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# The Situation in Canada

CANADA to-day faces a future full of political significance as to her own standing as a section of the British Empire and has been assured on many occasions since Canada placed her mark upon the Versailles of her sovereignty, only to discover on just as many other occasions that she is considered yet far too young to face an Imperialist world alone. The Dominion is a member of the League of Nations; she has signed a full-fledged treaty with America; she has borrowed billions from her powerful neighbour upon her own responsibility; and yet as recently as January last, she was told by the Privy Council (of Britain), that the Industrial Disputes Act is "ultra vires" of the Dominion Government as violating the provisions of the British North America Act.

Under the terms of this B.N.A. Act, the Governor-General is an Imperial officer, whose consent must be obtained for any parliamentary measure before it can become law. The Imperial Parliament has not the power to disallow any Canadian parliamentary measure, although it can legislate for the whole Empire. But the Governor-General acts, not on the instruction of the British Parliament, but on that of the Crown which stands above Parliament. It can, therefore, be seen that the B.N.A. (British North America) Act apparently allows the Dominion free reign, but carefully restricts action when at any time the offspring moves too fast for the parent. It is not suggested here that the Industrial Disputes Act mentioned was declared to be of no standing because it was too progressive. The Act assumes importance chiefly because it provoked the Privy Council decision at a time when Canada was really tugging too vigorously at the "bonds" of Empire, and follows on the refusal of Britain to accept the terms of the Protocol and to imply that her decision covered all the Dominions. This again moved Canada to anger and brought forth a direct refusal to ratify the mother country's action or to bring forward counter or additional proposals.

All of the above is descriptive only of more recent happenings in Canadian political life and refer only to the tendency toward independence. As a rule the Canadian press is

silent upon such a dangerous subject and is apparently determined not to encourage popular discussion on these matters. The British press is more concerned as to Canada's future. On the other hand, we can observe the growing influence of America.

Prior to the war, Canada looked to Britain for her capital and British investments were heavy. The two trans-continental railroads promised profitable returns, and indicated a potential field for very successful investments. But the war changed matters greatly, and the flow of British capital subsided. Conversely with this decline was the increase in American investments until at the present moment America tops Britain's total slightly. The figures are:  $2\frac{3}{4}$  billions of dollars for the U.S.A., and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  billions of dollars for Great Britain. (1914 figures were United States 750 millions of dollars; Great Britain nearly  $2\frac{3}{4}$  billions of dollars; since the war Britain has resold over 200 millions of her Canadian securities.) The major portion of the Yankee figure is behind industrial development, and naturally Britain's biggest total is agrarian. America's contribution to Canada's development was, unlike that of England, so framed as to bind the Canadian branches of her industries closely to the parent bodies. At present there are about 800 of these American "branch" factories in the Dominion, and these, coupled with other factors in the process of peaceful penetration (American films, newspaper correspondents, magazines, fraternal organisations like the Kiwanian Club, etc., etc.), have all helped to show that Canadian interests lies not within the Empire, but without; and also serve to explain the Conservative protests against the destructive industrial competition of Britain. The psychological effect of the prolonged boom in the United States upon the Canadian populace has also been great for Canada has had no outlet in the crisis she has experienced since 1919. Hundreds of thousands of workers have entered the States from Canada and latterly the border has been closed even to citizens of many years standing. All of which has served to leave the impression that under complete American domination her poorer relative would prosper.

Economically, Canada goes from bad to worse. Her public debt has increased about 11 times since 1914; the 220 millions now standing at nearly 3 billions. Efforts to increase her population have all failed, at one period the greater part of 1923, emigration exceeded immigration. Unemployment has been rife, and in spite of the big crops

of 1923 and 1924, the poor farmers are poverty stricken. The farmers have fallen away in organisation since the days of their successes of 1919 and on. The Ontario farmers were decisively beaten at the 1923 provincial election; the maritime provinces organisation has almost disappeared; in Manitoba and Saskatchewan the farmers are behind the 62 "Progressive" members of the Federal House; but the support given the Liberal Party by this group preserves the present government in power, and labels the farmers as being really Liberal at heart. As a consequence, the Farmers' Union of Canada, an organisation of 600 branches, about 25,000 members and less than three years old, is anti-parliamentarian in outlook. This body contained revolutionary possibilities and actually in some places organised armed resistance to the Sheriff seizures. The Communist Parties have been active in this field, and have conducted a vigorous campaign for the Farmer-Labour Party. Our propagandists have been blacklisted by the F.U.C. officials, but we are now in definite connection by means of English-speaking branches, and quite a number of Finnish and Ukrainian comrades working as fractions. The problem of the farmers' movement has been aggravated by proposals of fusion of the more reactionary Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association and the Farmers' Union. These negotiations are likely to materialise and undoubtedly the inexperienced leadership of the F.U.C. will be as pawns in the hands of the more experienced politicians of the S.G.G.A. who will very quickly tone down the fighting qualities of the poorer farmers' movement. In Alberta the provincial legislature is still in the hands of the farmers, and the leadership here is at the least much more progressive. But all in all, there is much need for work before we will be able to say that the farmers are anti-capitalist. Our efforts must be directed toward winning the poor farmers over to closer contact with their exploited industrial brethren; to expose those Liberals who are masquerading under the guise of "Progressives" and to break down the opposition to parliamentary action by our propaganda for the Farmer-Labour Party, and at the same time avoid the possible dangers of too great contact between the reactionary elements of the Canadian Labour Party and the office-seekers of the older established farmer organisations.

The trade union movement is in the hands of complete reactionaries. The official organisation is the Dominion Trades Congress, which only differs from the A. F. of L. in that it supports the Canadian Labour Party and is affiliated with Amsterdam. In all other matters can be seen the

imprints of Gompersism. As a result, the C.P.C. has been agitating for autonomy for the Canadian movement, *i.e.*, to establish the right to call general strikes and to govern its own affairs. This would allow greater support for any general strike of which there have been several of late years of great importance, but in regard to which the Congress might have been non-existent. For instance, the present (March) Nova Scotia miners' strike is but a continuation of the struggles of the past few years, which have all been refused support by Lewis, the reactionary head of the United Mine Workers of America, on the grounds that the 100 per cent. strike is contrary to the constitution and principles of the U.M.W.A. Yet there is no other recourse left to the workers than that of a complete tie-up; for they have had to battle with the provincial police, governmental troops and arrests and imprisonments. Of particular appeal is the Communist slogan of Nationalisation of the Mines. In the East (Nova Scotia) as touched upon above, the miners have had to fight on all fronts against the Central British Empire Steel Corporation (BESCO). Even the U.M.W.A. officials have lined up with BESCO against the men, taking away the charter and installing a provisional executive which was only withdrawn when it became evident that the beginning of 1925 would see another wage struggle. The consequent elections resulted in the return of a full Communist slate, whose fighting qualities are being tested by the strike already mentioned.

The Western miners are unfortunate in that their leadership is Lewis-controlled, and this resulted in their defeat after the six months' strike which ended last October. Dissatisfaction is general, and is becoming more pronounced with every move of the reactionaries. The names of Communists have been struck off the ballots, and the sentiment thus created by the lack of fight on the part of the executive is producing apathy, and even in some cases (Ferneie, Michel) withdrawal from the U.M.W.A. and acceptance of the company union. It is in this section that we find most deeply rooted the antipathy towards participation in the yearly Trades Congress. The left-wing minimises the importance of carrying on the struggle against reaction on every possible occasion, and this attitude is partly responsible for the weakness of our delegations. Other causes are financial in origin.

The campaign for International Trade Union Unity is receiving support from the masses, which will undoubtedly



increase as the movement grows. The majority of trade unionists allied with the Congress are of British origin, and will follow the lead already given by the Old Country movements. But on the other hand, the executive will be under pressure also from the American Federation of Labour, and the anti-unity section of Amsterdam. The American sentiment is already expressed in the refusal to even affiliate with Amsterdam, so everything will depend upon the activity of the left-wing among the rank and file if we are to see last year's Congress decision reversed.

The Canadian Labour Party is not yet established as a Dominion-wide organisation. There are provincial sections established in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia. The Communists are firmly established in each section, and work well as party fractions. But the reformists are not keen to see the C.L.P. develop along present lines. The Communists are pushing a little too steadily toward the left for the comfort of those who prefer the social possibilities contained in an emulation of MacDonaldism. But the rank and file are behind the left, and there is no doubt that any attempt made to exclude our Party would stir up too much trouble for the reactionaries. Efforts are still being made to extend the activity of the Labour Party into other fields beside those of purely electoral endeavour, but distance and other difficulties make progress slow.

In coping with all of the above problems, the Canadian Party has acquitted itself well enough when allowances are made for the composition of our membership, the immense distances, prolonged unemployment, and the loss of many of our active spirits who have been forced to seek work in America. But our influence is steadily growing and the English-speaking workers becoming less shy of associating themselves with a Communist Party, resulting in a desirable influx of new members. This will assist materially in our tasks of establishing Canadian Trade Union autonomy; in the fight for World Unity; the struggle for freedom from imperialist domination; the abolition of the British North America Act, which serves as a shield of our politicians on each question as unemployment relief and the 8-hour day; and the important matter of bringing the poor farmers into alignment with the industrial workers so as to facilitate the struggle for the Canadian Workers' and Farmers' Republic.

W. MORIARTY.

# The War in Morocco

THE renowned death-trap of Morocco, where in 1907 the first flames were lit of the conflagration that devastated the world for four years, is once again the theatre of war! Following on the Spanish imperialists, it is now the imperialists of France who are bringing civilisation to the Riff tribes by means of artillery and rifle fire. The "Left bloc" which had promised peace to the world, is making war in Morocco. The well-known London Agreement and the Geneva Pact were just so many "symbolical gestures" of peace, which made it possible to deceive public opinion, while the occupation of the Ruhr was being maintained, and the war against the Riffs was being prepared.

The "Left bloc" has followed faithfully in the track of the "Bloc National." Both of the two "Left bloc" governments are equally responsible for the present events; Herriot's government prepared the attack on the Riff, in full accord with Lyautey, the Resident-General, and Painlevé's government let loose the conflict.

Herriot and Painlevé, in this war, continually boast of peace and proclaim the pacifism of France—while they affirm that "his government deserved honour for having (being warned in time by Marshal Lyautey) foreseen the Riff offensive and taken every measure to withstand it" (Herriot) and "he had done nothing but continue the Moroccan policy of his predecessor, and the events which are occurring arise out of the measures taken by Herriot" (Painlevé).

"A defensive war," say the pontiffs of the "Left bloc," No; it is an offensive war that has been skilfully prepared.

For more than a year the Riff has been blockaded. It is admitted by the reactionary press as well as by that of the "Left," that there is no frontier between French Morocco and the Riff. "A paper frontier," says the democratic *Europe Nouvelle*. "A hypothetical frontier," writes the *Matin*. "There is no frontier, in the economic and inter-

national sense of the word," confirms the reactionary *Eclair*. But during the last six months the whole of the neutral zone which borders on this "hypothetical" frontier has been covered with blockhouses, placed to cover each dissident tribe. The tribes of this neutral zone, in which is the fertile valley of the Wergha, have been brought to submit more or less to the French protectorate, through the buying of their chiefs with money and honours. They have, thereupon, been armed to fight, at the right time, against Abd-el Krim.

Lyautey has refused with scorn the proposals to negotiate, made on several occasions by Abd-el Krim.

The blockhouses which he has scattered in the lowlands of the Wergha, where the Riffs are forced to come to provision themselves with cereals if they do not want to die of hunger, were supplementary to the peaceful diplomacy which it was stated, was being employed in Morocco.

Lyautey didn't care a damn for the negotiations which were proposed to him; he was busy preparing a trap in the Wergha valley, letting the Riffs filter through the line in order to attack them later.

But things have not gone as he would have wished; Abd-el Krim scented the danger and raised the tribes that Lyautey had armed against him! These tribes, like that of the Beni-Zeroual, are to-day fighting side by side with Abd-el Krim, and using Lyautey's rifles and machine guns against the French troops.

A captain in command of the French post at Aoulay, which was besieged for twenty-two days, attempts to explain this action of the rebel tribes by declaring that "it is under the pressure of the most atrocious terrorism that they have had to go over to the enemy's side." "For," he says, "they prefer the French to the 'savage' Riffs." But further on he states that the Riffs themselves took part in the siege of his outpost, which out of 34 men had only, at the end, sixteen left, almost all wounded—so vigorous had been the Riff attack.

This war is, therefore, costly in lives, according to the

admission even of military leaders, and it is known that it will be long—"it threatens to last many long years," writes the *Matin*, always well-informed.

So that the government is completely hiding the truth; it speaks of light losses, and of a rapid ending of the conflict, while knowing that the reverse is certain. Its declarations are completely in contradiction with those of the military leaders in Morocco; this shows to what a pitch the deception of public opinion is being carried in order to get the public to accept this new butchery, which will not profit anyone except the sharks of finance and industry, who covet the Riff mines and are using their influence on the government.

The Bank of Paris and the Low Countries, the Parisian Union Bank and the *Credit Foncier* of Algeria, which have already shared between them the riches of French Morocco, dream of getting hold of the resources of the Riff, and the newspapers in their pay demand the complete crushing of *Abd-el Krim* by war to the bitter end, or by a pitiless blockade.

The Painlevé, Briand, Caillaux Government, a flexible instrument in the hands of high finance (as was Herriot's government also), is carrying on "their" war by means of the double game that has been so successful in peace time. In the daylight of public opinion the government states that it wishes to treat with *Abd-el Krim*, in the dark of the Chancelleries, it organises reinforcements for the war. It is with this intention that it has sent its emissary, Matvy, to negotiate with the Spanish dictator, Primo de Rivera. It is in order to seek for an agreement aimed at intensifying the struggle against the common enemy that their approaches have been made.

