of the United Front, it appears that a minority—and, I believe, a small minority of the Polish Party—was against the United Front. However, it is very grave that such an opposition should have appeared in one of our oldest parties. We are convinced that the Polish Party itself will be able to reconcile these differences of opinion, and has probably already done so. But this difference of opinion did exist, and it proves how difficult is the practical application of the United Front.

There is not much to say of the Balkans. I must say, however, that our Balkan Federation is functioning poorly. The Balkan Federation is practically non-existent. There are no regular meetings ; I believe that we must insist that the Balkan Federation be strengthened, and that the Bulgarian Party give more attention to this question. A few words on Roumania : we wish to tell the Congress that they have fulfilled their duty in spite of all persecution. You know that the whole Congress of the Roumanian comrades, numbering several hundreds, were taken directly from the Congress to prison. Many of them have been shot ; many are still in prison. The Social Democrats have shamelessly co-operated with the bourgeoisie in crushing the Communist Party. The merit of our Roumanian comrades is all the greater that they have remained true to the Communist International under the most trying circumstances, and have fulfilled their duty in spite of all.

The Yugo-Slavian movement has just gone through a crisis. The question of legal or illegal activity has appeared. This problem has not yet been solved. The party has had great difficulties. Yugo-Slavia is again progressing, however. A new movement among the trade unions has begun, and we hope that our party will soon regain its power. A commission will deal with internal conflicts in the Yugo-Slavian Party.

In England, a most important country for the development of our organisation, we are growing very slowly. In no other country perhaps does the Communist movement make such slow progress. The problem of the adhesion of the Party to the Labour Party has been finally solved. The Party has decided to affiliate to the Labour Party. It will be one of the special tasks of the coming Executive, I believe, to give more attention to England. We do not know as yet the causes of this slow development. England is not a country of a large mass organisation. You know that the Communist Party there has not a large membership. We have no organisation there which corresponds to that of the German Party. This is owing to peculiar traditions. If we take into consideration the great amount of unemployment and the suffering of the English proletariat, the slow development of Communism in England is remarkable. We must pay more attention to the English movement than we have done heretofore.

We were able to send a delegate to America who remained there for some time. The greatest difficulty with which the American movement has been confronted was the problem of combining legal and illegal work. The situation is quite different from that in Poland, Yugo-Slavia, Finland or Latvia, where we have already had a revolution and the leaders of the working class have already gained the recognition of the proletariat. In America we have quite

a different situation ; there is a comparatively large trade union movement, and a Communist Party with violent factional strife. Therefore, America is one of our most difficult problems, and must be studied carefully.

In Austria, in spite of all difficulties, our Party has made great progress.

In Hungary, on the contrary, the situation is pitiful. I see many comrades here who have taken part energetically in factional strife and have contributed not a little to make the situation worse. You must permit me to criticise these comrades before the forum of the Communist International. The Executive has made an energetic attempt to surmount these difficulties. I do not wish to speak here of the political emigration. History teaches us that our cause owes much to such emigrés. Perhaps the Italian Party will have an emigration in the near future. We have sometimes thought that political emigration was a necessity. But there are emigrations and emigrations. There are emigrés who have suffered greatly after an unsuccessful revolution, but our Hungarian comrades have emigrated so much that it has become too much. I hope that the Fourth Congress will tell them energetically enough that we do not wish nor shall we allow a repetition of what we have seen. In a single day, a few weeks ago, 170 Communists were arrested in Hungary. In spite of the fact that the Communist movement is gaining among the masses, the situation of our party is as bad as can be. It is our duty, at a time when the working class movement is growing and the bourgeoisie is arresting hundreds of our comrades, to conquer the differences of opinion among emigrants and build up a real underground party. One may say that the combination of legal and illegal work in Hungary will be easy, because the Communists there have an old tradition behind them.

In Japan we have a small party which, with the help of the Executive has united with the best Syndicalist elements. It is a young party, but it is an important nucleus, and the Japanese Party should now issue a programme. The Congress of the Parties and the peoples of the Far East, which met here in Moscow, had great importance, especially for Japan, because, for the first time, it introduced the important question of the Japanese movement.

We have had valuable results in India. I can communicate to the Congress that the work of our comrades during the past few months has been crowned with success. Comrade Roy, with a group of friends, is issuing a periodical, whose task it is to smoothen our way in India. Our comrades have been able to gather together the Communist elements in India. They have found entrance into the newspapers ; they have entered the trade unions. I believe that this is a great step forward.