Will Spain, advised by England (who wishes to avoid at all costs France having her own Gibraltar on the coasts of a conquered Riff territory), accept the proposed bargain. There is little likelihood, for France is her competitor in Morocco, and she is more inclined to follow the advice of England, of which country she has need.

These are the international complications that arise between France and England, and they are complicated by

Italy's Imperialist designs on Tunis. A world war is simmering; the Moroccan death-trap threatens once more to inflame it suddenly. In this terrible situation, what are the leaders of the Socialists doing—the "leaders" of the two "Left bloc" governments? Their official participation in power, through the policy of supporting the government that they are practising, does not allow them to turn a blind eye to any side of policy.

*They prepared the war with Herriot, they are carrying on the war with Painlevé!*

It is in order to cover up their grave responsibilities that Pierre Bertrand of the "Quotidien," asked recently in their name (pretending ignorance of what was happening in Morocco), in a great headline in his paper, "Let us know the truth about Morocco!"

Painlevé replied to this demagogic demand by saying dryly, "that he had done nothing but continue the policy of his predecessor, and that it was to the latter that they should go to know the truth." In this way, he made them realise that they must not be too insistent, for their little manoeuvre against his government might hoist them with their own petard!

The Socialists did not insist. Renaudel, who had made a great deal of fuss over his demand for a debate on Morocco, asked for its postponement. The Socialist opposition, all a sham, put up to deceive the workers, fell to pieces of itself.

And so the Socialist group in Parliament went on to agree with the other groups of the "Left Bloc" to ask for the postponement of the debate on Morocco for a week, only declaring that *their* intention, as Socialists, was to

"Take away all the spirit of conquest from the military operations in Morocco, to have it announced by the government that the annexation of the Riff would not even be considered, and that ways and means to end the conflict would be sought as rapidly as possible."

In these worn phrases, there is no question of an immediate and unconditional peace, or of the evacuation of Morocco

—measures that any Socialist still worthy of the name ought to demand. Once again, the treachery of the Socialist leaders is absolutely complete.

The agreement with the other parties of the "Left bloc" was even so solid that it was decided to adopt a common resolution of confidence in the government, to be put forward in the name of the whole "Bloc."

Thus without waiting to know "the whole truth about Morocco," as had been demanded fiercely a few days before, the Socialist leaders agreed to rest their confidence still in the triumvirate—Painlevé, Briand, Caillaux—even *before* it had explained its policy!

At the same moment, the reformist General Confederation of Labour, by the pen of its secretary, Jouhaux, took up the defence of the government. "The government," he said, "has had to face a situation of which it is impossible to ignore the dangers." Jouhaux next showed his confidence in the government by writing that it "would not, for its part, repeat the duplicities from which the country has suffered so much before the war and after." Jouhaux defended the government against the reactionary press "who were bolstering up the legend of France's adventurous and militaristic character, a France that sought for surprise blows and that thirsted for new conquests." Jouhaux also wrote: "there exist extremist demagogues who are occupied with stirring up trouble everywhere, under the cover of the International they practice the narrowest nationalism."

In conclusion, Jouhaux, like his friends the Socialist leaders, asked the government to proclaim that it was not out for adventure or conquest"—and this in terms that cannot be suspected of secret reservations (*arrivè persées*).

The Socialists and the reformist trade union leaders, who in 1914 displayed themselves as patriots, and in favour of war to the bitter end, who declared that their country was in danger, and therefore joined in sacred union with their bourgeoisie—these again find themselves united, in 1925, in treason to the proletariat.

They use the same "democratic and Chauvinist argu-

ments, and as in 1914, use lies to deceive the workers—in order to make them accept the war in Morocco, first step towards a new world war.

They say that they work together with the government in order to be able to work for peace with it—but for what peace?

All the papers of the “Left bloc” speak of the necessity for guaranteeing “our” frontier against the invasions of the Riffs, and *after* “our” territory has been cleared, they mean to propose peace to Abd-el Krim.

Jouhaux, following Renaudel, has come out against the extension of military operations into what used to be the Spanish zone—and thus shows himself to be in favour of continuing the war until the Riffs are thrown back to the other side of this famous frontier, which only exists on paper. It is the formula of the “fatherland in danger, which must be defended,” that is being supported by the Socialists.

The resolution on Morocco worked out by the “Left bloc” is not yet published (at the moment of writing), but we know that it will amongst other things declare the pacifism and the will to peace of France. It will also contain a proposal to negotiate with Abd-el Krim, *but on condition that the latter accepts as definite the French frontier, until now purely hypothetical.*

It is known beforehand that Abd-el Krim will refuse to isolate himself in the barren mountains of the Riff, and cut himself off completely from the fertile valleys without which his compatriots cannot live.

“Abd-el Krim refuses to negotiate,” the soldiers and rulers will then say; and this will serve as a pretext for continuing the war either by arms or by blockade.

Reactionaries of the “Bloc National” and Democrats of the “Left bloc” are also agreed in saying that this war will be a long one, and that it will have to be waged “to the bitter end.” For it is impossible to make peace on terms that are advantageous to Abd-el Krim; that is, to leave to him the valleys which grow grain.

They are equally unwilling for Abd-el Krim, who more and more appears as the champion of Islam facing the Christian robbers, to have even a semblance of success. For the echoes of this might be so loud that "our Moslem empire would be menaced by them.

The reactionary press, and that of the "Left" is unanimous in saying that even the driving of the Riffs to the other side of the "hypothetical" frontier will not end the war.

Reactionaries, Democrats and Social-Democrats know that the only way to finish Abd-el Krim is to send out there an army strong enough to drive the Riffs into the sea: that is to say, to engage upon a war that will cost thousands of millions of francs, and thousands upon thousands of victims. The reactionaries say this straight out, suggesting it to the government. The Democrats and Social-Democrats also believe in it, but they are afraid of difficulties within France and international complications outside.

They do not draw back—but they employ a ruse. They have promised peace—opinion must not be in a position to accuse them of making war. They have promised better living—they must not be liable to the accusation that they have made living dearer and taxes heavier. They think it more skilful to carry out a war of attrition by means of a strengthened blockade.

How long will they be able to deceive the wide masses of the workers?

They have a good set of trump cards in their game of forming opinion, in the Socialist and reformist trade union "heads" who accept the war.

Yet already serious protests are to be heard in the ranks of the reformist unions, the departmental confederal unions (district trades councils) of the Haute Garrone of the Rhône, of the Gironde, and of Meurthe et Moselle, ask that it should be recognised that there is, among the masses of the people, a current of opposition to the Moroccan war; *and they denounce the criminal designs of the capitalists in this new butchery.*

The proposals for a united front against the war, made



by the Communist Party and the Unitary Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.U.) to the Socialist Party and the reformist Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.) have been repeated to every group of these bodies from top to bottom. At the top they have been left without an answer. *But the reformist rank and file has answered, and the common struggle of the the non-party and reformist workers with the revolutionary workers is going to increase in vigour and in scope.*

The agitation undertaken by the Communist Party and the C.G.T.U. is based on the following slogans :

“Fraternisation of the soldiers of France and of the Riff.”

“Immediate and unconditional peace with Abd-el Krim,” and

“Evacuation of Morocco !”

In spite of the “pacifist-warrior” poison pumped into the opinion of the people by the “Left-bloc,” this agitation is beginning to bear fruit.

The opposition to the war is going, in the days that are coming, to increase in strength. It is the proletariat of the towns and fields that is going to impose peace in Morocco. It is the proletariat that has got to force the French imperialists to respect their own democratic *phrases*, and to apply the “right of all peoples freely to dispose of their own lives,” in virtue of which *Morocco ought to belong to the Moroccans.*

The French working class, faithful to its revolutionary traditions, will be able to impose its will to peace on the bloodstained politicians and charlatans of the “Left Bloc” who bear the responsibility for the butchery in Morocco.

PIERRE SEMARD,

(Secretary of the Communist Party of France.)

# The New Tasks in the Rural Districts of U.S.S.R.

**T**WO hostile camps confront each other to-day. One of these is Soviet Russia, which is wholly engaged at the present time in work of construction and is conducting a peaceful foreign policy. But by the very fact it has existed for seven years and has achieved successes in its task of proletarian construction, it is conducting dangerous Communistic "propaganda" in all parts of the world, attracting to itself the sympathy of the proletarians of the West, and the oppressed nationalities of the East. The other camp is the capitalist camp, which is brandishing its weapons, hurling thunder and lightning against Soviet Russia and straining every effort to establish a united front against it.

Both camps are just now becoming economically stabilised. But the capitalist world in which the anarchy of competition reigns cannot overcome the antagonisms within its own camp. The allies of to-day in this camp are becoming converted into the enemies of to-morrow. We have seen how the allies, Great Britain and France—immediately after the conclusion of the Versailles Treaty—commenced a covert struggle against each other and how, during this brief period Great Britain has been able to rob France of its political hegemony, or, to be more precise, of its position as the gendarme of capitalism on the Continent of Europe. We have seen and still see how Great Britain, with the co-operation of the United States of America, is putting Germany upon its feet, how throwing an economic noose around its neck with one hand, with the other hand it has helped to set up Field-Marshal Hindenburg and is striving to convert Germany into a vassal state. We observe how France with fear and trembling, is watching the stabilisation of Germany, which at the orders of its masters must threaten its Eastern neighbour, the U.S.S.R., but which, when it becomes stronger, may turn on its Western neighbour, and take revenge for its degradation at Versailles. We shall see still further changes. The predominant feature of European politics at the present time is Anglo-American co-operation in Europe, but the antagonisms between these

two "collaborators" in all parts of the world are becoming more acute. The United States of America, which has converted the bloodshed during the world war into gold, is striving economically to enslave the whole of Europe and already represents a great menace to the British World Empire. It is not difficult to foresee that under such conditions England will sooner or later begin to form a coalition against the rising Dollar Republic in the same way as at the beginning of the century it formed a coalition against the rising empire of the Hohenzollerns. Capitalism is incapable of eliminating imperialist antagonisms which are rending it. These antagonisms are developing all the more rapidly because the world market has become poorer and smaller, as a result of the devastation caused by the war. Consequently, its stabilisation is very unenduring and short-lived.

The economic stabilisation of the Soviet Republic bears quite another character. The Soviet Republic also had to overcome and still has to overcome internal friction between the allies—the proletariat and the peasantry—but in this republic method is overcoming anarchy and its fundamental strategic plan, well tested by experience, is to strengthen the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry while at the same time preserving the hegemony of the proletariat. Consequently, the stabilisation of the Soviet Republic is not threatened by any *internal* catastrophies.

Friction between the proletariat and the peasantry I repeat, periodically arose in the U.S.S.R., but the Russian Communist Party cleverly eliminated it. The first time sharp friction arose was in 1921. This induced the Soviet Government sharply to change its economic policy and transfer from War Communism to the New Economic Policy. The New Economic Policy, which restored freedom of trade, not only pacified the rural districts, but rendered it possible to successfully carry through the currency reform and to revive industry. These were the principal tasks upon which almost the whole of the attention of our Party was concentrated, during the last four years. Recently, certain phenomena in the rural districts signalled the necessity for a further change—the expansion of NEP in the rural districts and the necessity to give greater scope for the individual initiative of the peasants. As in 1921, the new line of policy to-day is dictated not only by the need to strengthen the alliance of the workers and peasants, but also by the need for the further development of our industries, which are entering a new and higher phase, i.e., in the final analysis, by the need to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat in the country.

Recently our industry has been restored at a veritable American rate of speed, which has set to scorn the forecasts of the bourgeois Cassandras, who declared that the proletariat would never be able to manage this task. I will quote a few examples from the report of the Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council, comrade Djerjinsky. Our metal industry, which began to develop later than any of the others—only since the end of last year—is reviving at such a rapid rate that during the last year it was necessary to revise and enlarge the plan of restoration no less than three times and towards the end of the year the extent of restoration exceeded by 90 per cent. the plan forecasted. Our electrical industry is being restored at a much more rapid rate, and already exceeds the pre-war level. In the rubber industry, only last year the question was discussed as to which of the two works of the Rubber Trust should be closed, in view of the fact that the warehouses contained 8 million pairs of goloshes which could not be sold. Now that the price of goloshes have been reduced, not only do we not intend to close either of the works, but the number of the workers employed in the Treugolnik works has been increased from 5,000 to 13,000. The textile industry last year reached 44 per cent. of its pre-war output; this year the cotton industry has reached 74 per cent. of pre-war output. Taken as a whole, our industry, in the course of one year, has increased one and a half times, and we may expect that in another year or two output will exceed pre-war level all along the line. The growth of industry in Russia is proceeding parallel with reduction of prices of manufactured goods, and in spite of the systematic reduction of prices, the revenues of the State from industry are increasing. In the present year the State Treasury estimates that 600 million roubles will accrue in the form of direct and indirect taxes upon the products of industry.

Owing to the fact that in the recent period of NEP the attention of the Soviet Government was directed principally towards reviving urban industry—the base of the dictatorship of the proletariat—the rate of development of agriculture relatively lagged considerably behind. It is true that the area of land under cultivation is now 72 per cent. of that of pre-war times and within another year or two will equal the pre-war area. It is true also that the quantity of live stock and farm inventory in the rural districts is increasing (the number of horses during the year increased 10 per cent. and the amount of agricultural instruments supplied to the rural districts during the year has doubled and already covers 70 per cent. of pre-war requirements). Nevertheless, the rate of

development of agriculture cannot be compared with the rate of development of urban industry. The latter in 1921-22 represented 23 per cent. of pre-war level, and now represents 70 per cent. to which should be added that during the past year it increased one and a half times. Agriculture has also reached this level, but agriculture was not damaged so severely by the wars and it had less to make up. Agriculture is growing, but more slowly than industry and during the past year increased only 2 per cent. While urban industry during the past year increase dits output by 850 million roubles, agriculture increased its output only by 130 million roubles.