This year we have built more or less strong nuclei of our party in Turkey, China and Egypt. We should have no illusions in this regard ; they are very small groups, but nevertheless it is a step forward, and we must help our comrades there to accomplish a double task, first, to increase these proletarian nuclei, and secondly to become the vanguard of the whole movement against the bourgeoisie.

Important work has also been started in Australia and other countries.

VI. Other Fields of Action

I will now speak of the Red International Labour Union, the Profintern. As you know, comrades; the Profintern has met with opposition, even in one of the best parties—the German Party. The German Party discussed quite seriously whether the Profintern was not a premature organisation, whether it should not be totally liquidated, etc. This took place under the influence of the Levi group, but it was not only the Levites who fell into this error. This was a most dangerous period for the Profintern. The Executive naturally held it its duty to fight against this liquidating tendency. It was our opinion that the Profintern was in no way premature.

The entire anti-Profintern movement has now been defeated in Germany, and I hope in other countries, and the Profintern is on the high road to success. We can prophesy that the Profintern will experience a great growth in the coming years, if not even in the next few months. The Amsterdammers wish to bring about a split. They have accomplished this split in France, and have begun it in Czecho-Slovakia. In Germany we face a possible split of the trade unions. We believe it to be our task and that of the Profintern to combat this splitting. We want a united working class movement; the Amsterdammers want splits. The more influence we gain in the trade unions, the greater will be the desire of the Amsterdammers to split them, and the more energetic must be our fight against this tactic. We must organise and prepare suitable measures for this purpose. Our campaign will be the subject of a special discussion. With regard to the independent unions which they have forced us to organise in France and Czecho-Slovakia, and which we are now being compelled to organise in Germany and other countries, we must proclaim that the new unions, products of the splits, are born with the cry for unity upon their lips. The slogan of these new unions, produced by mass expulsions must be: Trade Union Unity!

When the Czech, German and other comrades are compelled to establish a general, or even a craft union, they must issue the watchword: Unity! Struggle for the unity of the trade union movement. I will deal with this question in greater detail in the second part of my speech.

Our movement made considerable progress in the question of co-operation, and the organisation of the young people. I should like to make special mention of the Young Communist International. The transfer of the Y.C.I. to Moscow has proved successful, and all fears in connection with this have proved groundless. The Y.C.I. has done good work. We must, however, admit in some countries the movement has become rather slack. The Young Communist movement in Germany and in other countries has also gone through a difficult period. This is a feature of the general situation of the working class. Nevertheless, the Y.C.I. and the Young Communist movement have remained a vanguard of the Communist International. A Young Communist Congress will be held after our Congress, to which we must pay the greatest attention. We must, however, endeavour to become an overwhelming majority. The amalgamation of the Two and Two-and-a-half Internationals will be of great harm to the social democrats in connection with the young peoples movement. New methods are required in order to

influence the young proletarian masses which have become rather indifferent. We hope to be able to do this.

This closes the survey of our activities during the last fifteen months. We have, of course, committed many errors, and you must criticise us on that account. We shall discuss frankly whether, and say if we want to retain the 21 points. Our French comrades have, for instance, criticised Clause 9 on the basis of which Fabre was expelled. I do not think that any comrade would say that we were wrong in acting thus. This expulsion was absolutely necessary. However, some of our French comrades have objected to it, saying that we had no right to act in this manner, and that we had given a too wide interpretation to Clause 9. It will be for the Congress to say if we exceeded our authority in making use of Clause 9 in the way we did.

There is still another point. The Executive has resolved that the National Congresses of the Communist Parties should as a rule be held after the World Congress. Exception, of course, may be made. I am not going to enquire whether this was absolutely necessary. But what, indeed, was the meaning of this decision? It means that we were determined to be a centralised world party, a party directed from one centre. We want the World Congress to be the leading organ for all the parties. We do not want the Communist International to be merely a meeting-ground for all parties. This point of view has been violently criticised in France.

But what has the French example taught us? What would have been achieved if this Congress had met sooner? As I said before, I am not going to oppose any proposal to modify this decision, and would be quite ready to accept any modifications. At any rate, the decision means that we must remain a centralised world organisation. We have been too lax in carrying out the 21 points. You will be quite right in wanting to punish us for it. The 21 points must be more strictly applied henceforth. This does not mean that we have not done anything until now. The Communist International has been in existence only three and a half years. Comrades, this is too short a period in which to organise our Communist parties on a world scale. The greatest evil was not in our negligence, but in the fact that we looked upon the 21 points as a scrap of paper. However, I am of the opinion that the Congress will say that it is here in order to carry out the 21 points. We must see to it that we become a really International World Party. Hitherto we were in favour of this in principle, but it is necessary that this principle should be put into practice.

This is my report on the activity of the Executive during the last fifteen months. I shall deal with our future tactics later on.