If we bear in mind that the retarded rate of development of agriculture has been accompanied by a great awakening of the peasantry and an unexampled striving on their part towards rational cultivation, it will appear quite natural that a certain amount of "jealousy" should arise among the peasantry towards the proletariat and a certain amount of discontent over the fact that the Soviet Government apparently concerned itself more with the interests of the proletariat than with the interests of the peasantry. These sentiments were fostered also by the circumstance that our Party apparatus in the rural districts worked extremely badly in comparison with that in the towns and especially with that at the centre.

Communists in the village occupy a most difficult position. In the expansive sea of peasantry we have only 145,000 rural Communists who are too weakly linked up with the Party leadership. Of these Communists 100,000 are engaged in Soviet administrative work, and only a small percentage actually engaged in farming. In the Moscow province, for example, out of 11,000 rural Communists only several hundred are engaged in farming; a number not representing more than 0.5 per cent. Consequently, our comrades in the villages are not only badly connected with the Party leadership, but have not sufficiently close connections with the mass of the peasantry. Under such conditions, these comrades, who have rendered great services to the Party and have shown enormous self-sacrifice during the civil war and the period of War Communism, in the fight for the maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the rural districts—in many places still cling to the traditions of War Communism and have been less capable than the urban Party comrades to adapt themselves to the New Economic conditions. Some of these comrades have become bureaucratic and "command" in their district in a most arrogant fashion, whilst a small section has become positively corrupt.

Meanwhile, a powerful cultural revival is taking place among the non-Party peasantry. From the ranks of the demobilised Red Army men, sections of the middle peasantry and the rural intelligentsia—teachers, etc.—among whom a great change of sentiment in favour of the Soviet Government has taken place—has emerged a stratum of social workers, well-informed about the policy of the Soviet Government, and who see that there are frequently contradictions between the orders that we issue from above and the conduct of the local village Communists. The frequency with which cases occurred last autumn of rural authorities persecuting peasant correspondents who exposed the abuses of the local authorities, sometimes going to the extent of assassinating these correspondents, served as a warning sign to the Party, which during the past years of NEP had devoted its attentions principally to the restoration of industry and the marshalling of proletarian forces—that it must now “turn to the village.”

“Turn to the village” was the slogan of the October Plenum of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. The Central Committee expressed the opinion that the immediate principal task of the moment was to **revive the activity of the Soviets** from below—from the village Soviet—to the top. The Central Committee issued instructions to slacken the pressure upon the Soviets during elections, not to force Party candidates on the electors, establish responsibility of members of Soviets to electors, to attract non-Party workers to Soviet work in Co-operative Societies, Peasant Manual Aid Committees, Village Libraries, etc. At the same time it gave instructions to raise the level of the Party workers in the local, rural Party nuclei, to give them more detailed instructions, infuse new blood into them, increase the influx of peasant farmers into the Party nuclei, eliminate the corrupt elements, re-organise the Party work of the nuclei in the direction of concentrating their attention upon educational and economic work in the village and devoting greater attention to the village Communist Youth League.

In those cases where the population showed indifference to the elections to the Soviet, the Party ordained that fresh elections take place in which greater freedom of election should be given—that less pressure be exercised from above. This new policy met with active response on the part of the peasants. The re-elections of the Soviets took place amidst considerable enthusiasm. The number of votes cast almost

doubled, and on the average from 45 to 50 per cent. of the electors voted. From 30 to 50 per cent. of the local Soviets were re-elected. Our comrades in the rural nuclei, however, have not thoroughly grasped the meaning of the new policy. Some of them regard it as a weakening of the dictatorship of the proletariat and have become discouraged and extremely passive. The masses of the middle peasantry were very sympathetic to the new policy adopted by the Soviet Government in the rural districts, but the percentage of local Party men elected to the Soviets decreased and only those Party candidates were elected who, by their good work in the village, had won the confidence of the inhabitants. In some districts, in the Kuban, for example, even the kulak element took advantage of the new policy, and in the district mentioned old cassocks ranging from 40 to 60 years of age were elected in the majority of cases. Taken as a whole, however, it may be said that while the peasantry were very critical of the minor Party workers in their districts, nevertheless, during the course of the elections, they displayed great confidence in the Central Soviet Government. The new policy has contributed a great deal to increasing this confidence. The Party was not in the least disturbed by the defeats which the local Party nuclei suffered in some districts. It was too much to expect that the rural nuclei, which are certainly more backward when compared with the urban nuclei, should immediately grasp the significance of the tactical manoeuvre of the Party and that they could undergo an immediate change. Their re-training requires prolonged and untiring work on the part of the Party, and this the Party has now undertaken.

At first the new policy was directed merely towards reviving the Soviets, but the depression which prevailed in Soviet life in the villages was closely connected with the repression of the **economic**, individual, initiative of the peasantry. An investigation into the conditions of the rural districts carried out by the Party after the October Plenum of the Central Committee revealed this pretty clearly. It became evident to the Party that unless we broadened the sphere of the economic, individual, activity of the peasantry, that unless we eliminated from the rural districts the **economic** survivals of the epoch of War Communism, unless we extended to the rural districts the principles of the New Economic Policy in the same degree as we had extended them to the towns, we would never be able to remove the discontent among the masses of the peasantry, and indeed we would lead the economic life of the country into an impasse.

We have already said that during the four years following the cessation of the Civil War, the Soviet Government has managed to restore State industry almost to its pre-war level. We are approaching the point when the old factories and workshops will be working 100 per cent. of their capacity. This raises new problems for us. All that which the proletariat could do in order to increase the productivity of labour by means of straining muscles and energy has already been done to a considerable degree. The future development of the productivity of labour and of our industries demands the re-equipment of our workshops and factories, the introduction of the latest achievements of technique and the construction of new factories and workshops. In the very near future the economic development of the Soviet Republic will come up against the problem of increasing **the basic capital** of the country. But the outlay of basic capital does not bring returns very quickly. To be in a position to make such outlays a considerable process of accumulation must take place first and in view of the slight chances of obtaining credits from bourgeois States this accumulation can only be made to any extent, in the sphere of agriculture. Hence, from this point also we approach the problem of accelerating the rate of accumulation in the countryside.

This process of accumulation, however, has met with severe obstacles in the shape of the economic survivals of the period of War Communism. Our agrarian legislation curtailed the rights of the peasantry to lease land and the right to employ wage labour in agriculture. This was intended to serve as a barrier against the penetration of capitalist relations into the rural districts. But this barrier proved to be partly ineffective and partly a reactionary hindrance to economic development. The Soviet Government in possession of the commanding heights of the economic life of the country in the last resort, has sufficient means at its disposal to overcome agricultural capitalism, but of this we will speak later. But the most unsuitable means for this purpose are **juridical and administrative barriers** to this development. These while hampering the development of capitalist exploitation encourage the worst forms of concealed, usurious exploitation. These juridical barriers finally caused discontent, not only among the well-to-do peasantry, who were deprived of all possibility of enlarging their enterprises, and of the middle peasantry, who are compelled in order to harvest in time to hire temporary labourers, but even among the rural poor, who were deprived of a means of finding employment. The rural poor in Russia are a numerous class. In spite of the fact that the land in Russia is distributed more or less



equally, the differentiation among the peasantry is, nevertheless, considerable as a consequence of the unequal distribution of live-stock, farm inventory and financial resources: 40 per cent. of the peasants are without horses. The horseless peasants plough their land with the aid of horses hired from the prosperous peasants, but, in consequence, the poor peasant becomes bound to the wealthy peasant and very often finds himself in a worse condition than a landless labourer.

The limitation of the right to lease land and the right to employ wage labour, which retards the intensification of agriculture, has a still further harmful consequence—it decreases the capacity of the rural districts to absorb labour, increases **relative over-population in the rural districts** and creates chronically increasing **unemployment** in the country. Even with the present rush in the development of industry it can absorb only from 200,000 to 300,000 fresh workers per annum. But the increase of population in Russia is more than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. which represents from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 million superfluous hands.

The peasantry try in their own way to evade the hampering laws concerning wage labour. In several places a system of "temporary marriages" (a young farmer "marries" a woman for a definite period, say to the end of the harvest and then divorces her—Tr.) and fictitious adoptions of children of working age grew up. But this did not carry them very far. In the main, the peasantry feared to resort to the employment of wage labour, because this would brand them as kulaks and get them into bad odour, and furthermore, the taxes that have to be paid by those who employ wage labour are so high that it makes it absolutely unprofitable to do so in the rural districts. In some places the peasants have to pay 30 roubles for the right to employ one labourer, in others, they were called upon to pay a sum equal to 12 per cent. or even 30 per cent. of the amount paid in wages. In many places the County Executive Committee charged two and even three roubles merely for registering an employment contract.

The Soviet Government has now decided to a large extent to remove **these juridical and administrative** barriers against the penetration of capitalism in the villages. According to the land code a peasant has the right to lease land only for the period of one rotation of a crop; now the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has passed a regu-

lation giving the right to the peasants in the R.S.F.S.R. to lease land for two rotations of crops where the multiple field system exists and for a period not exceeding 12 years where the three and four field system exists. At the same time the Council of Peoples' Commissaries of the U.S.S.R. has issued a provisional regulation modifying the conditions of employing auxiliary wage labour on peasant farms. This regulation permits the peasants to employ auxiliary wage labour also on leased land, and, in fixing the length of the working day and the number of holidays, the specific conditions of agriculture—its busy and slack season are taken into consideration. But at the same time it aims at protecting the interests of the labourers, man or woman, when concluding contracts with employers and at preventing the violation of the laws for the protection of labour.

In close connection with this was the question of changing the existent attitude towards home handicraft industry. This class of industry plays an important role in peasant economy. In 1923-24, one-third of the articles employed in peasant farming was produced by handicraft home industry. The attitude of the Soviet Government towards this form of industry hitherto has been hostile, since it feared the effects of its competition upon large State industry. These fears were well-founded at the time when our factory chimneys emitted no smoke and when the whole of our large-scale industry was paralysed, but now these fears have become an anachronism and have lost all meaning. The development of home industry does not represent the least danger for large-scale State industry, on the contrary, the one may serve as an auxiliary to the other. In the first place, home industry provides us with a reservoir of skilled workers for our factories and workshops; secondly home industry may satisfy to a considerable extent the goods famine now experienced in the rural districts owing to the fact that our factory industry will not be in a position for a long time to come—in view of the policy of lowering prices—to meet the ever growing demand for goods from the rural districts; thirdly, and most important, the development of home industry may increase the capacity of the rural districts to absorb a larger quantity of labour, and thus reduce unemployment and ameliorate the conditions of the rural poor. In spite of the fact that the revival of large State industry long ago called for the abolition of the administrative obstacles to the development of home industry, they continued to exist from pure inertia up to the present time. As a result the number of home workers in Russia was reduced by half as compared with the number that existed in pre-war times. In pre-war times the number

of home workers in Russia was four millions, now the number is 2,130,000.

The Soviet Government has now adopted a change of policy also towards the home workers. By an order of the Council of Peoples' Commissaries of the U.S.S.R. rural home workers and artisans, who do not employ hired labour, and also those who, by the nature of their industry cannot dispense with hired labour, are exempted from the payment of the **business tax**. The latter category of homeworkers is also exempted from the payment of **income tax** if they pay the **agricultural tax**. If, however, they do not pay the agricultural tax, then they pay income tax according to the scale of those receiving income tax from their own labour. The home worker is also relieved from the trader's tax if he trades in his own manufactures. At the same time the policy has been adopted of developing home industry, co-operation and supplying home workers with semi-manufactured materials. Finally the Soviet Government has resolved to include home workers in the category of the working section of the population and accordingly, the political rights of citizens who enjoy the right of participating in elections have been conferred on them.

In what relation do these new measures to be adopted in the rural districts stand to our Socialist tasks? No one in the Party disputes the necessity for these measures, but certain deviations were observed at first in the estimation of these measures. Some comrades with "Left" deviations (Larin, Kritzman and others), while recognising that these new measures were imperative, nevertheless argued that as these measures will give full play to capitalist conditions in the rural districts, we must draw very definite conclusions from this: i.e., we must at the same time take measures to intensify the class struggle in the rural district and to counteract kulak farming, which will now become very strong, by organising the rural poor, and speeding up the development of collective farming. Other comrades, well-informed of the temper prevailing in the rural districts and to some extent themselves influenced by this mood, revealed a deviation towards the right. They were inclined to minimise the principle of the new steps taken in our rural policy. These comrades started out from the correct position that it is impossible to draw the peasantry into Socialist construction without developing the commodity character of agriculture and without intensifying it; that no development will take place if we describe every industrious peasant who improves his farm as a kulak and subject him to the various forms of administra-

tive pressure and juridical limitations, and if we set up as a model every village poor man, even though his poverty be due to his laziness—but they were inclined to put too narrow an interpretation upon the category of “kulak” and too wide an interpretation upon the term “loafer.” They included in the category of kulak only those peasants who are engaged in usury and exploitation and who are interested in preserving the economic and cultural backwardness of the village.

The Party rejected both these deviations, the less dangerous and more theoretical deviation to the right and the more dangerous because practical, deviation to the left.

At the 14th Party Conference, in the press and at the Congress of Soviets, comrades Rykov, Bukharin, Molotoff and Kamenev indicated a distinct line of policy on this question, fully in accordance with the principles of Leninism. On the one hand they gave a clear and precise definition of the term kulak; they emphasised that a kulak was not only a usurer who lived at the expense of the backwardness of the village, but also a “progressive” farmer, who applying all the rules of modern farming, extracted surplus value out of the wage labour of the labourers. On the other hand, Rykov quite rightly pointed out that the prosperous farmers were too free in describing every poor farmer as a “loafer” and that really the loafers in a village were very rare, because no one voluntarily starved. At the same time all these comrades very clearly, without any attempt to minimise it, defined the character and the immediate consequences of the new course we are taking in the rural districts. These measures, they say, will undoubtedly, **in the immediate future**, bring about a differentiation among the peasantry and give rise to the development of capitalist relations in the rural districts. There can be no doubt about this, and we must state it frankly. But it does not follow from this, as comrades Larin and Kritzman believe, that we must simultaneously take steps to intensify the class struggle in the rural districts, for this would logically lead to a fresh revolution, and to a second violent expropriation. Nor does it follow from this that we must immediately concentrate our attention in the rural districts upon the development of agricultural communes. Comrade Larin and his friends, in asserting this, make a twofold blunder; in the first place they see in our village only two opposite poles—the kulaks and the proletarians. They entirely throw out of their calculation the whole mass of the middle peasantry whom we desire to draw into the work of Socialist construction together with the rural poor. Secondly,

they do not take into account the fact that we have taken this course not in 1921, when our nationalised factories and credit institutions practically did not function, but in 1925, when we are in possession of powerful economic commanding heights, which will become still more powerful as a result of the increase of accumulated capital in the rural districts, and in consequence of the attraction of the capital accumulated in the villages to the Treasury, partly by means of the income tax, and partly through the medium of our credit system. They leave out of account the fact that the influx of fresh resources from agriculture into industry and the influx of fresh investments in agricultural co-operation will sooner or later enable us to accelerate the rate of growth of co-operation in the villages, the rate of attracting the poor into collective farms, and the middle peasantry into agricultural co-operatives which, in their turn, by supplying the peasants with tractors and other agricultural machinery and later by electrifying the country districts, will completely draw the middle peasants equally with the poor peasants into our work of Socialist construction.

In the immediate future the new measures will undoubtedly lead to class differentiation in the villages, to bringing out its two opposite poles in greater relief, and to the intensification of the struggle between them? But this will mark only a transitional period during which our principal base—large scale State industry—will have grown to such an extent that, our efforts to introduce co-operation in the countryside and to create by these means the Socialistic elements of peasant farming, will be transferred from quantity into quality. Hence, while we may expect that in the immediate future class antagonisms in the villages will rapidly become more acute, nevertheless, at the next stage of the development of the villages, the elements of socialism will predominate over the elements of capitalism and will commence rapidly to eliminate them without any sudden manifestations of the class struggle; for the dictatorship of the proletariat in Soviet Russia will continue and will always desire to give economic support to the middle and poor sections of the peasantry, and will be in an increasingly better position to give that support as time goes on. The Party at the present time is being guided by the strategical plan which comrade Lenin drew up in 1921: "Link up with the peasant masses, with the rank and file of working peasantry and begin to move forward immeasurably, infinitely more slowly than we dreamed, but in such a way that the whole mass shall move forward with us. If we do that we shall in

time get such an acceleration of this movement such as we can now hardly imagine.”

This acceleration of Socialist construction represents the more or less remote prospect which our Party, in accordance with the teachings of Lenin pictures to itself, as it takes up this course of extending NEP to the rural districts. But it certainly does not follow from what has been said that the Party will not immediately give support to those sections of the peasantry which are threatened by the kulaks.

The Party and the competent organs of the government have adopted a number of important decisions in this direction simultaneously with the adoption of the course towards extending NEP to the rural districts. I will enumerate a few of them.

First, the regulation of grain prices. The Soviet Government cannot and will not abandon the method of regulating grain prices. But the system of price restrictions, which was applied last year revealed certain defects, which considerably affected the pockets of the village poor. The lack of flexibility in the restrictions of prices imposed last year in order to combat the effects of the well-to-do farmers to boost the price of grain which, if successful, would have brought about the collapse of our valuta, led to some unexpected results. In the autumn the poor peasants sold their grain at a relatively low controlled price, but in the summer they were compelled to purchase corn at a much higher market price and this enabled the kulaks to make a very good profit at the expense of the rural poor. In view of this, a course has been taken at the present time for a more flexible policy, namely, by establishing a “fair price” by averaging the market price prevailing at different times, and in different places. The fair price will be little higher than the average market price, *i.e.*, fair from the standpoint of the peasant corn vendor. The working out of these tactics in concrete form is a matter for the future, and the price will of course, depend upon the condition of the harvest.

Second, the expansion of agricultural credit. A beginning in agricultural credit was made at the end of 1922. The Government established an agricultural bank with a basic capital of 40 million roubles: Furthermore, it gave the bank power to utilise the credits of the State bank for an equal sum. In addition to this basic sum the bank obtained funds

for special purposes such as credit for the districts affected by the drought—3,900,000 roubles for supplying machinery this year—1,300,000 roubles, etc. The total special credits to be granted in 1925 will be not less than 10 million roubles, and the Government hopes to increase the amount of credit to be granted in the present economic year to 100 million roubles.

The third measure is to take the form of organised steps towards improving agricultural co-operation. All forms of co-operation in Russia are growing very rapidly at the present time, but their absolute extent is not yet sufficiently large. Consumers' co-operatives at the present time handles 35 per cent. of the goods consumed in the country, and serves 25 per cent. of the rural and 31 per cent. of the urban population. Agricultural co-operation lags behind consumers' co-operation in its development, but is growing rapidly as can be seen from the following table :

	No. of co- operatives	per cent.	No. of peasants & farms combined	per cent.
I/I-1924	19,700	100	1,270,000	100
I/Io ,,	25,800	117	1,940,000	127

In certain branches of peasant farming (potatoe growing, dairy farming, flax growing) agricultural co-operation is already the principal medium of supply, but agricultural co-operation has one very important defect, namely, the investments of the peasants in co-operation are extremely small, and the prosperous peasants hesitate to invest their savings in the co-operatives.

On the 1st of June, 1924, the amount of capital invested in 4,197 primary co-operatives represented only 2.4 per cent. of the total balance. In order to encourage the prosperous peasant to increase his investments in the co-operatives, certain measures have been taken. Firstly: strict separation of agricultural co-operation from consumers' co-operation, the agricultural co-operatives being prohibited from dealing in articles of consumption. Agricultural co-operation has been separated also vertically from credit co-operation, only the minor co-operative organisations being permitted to retain this function. For this purpose also, and in order to minimise the risk of investments in agricultural co-operation, it has been resolved to prohibit the agricultural co-operatives from trading on their own account; they must limit their activities to executing orders for the peasantry. In order to

attract larger investments from the prosperous peasantry in agricultural co-operation it has been decided to repeal the decree which prohibits those who do not enjoy the right to take part in elections to the Soviets from being members of co-operative societies. On the other hand in order to avoid the conversion of the agricultural co-operatives into instruments in the hands of the kulaks, it has been decided to prohibit "obvious kulaks" from being elected to positions on the Management Boards, Auditing Commissions and Councils of co-operative societies. In order to increase confidence in the co-operatives, it has been decided to guarantee freedom of election in them and increase their responsibility to constituents.

The fourth measure is to facilitate accelerated restoration of farm stock, which the rural poor at the present time lack more than anything else. The Soviet Government has set itself the following tasks: (1) to provide the peasantry with an adequate number of horses, with the aid of the State and the co-operative societies, **in the course of five years**; (2) to provide adequate farm stock by developing the manufacture of these articles in the State factories and also by home industry handicraftsmen, and to supply them to the peasantry at reasonable prices; and (3) to accelerate the introduction of the more complex modern types of machinery in peasant farming.

The fifth measure is to investigate the State of the Soviet farms. At the present time we have 5,159 Soviet farms, having a total area of 2,300,000 dessiatins. Soviet farms like all State enterprises, are run on a business basis and frequently are the cause of dissatisfaction among the peasantry. In those places where there is not enough land to satisfy the needs of the peasants, the peasants are discontented with the fact that the Soviet farms have taken up all the former landlords' estates, leased out the land and are independent of the county. In view of this it has been decided to investigate the condition of these Soviet farms, and in the case of the least flourishing ones, to divide up the land among the peasantry, and to preserve the better ones as model farms, but imposing upon them the obligation of helping the surrounding peasantry by supplying them with selected seeds, organising model fields, establishing electrical stations, etc.

The sixth measure is the reform of the agricultural tax. If we add up all the various taxes the peasant has to pay,



both direct and indirect, as well as non-fiscal payments, such as, rent etc., we will find that the peasant to-day has to pay considerably less than he paid in pre-revolutionary times, and that the payments diminish each year. If we take the total sum of payments which the peasantry had to make in 1912 at 100, we get the following figures for each year between 1920-21 and 1925-26 : 60, 48, 37, 42, and next year, when the conditions with which we will deal at the moment will operate, it will be 27. While, however, the total payments which the peasantry have to make is less to-day than in pre-revolutionary times and tend to decrease, nevertheless, the direct taxes which the peasants have to pay—and which are the most unpopular among the population—are nominally one and a half times greater than in pre-war time. Even if we make allowances for the depreciated purchasing power of gold, it will not be before next year, after the proposed reforms have been introduced, that the direct taxes of the peasantry will be equal to the pre-war level, for the 2 roubles 77 kopecks which the peasant will pay next year, will not be more than the 1 rouble 80 kopecks that he paid prior to the war. The relative burden of the agricultural tax, and the fact also that it does not fall equally upon all the peasantry, which particularly hampers the development of stock-breeding—a most vital necessity for the peasantry at the present time—has induced the Government to revise the whole system of the agricultural tax and as a provisional measure, until the revision is completed, considerably to modify the tax for this year. Last year the tax was based on an estimate of 470 million roubles. The third Session of the Central Executive Committee has fixed the tax for the coming year at not more than 300 million roubles. But as in the process of drafting the new law it was found possible to reduce the total tax still more, down to 280 million roubles; this means a reduction of 190 million roubles as compared with last year. Taking into consideration the rebates and other privileges which the new law provides, the peasantry in this coming year will actually have to pay, not even 280 millions, but 240 to 250 million roubles.

Further it has been resolved to make a change in the distribution of the revenues from this tax in favour of the peasantry. Last year the counties received from this tax 45 million roubles, but they will receive out of the revenues of the tax of the coming year 100 million roubles which will help considerably to meet their economic and cultural requirements. The methods of collecting the tax have also been improved. It has been decided to abolish such methods of coercion of the taxpayer as fines. It has also been de-

cided to fix definite dates for the payment of the tax which should be communicated to the peasantry two or three months beforehand. Finally, it has been decided to reduce the tax on cattle. Hitherto, on the average throughout the Soviet Union, for the purpose of the agricultural tax, one head of cattle was calculated as being equal to three-quarters of a dessiatin of ploughed land. This will now be changed and one head of cattle will be equal to one-half dessiatin, and furthermore the age of a beast liable to taxation has been increased from 18 months to two years. This will discourage the poor peasants from selling young beasts in order to avoid paying the tax as they frequently do.

The seventh measure is an extremely important reform indicated in the resolutions of the 14th Conference of the Russian Communist Party. This is to establish revolutionary law and particularly to give the population guarantees against the abuse of power without consideration to the revolutionary services rendered by those who abuse power. The realisation of this reform under the present conditions, is a necessary condition for the successful carrying out of all the other measures. In view of this the Party Conference instructed the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee to draw up all the necessary measures on the basis of the suggestions of comrade Lenin made in his letter which was published on the 23rd of April this year, and in the report of Comrade Soltz, to strengthen revolutionary law and to ensure that these measures be carried out through the Soviet institutions.

When comrade Tsurupa, in his report at the 14th Party Conference, severely criticised the defects of our agricultural tax, he nevertheless urged that we must not do anything hastily, that is to say, that no alterations in the tax should be made until the Party Congress, and that we must act cautiously, removing only the most glaring defects, and very carefully weigh the principles of the new impositions. When previous to this, at the April Plenum of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, comrade Molotoff delivered his report on our new tasks in the rural districts, he also urged very strongly that the new measures that were proposed should be introduced with the greatest caution and that "next year and perhaps sooner than that, we will have to revise these measures in one way or another." Why does our Party exhibit such caution in making changes? Is it because it is not sure of its general

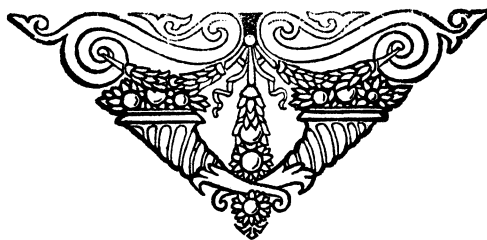
policy? Not in the least. The general line of strategy of our Party was drawn up by comrade Lenin "to cover a long period," and has proved to be correct to this very day. The new course in the rural districts does not in the least imply a modification of this strategy, but in order to carry out this strategy it is necessary to co-ordinate the most rapid development possible of our industrial forces with the everyday interests and moods of the proletarian masses on the one hand, and the peasant masses on the other. We must vigilantly see to it that no hitches occur in the economic development of the Soviet Republic, that the "jealousy" between the proletariat and the peasantry does not increase. Owing to the inevitably uneven character of the development of our industrial forces in town and country, we must according to the prevailing situation, pull first at one lever then at another and test by experience the manner in which the Soviet machine is working, to see whether any hitches have occurred in any of its parts and whether discontent is accumulating as a result of these hitches. Hence the Party's caution in making changes and the desire to test every step by experience.

In conclusion I would like to say a few words concerning the connection between the new course adopted by our Party in the rural districts and the international situation. I have already said that the present stabilisation of world capitalism differs essentially from the stabilisation of the Soviet Republic. The co-operation among the bourgeois States, which is the outstanding feature of the present situation, must sooner or later give way to sharp conflicts between them and fresh wars. The co-operation between the proletariat and the peasantry in the Soviet Republic becomes closer and closer after each occasion that friction arises between them.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that at the present time the great capitalist powers are co-operating with each other and that a partial stabilisation of capitalism is taking place. This cannot but affect the home policy of our Party in the U.S.S.R. In 1918, when the revolution was at its height, comrade Lenin regarded Germany with its high industrial development, and Russia, in which the proletariat had come to power as "two separate halves of Socialism" and saw in the junction of "these two halves" a pledge of "the victory of world Socialism"—a guarantee for the victor-

ious revolution. Now that a direct revolutionary situation no longer exists in Germany, economically backward Russia, in order to advance towards Socialism must, to some extent, release capitalistic relations **within its own borders**. This compelled the Soviet Government to adopt NEP in 1921; it is this that has compelled it now to take a step further in this direction. Is this a "retreat"? In a certain sense, it is. But comrade Lenin, as far back as 1897, in his pamphlet "The Tasks of Russian Social Democrats," very clearly defined the character of such retreats with the words: "Il faut reculer pour mieux sauter."