VII. The World Situation

The first questions we have to consider are the international economic situation, the international political situation, and the position within the labour movement.

As regards the international economic situation, I think it would be superfluous at the Fourth Congress to recapitulate all that we decided at the Third Congress. In my own thesis I propose that the Fourth Congress shall simply confirm the thesis concerning the economic situation of the world presented to the Third Congress by Comrades Trotzky and Varga. We cannot fail to recognise that the course of events during the last fifteen months has substantially

confirmed these theses. There has, indeed, been a transient improvement in the United States, Britain, Japan and France, and perhaps in other countries as well ; but it is quite clear that there has been no permanent change for the better, and Comrade Varga was perfectly right when, in his last pamphlet, he characterised the existing state of affairs as appropriate to the declining phase of capitalism. What we are now living through is something more than one of the periodical crises of capitalism: it is *The* crisis of capitalism ; it is the twilight, the collapse of capitalism.

The economic position of the world remains, therefore, the same, despite improvements here and there in various countries. Capitalism cannot find a way out of this situation. The only salvation for mankind, the only way of restoring the forces of production is to be found in the socialist revolution. In this sense our diagnosis is unaltered, and we can unhesitatingly repeat what was affirmed at the Third Congress, that the objective situation remains revolutionary. Within its own framework capitalism can find no energies that will provide an escape from the definitive crisis of the entire capitalist world.

Next we come to the international political situation. Its character, likewise, is such as to entitle us to affirm that the antagonisms are being intensified day by day, and that the international situation remains objectively revolutionary. During the last fifteen months the decay of the Entente has advanced with giant strides. What we have been witnessing has been tantamount to a liquidation of the Peace of Versailles, and this decay of the Peace of Versailles is still proceeding. Bourgeois pacifism, whose most notable leader is Lloyd George, is utterly bankrupt. The Genoa Conference and the Hague Conference have affixed the seals to the bankruptcy of bourgeois pacifism. The electoral struggle now proceeding in Britain bears witness to an unprecedented poverty of ideas among the capitalist parties. The nature of the fight between the classic bourgeois parties in the land which was the pioneer in capitalist development shows that no trace of principle is left to either party. We note an absolute spiritual collapse. The struggle is one between coteries, one which merely serves to underline what was already plain enough, that bourgeois pacifism is bankrupt, and that the capitalist parties are no longer in a position to fight one another on broad grounds of principle.

The colonial and semi-colonial countries which constitute one of the most important factors of the process we denote by the name of the world revolution, have during this period raised their struggle to a very high level. We see that in quite a number of oppressed countries, despite all the efforts of the imperialist governments, the liberationist movement makes continual progress. I think that among the Communists no one to-day will contest the assertion that this struggle, although it is neither socialist nor Communist, is nevertheless, objectively considered, a struggle against the capitalist regime. The great movements which we have been watching in India and in the colonial and semi-colonial countries are by no means Communistic, but dispassionately considered, they rate as an important factor in the fight against capitalism.

Bourgeois democracy, whose decline we have been witnessing for several years, is now perishing more obviously month by month. What is the meaning of the events in Italy? Are they not an unpre-

cedented attack on bourgeois democracy? Italy was one of the countries where bourgeois democracy was most hallowed. The Fascist onslaught is an attack upon the ideal of bourgeois democracy. Not merely has the King of Italy lost prestige because a band of desperadoes has thrust him aside politically, but the prestige of the whole régime of bourgeois democracy has been lowered. We must keep clearly before our minds that the happenings in Italy are not simply local phenomena. Other countries will inevitably experience what Italy is experiencing, though perhaps in a modified form. If the Fascisti maintain power in Italy (and it seems probable that they will do so during the immediate future), there can be little doubt that similar occurrences will take place in Germany, and perhaps throughout Europe. In substance, the two would be identical. Again, what is now happening in Austria is closely akin to the Italian situation. It, too, is a blow directed against bourgeois democracy, which in Austria has hitherto been defended, not only by the capitalist parties and the Second International, but also by the Two-and-a-half International.

In Czecho-Slovakia we see the preliminaries to such a counter-revolutionary transformation. Of Hungary it is needless to speak. The Fascisti learned their lesson from Hungary. In the Balkan States, and especially in Yugo Slavia there are indications that things are taking the same turn as in Italy.