X. X. X.



# Partial Capitalist Stabilisation and Our Tasks \*

## 1. THE NATURE OF CAPITALIST STABILISATION.

### Parallelism Between the Development of Comintern and our Revolution.

**C**OMRADES, when we examine the activities of the Communist International, we cannot but arrive at the conviction that nearly every crucial turning point in its history coincided with a crucial turning in the history of our Party. A certain parallelism between the Communist International and our own revolution can be definitely established. You will recall the article of Vladimir Ilyitch written on the occasion of the first anniversary of Comintern. He wrote of the triumphant march of the Communist International which conquered position after position and corresponded with the rapid successes achieved by our revolution. The Second Congress of Comintern coincided with our advance on Warsaw. The Third Congress of Comintern took place after Kronstadt, and the tactics adopted by our Party left a clear impress upon its decisions. The Fourth Congress met in the first period of NEP, and again a definite connection between international policy and the policy of the Russian Communist Party could be observed. The Fifth Congress reviewed, and drew definite conclusions from our internal Party discussion. Our internal Party crises have always coincided with definite crises or semi-crises in the history of our revolution.

A similar parallelism may be observed to-day. The decisions arrived at by the recently concluded session of the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International, a session which had all the significance of a Congress, are closely

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\* Report by Comrade Zinoviev at the Fourteenth All-Union Party Conference on the work of the Plenum of the E.C.C.I., supplemented by extracts from his Report on the same subject to the active Party workers of Leningrad and Moscow.

bound up with the general political situation in our own country. That is but natural, when we remember that the Communist International was born and developed in the course of the early victories of the proletarian revolution in the U.S.S.R. Although the Union of Soviet Republics may occupy only one-sixth of the globe, nevertheless for reasons which are obvious, the importance of the Russian Revolution in the Communist International, is much greater. That is why the decisions taken by the Enlarged Executive of Comintern are so important for us, not only because we are one of the Sections of the Communist International, but also because we are a Party in control in the first proletarian country in the world.

### **The Base of the Second International.**

A similar parallelism is to be observed in the activities of the Second International and a number of bourgeois countries. When the bourgeoisie is on the up-grade, the Second International is also on the up-grade. If capitalism achieves a certain amount of stabilisation, so does the Second International. It is difficult to say with what country the Second International is at present most closely bound, and what country most represents its policy. When MacDonald was in power, we were all inclined to think that just as Moscow was the heart of the Third International so London was the heart of the Second International. Events, however, proved the contrary.

The marked movement towards the Left which is taking place among the British working class masses and which is leading to closer relations between the British trade unions and the Soviet trade unions undoubtedly indicates a diminution of the importance of the Second International in Great Britain. It cannot now be said that London represents the Second International, or that the British working class movement is its base.

If proofs were required they have been forthcoming of late in great abundance. At the recent conference of the Independent Labour Party, MacDonald's Party, which in certain respects represents the Left-wing of the Labour Party, it seemed as though MacDonald would be defeated. In this respect the vote on the notorious forged "Zinoviev

Letter," ascribed to Comintern, is symptomatic and illuminating. MacDonald, the leader and guide of his party, was left in a minority, having secured only 261 votes against 286. Matters have come to such a pass that the *Morning Post* has recently prophesied the formation of a new Labour Party by MacDonald and Thomas, free from the taint of the Communists. The "Morning Post" facetiously declared that the Labour Party is controlled by the Independent Labour Party, that the Independent Labour Party is in fact controlled by a group of Communists who have joined it openly or tacitly, and that it only remains for MacDonald and Thomas to form a new party. Whether it will ever come to the formation of a new party as the *Morning Post* prophesies, I do not know, but the mere fact that it is talked about is significant. Not long ago, during the Easter holidays, MacDonald came forward with a plan in opposition to the proposed Anglo-Soviet Trade Union rapprochement. He advanced the idea of an Anglo-German rapprochement on the plea that the centre of the European working class movement was after all in Germany,

A very interesting dispute arose at a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Second International as to where the Executive Committee was to hold its meetings in the future. After many piquant incidents, the matter was concluded by a vote which resulted in a majority of two in favour of Germany. Even so, the decision was given rather a conciliatory form; the resolution spoke of the transfer of the work of the Executive Committee of the Second International to a "German speaking" country. They could not bring themselves to say Germany openly. This fact alone proves that Great Britain is no longer the chief country of the Second International and that London no longer represents the Second International in the sense that Moscow represents the Third. It seems probable that we are approaching a period when Germany will have again to be regarded as the country of the Second International.

### How Our Enemies Distort our Decisions.

In this state of affairs it behoves us to adopt a new policy. You know, comrades, that the recent Plenum of the Executive Committee took a definite cognisance of the situation which had already become more or less pronounced at the time of the Third Congress in 1921. The Plenum

formulated our attitude toward the slackening of the pace of the world revolution and recorded the partial stabilisation of capitalism. Our resolution and pronouncements regarding capitalism, were for many, if not unexpected, at least rather unpleasant. They came as a shock to some. Nevertheless, it had to be said, for the Communist movement has never profited from illusions or self-deception. Communism was right in 1923, when at the time of the acute revolutionary situation in Germany it brought all its influence into play; and Communism was right when it afterwards waited a year or more as we in Russia waited in 1905, in the expectation that the direct revolutionary situation would soon return.

And similarly is Communism right in 1925, when quantity is being transformed into quality, in clearly and definitely declaring that at the present moment, especially in Germany, where there was a direct revolutionary situation in 1923, such a situation does not now exist. I will not repeat the report made to the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International. I shall not quote the figures regarding the world economic situation, which we exhaustively examined at the Plenum with the object of determining the degree of the consolidation of capitalism in the various countries. I believe the main facts are known to all. I would only say, that, as indeed was to be expected, the pronouncement made by the Enlarged Executive of Comintern regarding the partial stabilisation of capitalism was seized upon by the capitalist and Social-Democratic press, and interpreted by them very "widely" in the sense that the world revolution has been removed from the agenda and that all prospects of a world revolution had disappeared, but the enemy was guilty of a "slight" falsification. We spoke of partial stabilisation, but the word "partial" was overlooked. We spoke of the absence of a direct revolutionary situation, but the word "direct" was omitted. They spoke of the complete absence of a revolutionary situation and the consolidation and complete stabilisation of capitalism.

### **The Limits of Economic Stabilisation. France.**

Only a brief period has elapsed since the Plenum of the E.C.C.I. was held—barely a month—but already we have several important facts which enable us to give a concrete



illustration of the views of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Comintern, and to determine the limits and extent of the partial stabilisation. Three weeks had hardly elapsed before certain very important events took place in France, Bulgaria and Germany, I shall deal with them briefly.

For determining the limits of economic stabilisation, France serves as a striking example. For determining political stabilisation, we may use examples furnished us by Bulgaria and Germany in the last few days.

In France, a severe government crisis has taken place, so far ending rather favourably for the Left Bloc. Herriot and Painlevé have merely changed places. France as we know, is a country of ancient parliamentary traditions and such crises are mere trifles. But the characteristic feature of the recent government crisis was that it was provoked not by a storm in a tea-cup, not by a customary parliamentary manoeuvre, but by profound economic causes. Unlike other crises it bore an economic character. You are all very well acquainted with the contradictions existing in the Left Bloc and I shall not dwell upon them. What, however, was the direct cause of the recent parliamentary crisis in France? Questions of financial policy. France is a country which issued triumphant from the imperialist war, which until quite recently was unfamiliar with unemployment, and where large industries developed considerably during recent years. Yet even she has reached an economic impasse. It is all a question of inflation, of the necessity for the unlimited issue of paper money in order to save the situation. The result is a serious menace to bourgeois well-being, a menace which immediately produced a profound regrouping of forces among fairly extensive sections of the bourgeoisie. Why? Because the word inflation conjures up before the French bourgeoisie pictures of Germany in 1923, and brings before their eyes the gruesome spectre of the German crisis of 1923 which contained many direct revolutionary features and characteristics. And what was the course of events in Germany in 1923? Financial collapse, economic depression, a flood of paper money, unemployment, inflation, etc. We see how since the Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, in one of the richest countries in Europe, a victorious country, a severe government crisis has developed, arising from economic causes, and how the spectre of a financial crisis is sweeping over the country.

For the time being the situation in France has been saved. But do not forget that France has a deficit of 24 milliards. It is true that so far she has managed to avert a catastrophe, she has attempted to cover the deficit by issuing paper to the amount of four milliard francs (this indeed was the cause of the government crisis), but a deficit of 20 milliards still remain. If every four millions is to produce a government crisis, the deficit is enough for five such crises, and indeed each succeeding crisis will be more acute than the last. The important issue is, as I said, that this is going on in France. And France is a victorious country, a rich country; she is not in the claws of the Entente, she is not an object of the Versailles Treaty, but its subject. There is no direct revolutionary situation therefore in France; here we find a certain degree of "stabilisation"; but the example demonstrates the economic limits to that stabilisation. The situation, of course, will not assume definite form within the course of a few weeks or even months, but the limits of stabilisation are excellently illustrated by the economic crises which are developing before our eyes.

### **The Limits of Political Stabilisation. Bulgaria and Germany.**

Let us now consider the question of political stabilisation. It seems to me that the events in Bulgaria and especially in Germany give a clear idea as to the limits of the present political stabilisation.

We do not know what will be the direct result of the events in Bulgaria, but these things have come to such a pass that not only had the Bulgarian landowners seized "their" workers and peasants by the throat, but there was even every likelihood of an armed conflict between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Rumania. This was openly talked about in international circles. It is true that an armed conflict did not take place, but it was a near thing. Those who remember what the situation was in 1914 on the eve of the war will know how rich the Balkans are in classic possibilities of armed conflicts capable of ending in world war. The present situation in the Balkans is no evidence of political tranquility in the capitalist camp.

In the bourgeois world, attempts are being made to a lesser extent in recent days, it is true, to cast the responsibility for the events in Sofia upon the Soviet Government and the Comintern. The complete absence of foundation of

this unheard of and monstrous accusation has compelled the accusers to eat their words. The record was beaten by the Cadet paper, *Rul*, which affirmed that "they," the Bolsheviks, at a meeting of the Comintern, deliberately invented stabilisation in order to distract the attention and soothe the international bourgeoisie, while at the same time they were making preparations for the explosion in Sofia. Of course, nobody was likely to believe such nonsense. The explosion was due to the social situation in Bulgaria, and indeed in the Balkans generally. The fact is that it is impossible to govern such a predominantly peasant country as Bulgaria in spite of, and against the interests of the vast majority of the workers and peasants.

Only two weeks have elapsed since the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Politically, the situation in the Balkans shows that the struggle that developed there almost involved the possibility of the outbreak of a new war. At any rate, events are unrolling before our eyes which may find an echo through the whole world. We are faced with events which are capable of aggravating class relations and intensifying the civil war in Bulgaria, which is not the least important of the Balkan countries.

### **Germany and Hindenburg.**

Especial importance, comrades, must be ascribed to the recent events in Germany, and the election of Hindenburg as President. I must first acquaint you a little with the Party side of the matter. The second ballot in Germany was fixed at a time when a delegation from the German Communist Party was present at an Enlarged Executive meeting of the Comintern. We fully recognised the significance of the politics which were developing in Germany. We unanimously resolved to leave it to the Party itself to decide the question on the spot, but we categorically counselled the German Communist Party to make an open proposition to the Social-Democrats to support their candidate at the second ballot if they did not withdraw their candidate. After the first ballot the Social-Democrats immediately withdrew the candidature of Braun, in spite of the fact that they had received 8 million votes, while Marx, the candidate of the Centre, the Catholic party, had received 3 million. The Social-Democrats withdrew their candidate and decided to

mobilise the whole of Germany on behalf of the candidature of Marx, bargaining for Braun in return the post of Prussian Prime Minister. There thus remained at the second ballot three candidates, Thalmann, Marx and Hindenburg. The Right-wing manœuvred very cleverly, putting forward the candidature of Hindenburg, not at the first ballot, but at the second, and thus confusing the issue.

The result of the first election was such that there was apparently no "Black Hundred danger"—as we used to say in the old days—since the Right bloc would remain in the minority even though the Communists were to retain their own candidate. But by putting forward Hindenburg, the Right bloc mobilised 3 million new voters, mainly women, and thus created a new situation.

We feared that the Communist votes would melt away at the second ballot, and that instead of 1,800,000 votes we should secure only 1,000,000. As it turned out, however, the votes did not melt away; in Saxony, as the election statistics show, certain Social-Democratic workers voted for Thalmann as a protest against the fact that the Social-Democrats had put forward Marx. It should be added that the "left" Social-Democrats, including a section of the Young Socialist League, protested against the fact that the Social-Democratic Party supported a bourgeois candidate. This points to the fact that not only among the Communist workers, but also among the Social-Democratic workers the psychological preparation did not exist for the support of Marx. So much for the facts of the case.

I should like to say a word or two regarding the number of votes polled by our Party. Certain comrades, not without justice, express surprise that the Communist Party secured 2,600,000 votes in the Reichstag elections and only 1,800,000 votes in the present case. This is to a large extent to be explained by the fact—as can now be proved—that the psychology of the workers during the presidential elections is different from that which prevails during parliamentary elections. We know that the workers react differently at municipal elections from what they do at parliamentary elections, and at factory council elections differently from presidential elections. To take the example of the presidential elections in America, or even the elections in so

small a country as Finland, we find that the workers, knowing in advance that their candidate to the presidency will not be elected, take less interest in the elections than in the parliamentary elections where they hope that at least one or two of their candidates will be elected. That accounts for the paucity of votes.

Yesterday, I received information regarding the elections to the Factory Councils now taking place in Germany. The elections are in full swing. The figures show a certain increase of votes cast for the Communists in a number of places. If we can judge by these preliminary figures it may be forecasted that the number of votes secured by the Communists at the Factory Council elections will be far in excess of 1,800,000. It is difficult to make an exact calculation because in certain places the Communists put forward joint lists with the Social-Democrats. But to judge by the information already at our disposal it is clear that at the Factory Council elections an increase rather than a decrease of the influence of the Communist Party among the working class masses will be recorded. That is as far as the facts are concerned.

Now, comrades, as to the political side of the question. I have already said that the election of Hindenburg also represents an important historical illustration of our thesis regarding stabilisation. This thesis remains in force and cannot be shaken by isolated events in individual countries. Partial stabilisation is a fact; it will continue for a definite period of time, probably for several years; nevertheless we can judge as to the limits of this stabilisation by such events among others, as the presidential elections in Germany.

A world campaign is being conducted by the Mensheviks against the Communists as a result of the presidential elections in Germany. The Social-Democrats are crying in all languages and in all parts of the world that the Communists alone are responsible for the election of Hindenburg. I should like to cite a historical example to show how the Socialist Parties acted on an analogous occasion. In 1913 presidential elections took place in France. Two candidates competed: Poincaré, the President of the Council of Ministers, and Pams, the Minister for Agriculture in the Poincaré Cabinet. Pams was regarded as more left, more radical, than Poincaré. The shade of political difference be-

tween the latter and Pams was more or less the same as between Hindenburg and Marx. A furious presidential campaign was conducted. The elections, unlike the German elections, took place not in a direct vote of the people, but in accordance with the French constitution, at a united session of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The voting for Poincaré and Pams was almost equal, Poincaré securing only 13 votes more. The Socialist fraction at that time had 70 votes. Vaillant was nominated as the Socialist candidate. The Socialists voted for Vaillant knowing very well that they would thereby help Poincaré to be elected. There was not the slightest doubt as to the result of the elections. There was no secret ballot, especially since it is the custom to have a trial vote, which took place also on this occasion. Nevertheless, the French Socialist Party, which belonged to the Second International, which was not a Bolshevik Party, and was headed by such men as Jaures, Vaillant, and Guesdes unanimously decided that they would give their votes neither to Poincaré nor to Pams, but to their own candidate. At that time there was not that open bond between the Social-Democrats and the bourgeoisie as there is now. At that time such a bargain could not be made as that which we recently witnessed; you give a ministerial portfolio to Braun and I will sell you the 8 million workers' votes for your Papal candidate; I shall not even attempt to force you against the political barrier; for me there is only one choice—between one wing of the bourgeoisie or the other. The policy of Gompers has become the policy of the whole Second International. It is opportune to bear this in mind now that they are trying to lay the whole blame on us.

### **The Political Significance of the election of Hindenburg.**

Nevertheless, the significance of the election of Hindenburg is very great. We must not over-rate it. But the fact remains that a few years after the civil war nearly fifteen million Germans voted for Hindenburg, *i.e.*, half of the German electorate. And in that respect this symptom must, of course, not be under-rated. A large section of the German electors voted not so much for Hindenburg as for revenge on the Versailles Treaty and against the humiliations with which we are unfamiliar (because our country, apart from the brief period of the Brest peace, never had such an experience), but which in Germany calls forth extreme agitation and indignation among the wider sections of the people. It may well be that a large section of the electors voted not

so much for Hindenburg as against the Entente, against French and British capitalism. Nevertheless, the fact remains.

Here one may again cite a historical analogy. After the suppression of the Paris Commune, presidential elections took place in France. If I am not mistaken in 1875.

The Republic was ratified in parliament (1875), by a majority of one, and MacMahon was elected President under the slogan "a Republic with Republicans." Something very similar is going on in Germany now. They are electing a president of the Republic who has inscribed on his banner "a Republic without Republicans," for the "republic" of Hindenburg is a Republic without Republicans. Of course, there is a vast difference between the situation in France in 1875 and the situation in Germany in 1925. The difference consists in this, that in France the working class had been crushed, and in Paris drowned in blood (in Paris there was not a single working class family which did not count a victim), and the revolutionary movement had completely died out. In Germany to-day, there is a powerful working class, tried in battle, which has suffered defeats, but which has not yet made its last fight. Fifteen million German workers have not yet said the last word. And around Germany, beyond its frontiers, are countries in which there are great working class movements and a growing class struggle. The parties of Comintern are steadily gaining ground among the working class. Therein lies the difference, but nevertheless the analogy is correct, since in Germany, just as in France after the defeat of the Commune, the move is now towards the slogan "a Republic without Republicans."

What will be the immediate results of the election of Hindenburg? It is difficult to foresee the full effects, but it is quite clear that within Germany herself it will intensify and aggravate the growth of political contradictions. The Social-Democratic leaders who are carrying on a campaign of pogroms against the Communists will very quickly reconcile themselves with Hindenburg. They carried him shoulder high during the war; they were the last to proclaim the bourgeois republic. Wels and Scheidemann will quickly become reconciled with Hindenburg. But that does not mean that the German working class will become reconciled with Hindenburg. Not by any means. The contradic-

tions in Germany will increase. A much less stable political situation is developing in Germany than might have been expected.

And what will be the international political consequences of the election of Hindenburg? They will undoubtedly be serious. At any rate, Hindenburg does not mean the stabilisation of relations between Germany and France, but, on the contrary, their aggravation. Hindenburg also does not mean the stabilisation of relations between Germany and Poland, but rather their aggravation. Thus along the line Germany-France, Germany-Poland, we see the creation of an uncertain and unsettled situation, one full of dangers and surprises.

In relation to us, Soviet Russia, the situation is much more complicated. Here we shall see a prolonged play of forces. In the first place, Great Britain for some time will try to play off Hindenburg Germany against the Soviet Union. This indeed was attempted before the election of Hindenburg. His election will enable the British to carry on this game, perhaps more slowly but nevertheless more "solidly."

The news was received recently that America would respond to the election of Hindenburg by refusing credits to Germany, i.e., by keeping a tight hand on the purse. Today we received somewhat different news to the effect that the election of Hindenburg is regarded as a strengthening of conservatism in Germany, and as a reaction against Bolshevism, and that this fact, according to the Secretary of the Treasury Mellon, will protect the interests of those who invest their capital in Germany. Naturally, comrades, in America as in every bourgeois country, there will be found elements who will count on more "solid" political forces in Germany, which in their opinion may save the country from Bolshevism.

What is going on in Germany from the point of view of world historical prospects? We expected a proletarian revolution in Germany. At the beginning of our October revolution we hoped that it would take place within a few months. The German revolution came much later, and it was not a proletarian revolution, but a revolution which overthrew Wilhelm. With certain reservations, owing to the



different social composition of our country and of Germany, we may say that in Germany there took place a bourgeois democratic revolution.

### **The Lessons of the German Revolution.**

Germany furnished an interesting illustration to our ancient conflict with the Mensheviks and with Trotsky, who affirmed that the Bolsheviks were in favour of the "self-limitation" of the proletariat, but that in fact the proletariat after coming to power would not "limit itself," but would rather immediately carry out the Socialist revolution. After the revolution in 1918, in Germany, the proletariat came to power and the whole country was in the hands of soviets, which were in fact the masters of the situation. The first German government consisted of six Social-Democrats, three Rights, and three independents. The workers had the power in their hands, but under the influence and pressure of the Social-Democrats, the Soviets at their German Congress dissolved and "limited themselves" by the Weimar bourgeois Constitution. We saw an example of how the highly civilised working class of Germany "limited themselves" by a bourgeois democratic revolution. What is now going on in Germany may be described as a certain retrogression of the bourgeois democratic revolution towards a monarchy of a semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois character. While with us during the nine months from February to October a rapid transformation of the bourgeois democratic revolution into a proletarian revolution took place, we are witnessing the opposite process in Germany. In 1921 and 1923, it seemed that we were witnessing in Germany the transition to a proletarian revolution. But now we are faced with certain convulsions and spasms in the direction of a reverse development from the bourgeois revolution towards Hindenburg and Monarchism. In my opinion, comrades, it is merely an episode, a spasm, but nevertheless a highly characteristic spasm, and one which we must understand.

### **Hindenburg and Kautsky.**

The victory of Hindenburg should, therefore, induce us to consider profoundly the molecular process which is going on in the depths of a country like Germany which has passed through the furnace of civil war. It should at the same time help us to understand the extent of the political

stabilisation in Europe. We witnessed a number of unexpected surprises and incidents which may at first, perhaps, swing this stabilisation to the right, but this convulsive move to the right may be followed by a move to the left. All this places the working class revolution in an entirely new situation and menaces us with fresh dangers.

It is not at all surprising that the German Communists are finding it so difficult to face the possibility of even temporary agreements with the German Social-Democrats against the monarchists, since the leaders of the German Social-Democrats, like the whole of the Second International, are now representatives of the bourgeois policy.

A single example will make the matter clear. We heard that at a recent meeting of the Executive of the Second International, Kautsky introduced certain theses on the Russian question which were rejected, and which it seemed was even too right for the Mensheviks.

We have long searched for these theses, and have at last succeeded in securing them. It is interesting to peruse them, for they help us to understand why it is so difficult in Germany to speak of an agreement between the Communists and the Social-Democrats as against the monarchists, although such an agreement would be absolutely feasible and essential.

As you know, Kautsky is a man already well advanced in years, and fairly settled and tranquil. Hindenburg is 78 years old; Kautsky is about the same age; in any case, they can easily count 150 years between them. You know that this grey and hoary old man is as tame as a lamb, and as soft as wax where the bourgeoisie is concerned. He is opposed to uprisings, civil wars, etc. But just listen to this old fellow so peacefully awaiting his last hour, when the question of Soviet Russia and of our revolution is raised. The theses are called "the Duties of the International in relation to Russia." Hitherto we all thought that the duty of the International towards Russia was to support her in one way or another. But his theses start as follows: "Just as at one time the struggle against the autocracy, so now the struggle against the despotism which is crushing and suppressing the peoples of Russia and the territory it has annexed is one of the most important duties of the Socialists of all countries.

The exploiters of the revolution have become its hangmen and performing only anti-revolutionary functions, represent a Russian species of Bonapartism."

"The immediate weapon of resistance against brute force is force. Despotisms which relied upon military force have so far been nearly always overthrown by popular uprisings or by the desertion of their followers."

There then follow certain brief remarks intended as diplomatic whitewash. He condemns uprisings which do not make towards the end desired. In this respect he is opposed to partial uprisings. He would like, if possible to avoid uprisings altogether, etc. This position of Kautsky's was a little too extreme even for the Russian Mensheviks and they rejected it. But just imagine what must be the attitude of the German Communists towards the Social-Democrats, when they know how the learned Kautsky and all the Social-Democratic leaders regard Soviet Russia. This incident only once more proves how far apart lie the paths of the followers of the Second and the Third Internationals.

It appears to me that both these figures, Hindenburg and Kautsky, symbolise, as it were, the past of Germany and of Europe. We see a configuration and convulsion, which by temporarily strengthening Hindenburg has strengthened Kautsky. To-morrow they will be friends. Nevertheless, it is not to these grey beards that the future belongs.

### **Stabilisation—and Furious Arming in the Capitalist Countries.**

The existing situation proves that there are elements of instability in the capitalist camp. Compare the picture we now see with that which existed a short time ago. A year ago we had MacDonald, Herriot, and Ebert; in Yugoslavia, we had Davidovitch. And now in their place we have Chamberlain and Hindenburg; in France, Briand, for he will in fact be the head of the government; in Yugoslavia, we have Paschish, our old friend of Tsarist days. Europe is obviously becoming black. It is a swing to the right, which however, will inevitably be followed by a move to the left.

The other day Mussolini made a speech in the Senate demanding fresh credits for armaments. Turning to the senators he said: "Do you really believe that the war of 1914-18 was really the last war as many people assert?" And in reply came the unanimous voice of the senators: "Of course, not!" The Italian senate also consists of very worthy persons who in age and other respects very much resemble Hindenburg. They definitely and clearly answered that, of course, there will still be war. And they were right.

To-day's news tells us how Sweden regards the question of armaments. Just imagine, Sweden, a peaceful country, which took no part in the war, and which is far removed from the highroad of revolution, and nevertheless, there the terrible fear exists that sooner or later somebody will attack her. The conservatives are carrying on a feverish campaign against the reduction of armaments. From all parts delegations arrive with petitions to the Rikstag and the Minister of War against the reduction of armaments. Yesterday a meeting was held in Stockholm on this question. Among other orators was Sven Hedin, "an old acquaintance" of comrade Chicherin, who asserted that military complications are likely to occur in Eastern Europe at any moment. In proof of which Hedin cited the explosions in Reval and Sofia. General Linder also spoke. He referred to the "Russian menace" declaring that "an attack on the part of the U.S.S.R. would be directed first and foremost against the neutral Aland Islands, which can be defended neither by Finland nor by Sweden." The resolution adopted at the meeting refers to the necessity of strengthening the defences of Stockholm, which, it is claimed, will be considerably weakened by the projected reduction of armaments.

Just imagine, the defences of Stockholm to be strengthened! And in 1925, too, at the moment of stabilisation! It would appear that of all places Stockholm might remain calm. No direct danger menaces it. Nevertheless the worthy senators behave as violently as young Communists. Stockholm must be defended in time, its armaments must be strengthened!