We must look facts in the face. This is essential during a period that will not last very long, but will be a time of trial for our Communist parties. It is perhaps inevitable that we should pass through an epoch of more or less perfectly developed Fascism throughout Central Europe, and this will necessarily involve that, for a considerable period, in these regions our parties will be forced underground, will become illegal. The Executive sent special envoys a few months ago to some of our most important parties, warning them of the need to prepare for a period of illegal action, just as in Italy to-day. The political situation at the present time, when we are holding our Fourth Congress, unfortunately confirm these anticipations. We must make it perfectly clear to ourselves that this is not to imply an arrest of the world revolution. It is part of the process of revolution, for the revolutionary movement does not proceed along a straight line. Various episodes may intervene. What we are witnessing in Italy is a counter-revolutionary movement. But when we take a broad view, we see that it is only an episodic intensification, a stage in the maturing of the proletarian revolution in Italy. The same thing may be said of the proletarian movement in quite a number of important countries.

In general terms, then, the international political situation has grown more acute during the last fifteen months. The Third Congress was right in declaring that no equilibrium has been secured in capitalist Europe; and it was also right in pointing out that events of great importance, such as parliamentary conflicts, extensive strikes, etc., might readily lead to revolutionary struggles. The foregoing sketch of the position will have shown that the diagnosis of the Third Congress was sound. Recent events in the Balkan peninsula testify to the growing acuteness of the political situation. In connection with the Greco-Turkish war, the spectre of a new great war loomed ominously for a brief space. We seemed to be witnessing a rehearsal of the coming war. At this very time

when I am speaking to you there are renewed complications in the situation, such as might readily lead to disaster. My own estimate of the situation is that war is not yet imminent, but the Balkan flurry was a foreshadowing of what cannot fail to come unless the social revolution breaks out first, thus depriving the capitalist States of the possibility of organising a new war.

The future, therefore, remains uncertain, but the collapse of the capitalist system is also in sight when we confine our attention to the complications in the political field. Simultaneously we note an unprecedented strengthening of the political position of Russia, the only revolutionary State which has been able to maintain itself for five years.

VIII. The New Economic Policy

It will be necessary to discuss the New Economic Policy in detail when we come to consider the Russian question. I shall, therefore, not anticipate, but will content myself with recapitulating what I said in my introductory remarks. We have come to the conclusion that the new policy was no chance matter. It was not something forced upon us by the weakness of many of our Communist parties. It was something greater than this. You are right in saying, with many of the best friends of Soviet Russia, that if Russia found it necessary to adopt a new economic policy, this was because the German, French, and British workers were too weak to overthrow the bourgeoisie in their respective lands. This is true enough, but it is not the whole truth. We have come to the conclusion that the necessity for the new policy is not something peculiar to our own land, in which the peasants form so large a majority of the population. We now believe that all, or nearly all, countries, even those with great proletarian masses, will have to pass through some such political phase. The New Economic Policy is something more than a result of our weakness, or of the weakness of the world proletariat; it is based upon an accurate recognition of the balance of power between the workers on the one hand and the peasants and petty bourgeoisie on the other.

Of course the peasantry in such a country as Russia differs from the German peasantry. Nevertheless, alike in Germany and in the other countries where capitalist development is far advanced and where there is a very numerous industrial proletariat, at the decisive moment the working class will have to adopt a whole system of measures to neutralise the trend of the most influential part of the peasantry. The workers, in fact, will have to use just such methods as we have used in Russia. We shall return to their consideration in connection with the Russian problem.

In a survey of the political world situation, we must not fail to take into account the Soviet Republic as a factor of primary importance. At a moment when the Entente is collapsing, when the colonial and semi-colonial nations are engaging in intensified struggles, when the war spectre hovers over the Balkan peninsula, and when the equilibrium of the capitalist world is trembling—at this very time the position of Soviet Russia is being rendered increasingly stable by the adoption of new economic methods. Thereby Soviet Russia has become a titanic factor in world politics. The star of the first proletarian Republic rises ever higher. The general upshot is a revolutionary situation.

The capitalist offensive is an international phenomenon, and is

one of the factors making for revolution. The working class has not yet been able to arrest that offensive. There are, however, numerous indications, in France and elsewhere, that in the near future a change in this respect may be expected. The workers are closing their ranks for defence, and will repel the capitalist offensive.

IX. Collapse of the 2½ International

I now turn to the situation within the labour movement. In this domain the most notable phenomenon is the amalgamation of the Second and the Two-and-a-half Internationals, an amalgamation that will be effected very soon. In Germany the matter has already been settled, and yesterday came the news of a similar settlement in Sweden. Branting has accepted the Left Social Democrats into his party. The same thing is taking place elsewhere. In point of organisation, the union is not yet complete; but politically it is an accomplished fact, and it is a fact of great historical importance. The Second International is the enemy of the working class. No detailed proof need be offered in support of the assertion that the Two-and-a-half International is being absorbed into the Second International; the process is not the other way about. Suffice it to quote the words of Martoff, one of the spiritual leaders of the Two-and-a-half International, and in many respects the intellectual superior of his associates. He writes as follows in an article in his newspaper, *Der sozialistische Bote*, dealing with the problem of the Second International:—

“Let us harbour no illusions. Under present conditions, the mechanical amalgamation of the two Internationals signifies the return to the Second International of the parties that detached themselves from that body in the hope of founding a very different International. The return is a defeat of these parties.”