Lloyd George also recently said that he was not a pessimist, but that judging by what was going on in the economic life of Great Britain, if radical changes did not take place, a catastrophe, in his opinion, was inevitable. Here we have the

opinion of Mussolini, the Swedes and Lloyd George. Add to this the recent Conference of the General Staffs in Riga; add to this the fact that as the results of the Sofia explosion, powder can be smelt in the very corner of the Balkans which kindled the war in 1914. If we take all these facts together it becomes clear that while we must recognise stabilisation and base our plans on it, we must also bear in mind the conditions, the extent and the character of the stabilisation. We must remember that capitalism even now, in a period of comparative stabilisation, will not allow itself to be rocked asleep. It is a stabilisation which does not exclude the possibility of swings to the right and to the left. And while recognising this partial stabilisation, we cannot fail also to see the convulsions of the bourgeois order. That is how we must understand the stabilisation if we are to keep in touch with realities. Vladimir Ilyitch in 1915, wrote: "The revolution may consist, and very likely will consist of battles lasting several years, of several periods of attack and intervals of counter-revolutionary convulsions of the bourgeois order."

And now we are witnessing a world historical illustration of this contention. The revolution, indeed consists (1) of a series of battles; (2) of battles lasting several years, and (3) intervals of counter-revolutionary convulsions of the bourgeois order.

We are now experiencing one of these counter-revolutionary convulsions. It may be said that we shall now have to sail on the crest of this counter-revolutionary wave. It may last for several years and be full of great dangers for us. But in the long run, it is only a convulsion.

## II. THE GENERAL REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION.

### Three Types of Revolutionary Situation.

In our theses, which were fully approved by the Political Bureau, we attempt to go a little further than the Executive Committee of the Comintern, and endeavour to give a more correct and complete formulation of the international situation. In my opinion, three things must be distinguished: (1) a revolutionary situation in general; (2) an

immediate revolutionary situation, and (3) direct revolution. Unfortunately, at the Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, we did not emphasise this distinction with sufficient clarity, and it is necessary, therefore, to do so now.

An article of Vladimir Ilyitch was published a little while ago, which was written in 1915 and devoted to a German pamphlet of Axelrod. This article has only just been the light, because nobody abroad at that time would consent to publish it. It seems to me that it gives us the clue to the distinction between a revolutionary situation, an immediate revolutionary situation and revolution. In his pamphlet, Axelrod said roughly as follows: Perhaps Lenin, with his wild slogan of transforming the imperialist war into a civil war and defeating all the bourgeois governments would be more or less right if it could be proved that a revolutionary situation exists in Europe, as it existed in Russia in 1901. Vladimir Ilyitch seizes upon this statement and says:

“The example quoted from Axelrod exposes our opportunists as nothing else can. Could anyone who has not actually taken leave of his senses “declare” with certainty in 1901 that a decisive struggle against absolutism in Russia was “imminent”? Nobody could, and nobody did make such a declaration. No one at that time could know that **within four years** (December, 1905), **one** of these decisive struggles would take place, and that the following “decisive struggle with absolutism” would take place perhaps in 1915-16, or, perhaps, even later.”

The remarkable thing here is that Vladimir Ilyitch was nearly exact as to time. In 1915 he wrote that the second decisive struggle would take place in 1916, whereas it actually took place in 1917. He goes on to say:

“While nobody declared in 1901, not only not with certainty, but even generally, that a decisive struggle was “imminent,” while we at that time declared that the “historical” outcries of Krichevsky, Martinov and company, as to an “imminent” struggle were not to be taken seriously, we revolutionary Social-Democrats did *with certainty* at that time declare something different, namely, that only a hopeless opportunist could in 1901 fail to understand the duty of

**directly supporting** the revolutionary demonstrations of 1901, of encouraging and developing them and of issuing the most decisive revolutionary slogans for them. History justified us, and us alone, condemning the opportunists and casting them out from the working class movement, although there was no "imminent" decisive struggle, and although the first decisive struggle took place only four years later, and even so proved to be not the last, that is, not the decisive struggle.

"Exactly the same experience, literally exactly the same experience, Europe is passing through to-day. There cannot be the slightest shadow of doubt that in 1915 a revolutionary situation exists in Europe as it existed in Russia in 1901. We do not know whether the "decisive" fight of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie will take place in four years' time or in two years, or in ten or more years, and whether the second "decisive" fight will take place decades later. But we do know and declare "with certainty" that it is now our immediate duty to support the growing ferment and demonstrations which have already begun. In Germany, the crowd hooted Scheidemann, and in many countries the crowd demonstrated against the high cost of living.\*

For Lenin the facts cited were as much a proof of a revolutionary situation as the student demonstrations in Russia in 1901. The case is different now, but in 1916 it served as one of the proofs that a revolutionary situation existed. Nevertheless, he says, it is impossible to say when it will transform itself into a revolution.

Now the revolutionary situation changed in Russia.

Those simple things—the difference between a general revolutionary situation and an immediate revolutionary situation—we must ourselves clearly understand and explain to the workers of the world. To take our own case in 1902, it was clear then that a revolutionary situation existed. The students' strikes induced some of the representatives of the Right-wing, such as the economist Krichevsky, to lose their heads and cry, "Form into fighting columns, the fight has begun."

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\* "The authentic Internationalists, Kautsky, Axelrod and Martov"; an unpublished article by Lenin. "Proletarskaya Revolutsia," No. 3, (26), 1925, pp. 250-1.

Vladimir Ilyitch pours cold water on their heads and says: "We are still not faced with an historical revolution, but only with an 'historical revolution of Krichevsky.' But that a revolutionary situation existed in 1902 Lenin saw clearer than anybody. It was then that Vladimir Ilyitch issued the call, "Form yourselves into fighting columns." We then saw how the immediate revolutionary situation passed into the revolution of 1905, although that revolution was not as successful.

In 1905, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party continued to insist that an immediate situation existed. You will remember how many Mensheviks laughed at Vladimir Ilyitch because, as they said, he timed the peasant uprising to take place after the work on the land had ended. It is true, that Vladimir Ilyitch wrote that the peasants after the completion of field work would much more readily join the workers (he associated this theory with the recruiting which was then going on). The Mensheviks jeered at this, they said, "The land work has ended and your rising is still not in sight." Up to 1907 the Bolsheviks believed that the second revolution would take place very quickly and continued to behave as though an acute immediate revolutionary situation existed. It was only in 1908 that the Bolsheviks began to realise that there was no immediate revolutionary situation. Nevertheless the general revolutionary situation remained. The second revolution took place; and we based our whole tactics upon the forecast of that impending revolution.

As revolutionaries, as a truly revolutionary Party, **we were obliged**, until we had convinced ourselves that an immediate revolutionary situation no longer existed, to throw the whole force of the proletarian vanguard into the scales of revolution. And only when the strength of the bourgeoisie and the counter-revolution weighed down the balance on the other side we could say that a new period had really begun, that the bourgeoisie had won a few years' breathing space, and that we were witnessing a prolonged "counter-revolutionary convulsion" of bourgeois society. We saw that an immediate revolutionary situation no longer existed. But bearing in mind the economic and complex social situation at that time, and bearing in mind that Tsarism was unable to solve the land, the national and political questions, we, nevertheless, said that the second revolution was inevitable and that the situation objectively remained revolutionary. Let us work for the second revolution, we



said : we shall work for a year, or two years, or five years, as long as is required, until the general revolutionary situation is transformed into an acute and immediate revolutionary situation.

## The General Revolutionary Situation in Germany

### Continues.

We are passing through something very similar internationally, but in a more complex form, at the present time. The acute immediate situation which existed in Europe from 1917-23 is passing. At any rate, in Germany where in 1923 there could be no doubt that there existed an aggravated revolutionary situation prepared at any moment to transform itself into direct revolution, the former acute revolutionary situation is disappearing. The Dawes Plan for Germany is to a certain extent, although, of course, in a different way, playing the same part as the Stolypin agrarian reform played in Russia. We cannot, of course, draw a complete parallel, but a certain analogy can be established. Just as the whole series of measures taken by Tsarism in 1906-8 strengthened its situation and ameliorated its condition, similarly to-day the Dawes Plan and the whole combination of measures taken by the German and international bourgeoisie has temporarily eased the immediate revolutionary situation in Germany.

But if we sound the German organism, carefully examining the internal development of the morbid processes, weighing the main facts of the State life of Germany—the situation of the working class, the condition of the peasantry, the yoke of the Versailles Treaty, the dependence of Germany on the Entente, we must come to the conclusion that **the objectively revolutionary situation in Germany continues, that a second revolution in Germany is inevitable, and will come.** We cannot foretell exactly the day and the hour of its coming. The best brains of the revolutionary movement, beginning with Marx and ending with Lenin, have sometimes erred in their attempts to indicate times and periods. But it is clear that a second revolution in Germany is inevitable.

Of course, comrades, it is not a very pleasant thing for

our revolutionary, after having made a thorough examination of the situation in various countries, to come to the conclusion and loudly declare that in certain countries an immediate revolutionary situation does not at present exist. We know beforehand and the facts have convinced us, that our declaration would call forth a veritable witches' sabbath in the bourgeois camp, that every one of our words would be exaggerated and distorted, and that they would begin to talk of the "twilight of Comintern" and the "bankruptcy of Communism." As we said, let them comfort themselves. Illusions have never been of any use to revolutionaries. In 1923 we **were obliged** to do everything possible to weigh the balance in favour of a revolutionary solution of the crisis. In 1923 **it was possible** for the acute revolutionary situation to end in direct revolution. After 1923, we were obliged to wait a year or two, to sound and investigate the situation in order to determine whether an acute revolutionary situation would not recur.

A vast number of German revolutionary workers still cherish the idea that the situation of 1923 may at any moment return. The recent shootings in Halle led some workers to believe that it was all beginning again; since the bourgeoisie were resorting to such measures as shooting down workers at an indoor meeting, the workers would certainly retort to such provocation and there would be a repetition of 1923. Of course, the Mensheviks would gnash their teeth at such a frame of mind on the part of the workers and would thank their gods that they were not made like these republicans and sinners who believe in the imminence of revolution. The Mensheviks do not believe in revolution, they believe only in the star of bourgeoisie. What distinguishes the opportunist is that everything in the camp of the bourgeoisie appears to him to be rosy, while in the camp of the working class all is black.

Knowing how the spirit of the revolutionary people moves, knowing what the ebb and flow of the revolutionary wave means, and how it reacts upon the vanguard of the working class, we are not surprised that a section of the German workers in the spring of 1925 believe in the possibility of an uprising just as a section of the workers of St. Petersburg and Moscow together with comrade Lenin expected a direct revolutionary attack in 1906 after the land work was done. Nevertheless, carefully and objectively studying the situation which exists in Germany, we come to

the conclusion that for a period of several years Germany must pass through some such period as we passed through in Russia from 1908 to 1914-15.

The revolutionary situation throughout the world is more acute than it was before the war.

Comrade Lenin once said that the revolution expresses itself in a series of fights interspersed by counter-revolutionary convulsions of bourgeois society. It is just such a period of counter-revolutionary convulsions of bourgeois society that we are now passing through. All serious proletarian revolutionaries must clearly see the situation, must know how to eliminate it by the reflector of Marxism and Leninism, they must know how to economise and accumulate revolutionary forces and await the moment when the general revolutionary situation will again transform itself into an immediate revolutionary situation.

I remember how in 1918 Vladimir Ilyitch twitted Kautsky and said\*: "Once upon a time, in 1902, and again in 1909 ("The Path to Power"), when you were still a Marxist, you admitted that a revolutionary situation existed in Europe." In 1909, in his book "The Path to Power," Kautsky said that the objective requisites for a special revolution in Europe had fully matured and that there was no longer any danger of the working class coming into power prematurely. Some thirty years before that time Engels had written of the danger of the proletariat coming to power prematurely. But from about 1900 even Kautsky considered that that danger no longer existed. The proletariat could no longer come to power prematurely because the objective conditions and the economic pre-requisites for revolution had fully matured. The Manifesto of the Basle International Congress of the Second International held in 1911 also admitted that the situation in Europe was revolutionary.

Lenin again twitted Kautsky and said: "Before the imperialist war, you and many others in your camp admitted that the situation in Europe was objectively revolutionary. Well, since the imperialist war there is still greater justifica-

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\* N. Lenin: "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky."

tion for such an assertion, since the situation in Europe has become much more acute. The period of wars and revolution has not ended; we stand not at the ultimate end, but at the very beginning of that period. The situation in Europe is revolutionary not only because capitalism in general must create a revolutionary situation, but because (1) capitalism since the imperialist war is being torn by far greater contradictions than before the imperialist war; (2) because in one-sixth part of the globe a Soviet Power exists, and (3) the Eastern question, the question of the oppressed peoples, has become more acute than it ever was before.

The question of the East alone is of tremendous significance. We all know that this great flood is rising against imperialism and that it will come to the aid of the world proletariat. In 1920-21 Comintern for the first time issued the slogan "Proletarians of all countries and oppressed peoples of the world, unite." This was so novel a slogan that comrade Lenin referred to it at a meeting as follows:

"Recently, there appeared a journal of the Communist International called 'The Peoples of the East.' The Communist International has issued the following slogan to the peoples of the East: 'Proletarians of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite.' A comrade has asked, when did the Executive Committee decide to change slogans? I really cannot remember. Of course, from the point of view of the Communist Manifesto, it is incorrect, but the Communist Manifesto was written under entirely different circumstances, and from the point of view of peasant policy it is correct."\*

We see that in 1920-21 we were still quarrelling as to whether the slogan "proletarians of all countries and oppressed peoples of the world, unite," was correct. It still sounded rather novel, rather unusual. The movement in the East was then still in its early stages. Has the slogan still remained only a slogan? We see it being transformed into a tremendous revolutionary factor before our eyes. We see how the growing forces of the oppressed peoples of the East are moving towards union with the international revolutionary proletariat.