Martoff makes no secret of his opinion. It is true that at the close he finds some consolation for the members of the Two-and-a-half International, saying: “Within the Second International we shall defend Marxism.” But, none the less, he admits that the Two-and-a-half International is returning into the bosom of the Second International, and that the former has sustained a defeat.

There will, then, be a union of the reformist Internationals. This union will greatly quicken the process of splitting the working class into two camps. We on our side must also say: “Let us harbour no illusions!” The union of the Second and the Two-and-a-half Internationals means the preparation of the White Terror against the Communists. The Fascist coup is connected with the world political situation, and so is the coup that aims at bringing governments à la Stinnes to the front. The union of the Second and the Two-and-a-half Internationals is the preliminary to an unprecedented splitting up of the working class with a view to its weakening. I need not waste time in insisting that this union really foreshadows a period of White Terror directed against the Communists. Not by chance is Mussolini, a renegade from the Second International, a one-time social-democrat, now at the head of the counter-revolutionary movement in Italy; not by chance are such as Ebert and Noske at the head of the government in Germany, or such as Pilsudsky at the head of the government in Poland. Nor is it a chance matter that the Second International should be playing a decisive rôle in such countries

as Britain and Germany. In such a land as Germany, the situation is radically altered when the trade unions form a solid front with the mass of workers. No illusions then! The union of the two Internationals foreshadows the inauguration of the White Terror against the Communist Parties.

In the second place, this union will involve the splitting of the working class. We Communists are now advocating the unity of the trade unions. There is good reason for this course. The reformists see plainly enough that the ground is being cut from beneath their feet. Historically speaking, this is inevitable. It is inevitable that the trade unions (should evolution take a normal course) will pass under the control of the Communists. The reformists have a keen scent. They realise what is coming. They see that the influence of the Communists over the working class, the general influence of the revolutionary movement is growing. Feeling this instinctively, they try to avert it. They behave as if they had been directly commissioned by the bourgeoisie to shatter the trade unions. They are trying to destroy them before they are themselves driven out. I do not wish to suggest that they are directly commissioned to pursue such a policy. We all know that political life is less simple than this would imply. Of course, Stinnes does not issue direct written orders to the trade union leaders as his henchmen. In the general political sense of the term, however, the Socialist leaders are commissioned by the bourgeoisie to shatter the trade unions before leaving them. As they go out, they want to slam the doors so violently that all the trade union windows may be broken. This is their real aim.

No one can tell whether these developments will take months or years, but they are an historical necessity, and the "gods of the Second International" realise it. That is why the same phenomenon is manifest everywhere—a deliberate preparation for a split at the moment when they feel that large masses of the trade unionists are about to come over to our side. They wish to weaken the working class, to pulverize the trade unions so that when we come into power in the unions we shall find nothing but fragments. That is what they are commissioned by the bourgeoisie to do, and it will be an act of unexampled treachery. In comparison therewith, even the treason of 1914 was perhaps a minor matter. A deliberate act of treachery is now being prepared. They want to disintegrate the working class, so that when the time comes for the workers to form a united front against the bourgeoisie, the workers will find themselves weak, disorganised, and utterly disintegrated. Such is the policy that finds expression in the union of the Second and the Two-and-a-half Internationals.

This split in the labour movement is something more than a petty episode, something more than a trifle; it is a tremendous problem. Despite all its errors and defeats, despite the treachery of its leaders, the working class has fought for and achieved a huge organisation in the form of the trade unions, whose members are numbered by millions. At the given moment, this organisation must play a decisive part in the struggle. To-day, when the momentous hour approaches, the Second International joins with the Amsterdammers in an act of the utmost treachery against the working class. Their aim is to shatter to fragments this great organisation, this last refuge of the working class, in order that when we get

rid of the Social Democrats, we may find that there is nothing left to take over, that we have no labour organisations that are of any account. That is the most important fact with which we have to reckon. The Social Democrats and the Amsterdammers are foredoomed to become the professional disintegrators of the working class, not merely to betray the workers, not merely to interfere with the policy of the working weapons, the labour organisations. This will be the policy of the reunited Second and Two-and-a-half Internationals during the immediate future, and it is a fact with which we have to reckon.

X. The United Front

It follows, comrades, that our tactics of the United Front must be regarded as something more than a strategical move against our enemies. The policy of the United Front, however, is dictated by the historical situation as a whole, by the general position of the capitalist attack, alike in the economic and in the political spheres, and by the state of affairs within the working class. If I am right in my view of the policy of the Second and Two-and-a-half Internationals, if I am right in believing that the tactics of the deliberate splitting of the trade unions and of the working class will be adopted in the near future, then our tactics of the United Front are an inevitable and logical consequence. There are many reasons why we must deliberately work against this plan of the Second International. We must do so by our tactics of the United Front.

At the Third Congress we accepted the task of winning over the majority of the workers. Has this task been fulfilled? No, not yet. We must state the fact boldly. In many countries, the influence of our party has considerably increased. Nevertheless, we could not say at the Third Congress that the majority of the workers were on our side, nor can we say at the Fourth Congress that they are on our side. There is much still to be done. In such circumstances, the tactics of the United Front are the most important means of winning over the majority of the workers. We must be perfectly clear on the matter. The tactics of the United Front denote something more than an episode in our struggle; they denote a period, perhaps an entire epoch. As circumstances change, we may perhaps find it necessary to modify these tactics. In the main, however, inasmuch as the Second International is our chief enemy and is the main prop of the bourgeoisie, we shall have to hold fast to these tactics.

From the economic outlook, capitalism is ripe for the transformation to socialism. The world political situation is one that may be characterised as revolutionary. The Second International is the main prop of the bourgeoisie. Without the help of the Second International and the Amsterdam International, the bourgeoisie cannot hold its ground. It follows that our relationship with the Second International is something more than a question of party tactics; it is part of the problem of the world revolution, of the tactics of our class as a whole. Inasmuch as the united Second International will, for years to come, work directly towards a split, we shall be enabled to win over the masses of the workers by our tactics of the United Front, and by defeating those whose efforts are towards disintegrating the workers. Let me repeat we are not dealing with an episode, but with an epoch.

The tactics of the United Front have already proved advan-

taguous to us in many ways. I do not mean that they have enabled us to win over the majority of the workers. Were that so, the game would already be in our hands. Still, we have gained a great deal. We have gained this—that the working class is coming to realise that the Communist Parties are not the disintegrators, and that it is the opponents of the Communists who are working for disintegration. Until recently the workers held another view, and perhaps they had some reason for doing so. At one time, in our efforts to defend the interests of the workers as a whole, we had to split the old Social Democratic Parties. We should have betrayed the working class had we failed to take this course. It was essential to secure a rallying point for a genuine liberating movement of the working class, and this could only be done by the creation of a Communist Party. At this period we had to accept the rôle of scissionists, for only by splitting the old Social Democratic Parties could we forge the instrument for the liberation of the working class.

Now, however, we have entered a new historical phase. We have finished the task of the previous phase. There now exist Communist Parties, which do indeed contain vestiges of social democracy, which do indeed suffer from the diseases incidental to childhood, which are troubled with growing pains, and which must be freed from these disorders. But our main problem now concerns the winning over of the majority of the workers, in order to save and win over the trade unions, the chief weapons at the disposal of the world proletariat. That is why we have adopted the tactics of the United Front. I do not anticipate any serious disputes about the matter at this Congress. In France, the last of the Mohicans, those who had still fought against the tactics of the United Front have laid down their arms, and, it is an important fact that not only the French Communists, but also most of the Syndicalists, have now accepted the tactics of the United Front. Yesterday we had a brief talk with our friends in the United General Confederation of Labour. When we asked: "Are you still opposed to the United Front?" they answered laconically: "We have formed a United Front." Whoever follows the situation in France is well aware that in that country both the Centralists and the United General Confederation of Labour have deliberately adopted a United Front, for they could not help themselves. The needs of the daily struggle of the proletariat have forced the adoption of the tactics of the United Front, both in the industrial and in the political field, upon all who wish to defend the interests of the working class. The winning over of the opponents of the United Front in France has been a great triumph, and it shows that we are closing our ranks and that we shall be able to pursue tactics carefully thought out in advance.

What do we mean and what do we not mean by the United Front? We certainly do not mean an electoral alliance. We have instituted an enquiry concerning the carrying out of the tactics of the United Front, and the enquiry has been fairly successful. Three hundred to four hundred answers have been sent in, some of them by comrades who work among the masses. The details are now being elaborated, and will probably be issued in book form. The enquiry has shown that much confusion still prevails among the comrades as to the precise meaning of the United Front. I

have already explained that it does not mean an electoral alliance. Nor does it mean an organisatory union with the Social Democrats. The answers we have received from the executive committees of the Italian and of the French Parties show that many of the comrades have made the latter mistake. But an organisatory union with the Social Democrats would be the greatest crime we could commit. Every one of us would rather have a hand cut off than enter into a union with these traitors to the working class, with those who are pre-eminently our enemies, with those who are the last prop of the bourgeoisie. The United Front implies nothing of that sort. The United Front means the leading of the working masses in the daily class war. It means that we are ready to march against capitalism side by side with all workers, be they Anarchists, Syndicalists, Christian Socialists, Social Democrats, or whatever you please, to join forces with them in the daily struggle against the reduction of wages and against the loss of the eight-hour day. We accept the fact that we shall often have to sit at the same table with the treacherous leaders. The foregoing is what the United Front means, and nothing else. I think that the problem is solved as far as the Comintern is concerned, and I think it has been solved even for the French Party, the one where the greatest confusion has hitherto prevailed in this matter.

We shall also fight for the partial demands of the working class. I was shown to-day an article written a little while ago by Comrade Gorter. I have not finished reading the article, but I will quote a passage from it. The passage runs as follows:

“ We must oppose every strike. You will perhaps ask, why oppose every strike? I reply, because we must reserve all our energies for propaganda in favour of the revolution.” Further on he writes: “ We are so few, the ranks of the K.A.P.D. are so thin, that we dare not dissipate our forces in strikes, but must keep them intact so as to concentrate upon the revolution.”

This manner of thinking is so confused that one stands speechless before the childishness of such a political thinker. He has no time to fight alongside the workers in their daily struggle against the bourgeoisie. He wants to help the whole revolution. He who feels for the working class, he who is not satisfied with a subjective attitude towards the masses, but who, on the contrary, understands something about the lives of the workers and who has laboured in their ranks, will reject such childishness. For the very reason that we wish to fight on behalf of the proletarian revolution, we must participate in every strike, must go in advance of the working class, and must fight on behalf of every partial demand. We are revolutionists. But this does not mean that we ignore the fact that the position of the working class must be improved, were it only to enable the workers to buy a drop of milk for their children. We are opposed to reformism, but we are not opposed to anything that may improve the lot of the working class. We know quite well that in the extant conditions of capitalism the possibilities for such improvement are extremely restricted; we know that nothing but the revolution will secure a real uplifting of the workers: but we also know that we shall never be able to organise the workers unless we fight on behalf of their partial demands. It is from this outlook that we defend the United Front as a tactic which is not simply ephemeral, which is not simply episodic, but which in the existing circumstances of capitalism may last quite a while.

The watchword of the Workers' Government has not yet been fully clarified. The tactics of the United Front are almost universally applicable. It would be hard to find a country where the working class has attained notable proportions, but where the tactics of the United Front have not yet been inaugurated. They are equally applicable in America, in Bulgaria, in Italy, and in Germany. By no means can the same thing be said of the slogan of the Labour Government. This latter is far less universally applicable, and its significance is comparatively restricted. It can only be adopted in those countries where the relationships of power render its adoption opportune, where the problem of power, the problem of government, both on the parliamentary and on the extra-parliamentary field, has come to the front. Of course, even to-day in the United States good propaganda work can be done with the slogan of the Labour Government. We can explain to the workers: If you want to free yourselves, you must take power into your own hands. But we cannot say, in view of the present relationships of power in the United States, that the watchword of the Labour Government is applicable to an existing fight between two parties, as it has been in Czecho-Slovakia, as it will be perhaps in Germany, and as it was and may be again in Italy.

The watchword of the Labour Government, then, is not a general watchword like the tactics of the United Front. The watchword "Labour Government" is a particular concrete application of the tactics of the United Front under certain specific conditions. It is quite easy to make mistakes in this matter. I think we have to beware of the danger that results from an attempt to regard the stage of Labour Government as a universally necessary one. In so far as it is safe to prophesy in such matters, I myself incline to the view that a Labour Government will only come into existence occasionally; in one country or another, where peculiar circumstances prevail. I think its occurrence will be exceptional. Besides, it is quite a mistake to suppose that the formation of a Labour Government will inaugurate a quasi-peaceful period, and that thereby we shall be saved from the burden of the struggle. A Labour Government can only be based upon the winning of parliamentary positions, and these are worth nothing when won. A Labour Government will be no more than a petty episode in the struggle, and will not suspend the class war. Please do not interpret me as meaning that the watchword of the Labour Government is one to be rejected in existing circumstances. The working class must be made clearly to understand that a Labour Government can only be a transitional stage. We must say in plain terms that the Labour Government will not do away with the need for fighting, will not obviate the necessity for a struggle for power. But as long as we recognise the dangers of this watchword, we need not hesitate to employ it.

The United Front has its dangers also, and the Executive referred to them in its December thesis. The dangers are especially great when the United Front takes the form of the Labour Government. In countries with old parliamentary traditions, in France, for instance, comrades seem to think that when we Marxists speak of the Labour Government we are referring to something altogether different from the dictatorship of the proletariat. But to us it seems that the Labour Government is only one application of the

dictatorship of the proletariat. Even if a Labour Government should come, we cannot avoid the civil war. In certain circumstances the civil war will even be intensified by the existence of a Labour Government.

I cannot refrain from saying a few words concerning the industrial councils movement. I have devoted to this matter a special section of my thesis. In this I contend that a party which has no Communist organisation in industrial life, which has no Communist nuclei, is not to be taken seriously, cannot be regarded as a serious Communist mass party. I contend that a Labour movement which has not yet learned how to support and organise a mass movement within the domain of the industrial councils is not yet a serious revolutionary mass movement. The statement is applicable to almost all the great Labour movements of our day. It is a sign of the times that in Germany, where important and decisive struggles are probably imminent, the whole vanguard of the movement is led by the industrial councils. Turning to other countries, we must advise our comrades to devote themselves first of all to founding Communist nuclei within the industries, and then to supporting the industrial councils movement. Not until then shall we have a real mass movement. Many of our parties have failed to carry out this advice. At the Third Congress we adopted an admirable resolution drafted by Comrade Kuusinen, to the effect that every Communist Party should devote itself to the formation of nuclei, whatever the general line of its activities might be. But it is futile to adopt excellent resolutions if nothing be done to carry them into effect. We must see to it that the nuclei are really founded. Then our movement will forge ahead.

I must also add a few words concerning international discipline. In the thesis concerning the tactics of the United Front, proposed by the Renault group at the Paris congress of the French Party, there was a section concerning international discipline. Golden words are here inscribed. The group gave a brilliant theoretical demonstration that nothing could be done without discipline, and that the International would perish unless good discipline were maintained. Golden words, I say. But this same group gave a practical demonstration how wide a gap there can sometimes be between words and deeds. The best proof of international discipline is provided in the realm of action. Our tactics of the United Front are now extremely complex. There exists an International which is closely associated with the bourgeoisie, and which consistently works in opposition to us. If we are to resist its machinations successfully we must be strongly organised, and must have a genuine and rigidly disciplined International. It will be the task of the Fourth Congress to maintain this discipline and to carry it into effect.

Decisive struggles will be upon us in the near future. Many excellent comrades murmur when they hear me say this. They declare that the world revolution has been arrested for a time. The advance will not be resumed until the material position of the Russian workers has so greatly improved that they are better off than the average European and American worker. Then the example of the economic advantages of the Russian workers will arouse a revolutionary impetus, and there will be a renewed surge of revolution.

In my opinion, comrades, this is nothing better than a subtle form of opportunism, though such views are advanced by many who are revolutionarily-minded and good soldiers of the International. I will confine myself to a word or two upon the subject. It is an undoubted fact that the position of the Russian workers is on the upgrade to-day. The upward trend in Russia is slow, but it is unmistakable. No doubt a day will come when the economic position of the Russian workers will be better than that of the European workers, which is on the downgrade. The upward trend in Russia is slow, but it is unmistakable. But it is pure opportunism to say that it is impossible to lead a revolutionary struggle on the part of the workers of capitalist countries so long as Russian conditions remain difficult.

The real revolution will not be made by the workers in various countries because of an example drawn from other lands; it will not be made in any country because the workers there envy those in some other country who have more food. The revolution will occur because the workers will find themselves in difficulties from which there is no exit without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Consequently we must now allow those tones to become dominant in our agitation which imply that there is an arrest in the revolutionary movement. The Russian workers had far more numerous obstacles to overcome than those which impede the revolutionary progress of the workers in other lands. The revolutionary workers all over the world will have the support of the Russian workers. The Russian workers were the first to rise in revolt, and they were opposed by the entire capitalist world. It is unlikely that the working class of any other country will have such great difficulties to encounter. To the working class throughout the world we must present the picture of the Russian proletariat in its true colours, speaking of the blockade, of hunger, and of pestilence, and of the greatness which triumphed over all obstacles. We can now be satisfied that the Russian working class, despite all its sufferings, is past the worst, and that from hour to hour, day to day, and month to month, improvements are coming. Such must be our conception of the Russian revolution; this conception must be the basis of all our tactics.

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