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\* A speech by Lenin on concessions, delivered November 27th, 1920. Vol. 17, p. 324 of the Russian Collected Works of Lenin.

A general world revolutionary situation exists. In Germany an immediate revolutionary situation has given place to a direct revolutionary situation. But before our eyes a mighty steam-roller is beginning to move which was formerly immobile: revolutionary ferment is beginning in England. Marx taught us that a world revolution without the participation of Great Britain would be a storm in a teacup. We now see that the situation in Great Britain is becoming revolutionary. Of course, it is a long way from direct revolution, but a general revolutionary situation is beginning to develop in Great Britain. If we bear in mind (1) the revolutionary movement of the oppressed peoples of the East, (2) the growing forces of revolution in Great Britain, and (3) that the economic and political limits to capitalist stabilisation are extremely limited, it becomes clear and undoubted that the pace of revolution has only been slackened and not interrupted, and that a **general revolutionary situation continues.**

The rejoicings and congratulations and the beating of kettle drums in the camp of the enemy only confirm our theory of the instability of the bourgeois domination. They have heard from our mouths the admission that they have been granted a brief reprieve, and that they are already dancing for joy. Only a hopeless invalid would rejoice at such a diagnosis.

### The Probate Route of the Revolution.

Comrades, the questions which were discussed at the Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern may in the end be reduced to two problems. Firstly, the problem of pace and period, and secondly, the problem of route, of the paths of the proletarian revolution. Neither problem can be solved merely theoretically. Both are extremely complicated and can be solved upon only by practical experience.

As regards pace, we already see that the world revolution is developing slower than we first had thought. But on the other hand our foundation is far wider and solidier than we at first contemplated, our breathing space is much longer, the U.S.S.R., the only Socialist country so far existing, has far more time for manœuvring and for consolidating its forces

than any of us ever imagined. As regards the route of the proletarian revolution, it is clear that changes are only just beginning to manifest themselves. We are all used to believing that the route of revolution would be roughly as follows, from Russia to Germany, from Germany to Western Europe, and from there radiate out to other countries. There was considerable justification for such a theory as to the route of the revolution. It is now clear that another route of the proletarian revolution is possible, I would even say probable, namely, (1) via Great Britain, (2) via the East, and (3) via South Eastern Europe, the Balkans, where the situation remains revolutionary, and where we have a combination of the peasant, the working class and the nationalist movements, a combination which engenders revolution.

### Two Stabilisations.

In order clearly to define the idea of the Plenum of the E.C.C.I., we must refer not to one, but to two stabilisations: the stabilisation of capitalist society, and the stabilisation of our own U.S.S.R.

A comrade, evidently a student, sent me a letter in which he writes: "The stabilisation of our economic life means simply the stabilisation of a part of the whole world economy, since we have become an integral link in the social relations of world commodity economy. Therefore, the stabilisation of our economic life does not at all mean the proportionate disintegration of the bourgeois countries. That argument, I suppose, can only be used for agitational purposes."

He expresses his idea in a truly "academic" manner: our stabilisation does not at all mean the proportionate disintegration of bourgeois society. Proportionate, perhaps not. But to draw the conclusion from the fact that we have a Peoples' Commissariat for Foreign Trade which trades with capitalist countries, that we are an integral part of bourgeois economy is to fall very wide of the mark.

The fact that we have become an integral link in world relations is evidence of our strength. But the fact that we are building up our social economic life after our own

fashion, that we have done so for many years, and that we have a correct idea of how to go on building in future, that fact alone is undermining bourgeois society.

We cannot for a moment consider the question of world revolution independently of the revolution in the country in which the proletariat has already triumphed. That problem arose in the very first days of the revolution and becomes more and more complicated and acute. When the Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern recognised that a partial stabilisation of capitalist society had begun, the question as to how it would react on the construction of Socialism in our country became one of especial importance.

The answer is clear. If our economy had not become strengthened we should have had our own "scissors"; we should have seen them opened very wide indeed; we should have seen our economic life disintegrating and become feebler while the world bourgeoisie would be in process of consolidation. We should be on the descent, while they would be on the ascent. It was this situation which comrade Lenin feared more than anything else. You remember with what pride he spoke at the Fourth Congress of the first hints of success in our currency reform, and how on this foundation he built great prospects of the future development of our economic life. He lent so much importance to this question because he saw the direct connection between the development of the world revolution and the consolidation of the economic life of our country. While recognising the partial stabilisation in the camp of our enemy, we are entitled to say that we are certainly on the upgrade, and ascending rapidly, and not only in respect to the increase of production in general, but also in respect to the increase of the social elements of production.

### III. THE SLOWING-UP OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION THE DUTIES OF A TRIUMPHANT REVOLUTION IN ONE COUNTRY.

#### The Law of Unequal Development of Capitalism.

That is why we have to speak not of one, but of two stabilisations. The question as to what are the duties of a

revolution in one country towards the other countries is one of profound and immediate importance. That problem was theoretically solved by comrade Lenin. And we desire to forestall any possible objections and to avoid any possible misunderstandings, and endeavouring to treat the question as fully as possible, and from all points of view, have in our thesis endeavoured to reply to this question primarily on the basis of the views expressed by comrade Lenin.

Comrade Lenin, in 1915, in a number of articles, and in his well-known book "Imperialism; the Last Stage of Capitalism," investigated the imperialist phase of capitalism, and came to the conclusion that there is an absolute law of capitalism which affirms the inequality of its development. Comrade Lenin first establishes this as an economist and an investigator of the objective conditions in which imperialism is developing. Comrade Lenin was something more than an economist; he was also a politician and a leader of the proletarian revolution. He, therefore, draws political conclusions from an economic law. What are those conclusions?

The first conclusion is as follows: since capitalism develops unequally, especially in its imperialist phase, it follows that one country may begin the proletarian revolution without waiting for a number of other countries to begin also. We are acquainted with the psychology of the leaders of the Second International. Those leaders said: of course, if we are to begin "at once," "all together" we are agreeable. Even at Zimmerwald and Kienthal, where the best men of the Second International were present, they advanced this point of view not only as regards revolution, but even as regards voting against war credits. The Germans said: we should be prepared to vote against the war credits, provided the French will also vote against. but if the French stay on the side of the social Chauvinists, then, we are sorry to say, we too, must stay on the side of the social Chauvinists. That is the light in which the best leaders of the Second International regarded the question.

The attitude was rotten and false through and through. Let us first, they said, prepare for the simultaneous action of the workers in a number of countries, and then we can speak of revolutionary fights. Comrade Lenin replied that he who thinks that all countries must "first" come to an agreement and only then act "all together" is an enemy of



the proletarian revolution. Somebody must **begin**. Capitalism develops unequally, and this peculiarity means that in one or other country (or group of countries) a combination of circumstances may arise which assists it (or them) in taking action first. That was one conclusion which Comrade Lenin drew from the law of unequal development of capitalism.

The second conclusion was that it is not necessarily the most developed capitalist country which must first embark on the proletarian revolution. That idea Lenin developed in greater detail, in 1923, not long before his death, in the well-known article on Sukhonin. Comrade Lenin at the same time added that the **final** Socialist revolution would triumph only on an international scale; that it could not be otherwise.

And from this comrade Lenin drew the conclusion that in every country everything possible must be done to develop the revolution in all other countries.

### The Triumph of the Revolution in One Country and the World Revolution.

Russia was the first to break away from the capitalist globe. Our revolution took place in 1917. For comrade Lenin, as a true leader of the international revolution, there at once arose the question of the relation between the Russian revolution and the world revolution.

In March, 1917, on the eve of his departure from Switzerland to Russia, Lenin addressed a farewell letter to the Swiss workers. He already had definite theses prepared for our revolution. He wrote :

“The Russian proletariat by its own unaided efforts cannot alone carry the Socialist revolution **to a victorious conclusion**. But it can lead such proportions to the Russian revolution as will create the best conditions for it and in a certain sense **begin it**. It can facilitate the conditions for the

decisive entry into the combat of the **chief** and most reliable comrades, the **European** and American proletariat.”\*

That was how the question was put in the programme of our leader after the February revolution, when the prospects of the proletarian revolution were already clearly outlined: “The Russian proletariat cannot alone carry through a triumphant revolution, but it can facilitate by giving an impulse to other countries.”

After October, 1917, circumstances very quickly, in fact after a few weeks, faced us squarely with the international question. The advance of the German army began, the question of the Brest Peace arose, and a current of opinion against the Brest Peace made itself felt in the Party. It was the question of the “connection” between a victorious revolution in one country with the whole progress of the world revolution.

How did comrade Lenin deal with the question at that time? On March 7th, 1918, he said: “Regarded from a world historical viewpoint, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the final triumph of our revolution, if it remained unique and if there were no revolutionary movement in other countries, would be hopeless. . . . Our salvation from all these difficulties, I repeat, lies in the European revolution.

**That is the lesson, for it is absolutely true that without a German revolution we shall perish . . . . At any rate in all the possible combinations we can foresee, if the German revolution does not take place we shall perish.**

We do not know, and nobody can know, whether it (the international revolution) can triumph **in a few years or even in a few days. But we must not count upon that.\***

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\* V. I. Lenin, *Letter to the Swiss Workers*, 1917, Russian Collected Works, Vol. XIV., Part 2, p. 408.

\* V. I. Lenin, Russian Collected Works, Vol. XV., p. 129, Seventh Congress, Report on the Brest Peace.

### Germany and Our Revolution.

Comrade Lenin, like our Party, as a whole, then believed that victory was possible in a few weeks, and even in a few days. And, indeed, it was at that time that the strike movements began in Germany and Austria. We counted the hours, believing that in a few days the revolution would triumph in Germany and Austria. It was at that period that Lenin said that if there would be no German revolution, we must perish.

The German revolution, as you know, did not take place in a few weeks, but much later, in 1919. And what is more important, it was not the revolution we expected. It was a bourgeois revolution, and not a proletarian revolution which broke out in Germany.

That which we have been witnessing within the last few years in Germany is after all the painful transformation of the bourgeois democratic revolution into the Socialist revolution. It can now be described as a "growth backwards," such a convulsion as the victory of Hindenburg. I have already spoken of this in the beginning of my speech.

It is legitimate to ask, what would have happened to us, with the Soviet country, if even a bourgeois revolution had not taken place in Germany in 1919. Should we have managed to hold on? It is, of course, difficult to give a reply to this question. If Wilhelm had remained in power, if there had not been a violent collision between the two groups of imperialists (and we, as you know, managed to hold on for a long time because of that collision) it is possible that in such circumstances Germany would have attacked us, and we should not have survived. You remember that the German troops were already at Pskov and were moving on to Leningrad.

Matters might have developed thus unfavourable for us. We know that round about 1919 Germany, bourgeois democratic Germany, was, if not our ally, at least our semi-ally, or, shall we say, a fourth of an ally. Crushed by the Entente

she involuntarily and by the force of circumstances became our semi-ally. It only required a bourgeois revolution in Germany to enable us to hold on, and consolidate our proletarian revolution. We did not see that at first, and thought that if the German proletarian revolution did not take place immediately we should perish. The German revolution did not take place until the end of 1918. Even then it turned out to be not the revolution we expected; nevertheless, we did not perish. We miscalculated and erred in this case because, I repeat, such questions can be solved, not so much theoretically as on the basis of practical experience.

### The Very Beginning.

Now we have gained some historical experience, accumulated during a period of eight years. It was the first turn in the world revolution. We know better what the time factor means.

After that we began to have a much more sober view of things. In 1919, Vladimir Ilyitch wrote: "We are living not only in a State, but in a system of States, and the existence for any length of time of a Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for any length of time is unthinkable. In the end, either the one or the other must triumph."\*

That is how comrade Lenin put the matter in 1919. The two systems could not exist side by side for any length of time. In the end either one or the other must triumph. The whole question is, comrades, how are we to understand the words, "in the end"?

Comrade Lenin goes on to explain that "in the end" must not be confused with "at the very beginning." At the beginning of our revolution we thought that the speed of development of the world social revolution could be counted

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\* V. I. Lenin, March 18th, 1919. Russian Collected Works, Vol. 16, p. 102.

in weeks and months; we thought that "in the end" would mean either March or September, 1918. Now, after the first lap of the revolution, after the lapse of eight years from its commencement, we realise that we are only passing through the period of "the very beginning." On the world historical scale the years in which we have existed represent only "the very beginning." That dilemma (either our system, or the hostile system, but in any case they cannot continue together). Lenin continued to develop in a whole series of utterances down to 1923, when he wrote his article on the East in which he said that we must at all costs manoeuvre and prolong our "breathing space" in order to unite with the peoples of the East and to take advantage of the collisions of the imperialist West with the bourgeois East.

Comrades, if we are to regard the matter as ended, and our triumph as **final**, and if we are to believe that we are not menaced either from without or from within, then we should speak not of a "breathing space"; but simply of "breathing freely." Nevertheless, Lenin speaks of a breathing space. But of a peculiar kind of breathing space; first we thought of months and even of weeks, but in 1920 Comrade Lenin said that we were passing through a period which was not only a breathing space, but which afforded us many opportunities of real Socialist constructive work.

### **The Russian Revolution has Created a Firm Foundation for the Construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R,**

In order to get some idea of how Lenin regarded the question which is of burning importance to us just now, namely, the connection between a triumphant proletarian revolution in one country and its duties to all other countries, we must examine the whole gamut of Leninism, beginning with his first utterance in 1915, and ending with his articles on co-operation and the East. This question is for us at present not merely one of theoretical importance, but also one of profoundly practical importance.

Generally speaking, the triumph of Socialism (not the

**final triumph**) is undoubtedly possible in one country. Comrade Lenin in 1915, in his dispute with comrade Trotsky on the subject of the United States of the World, wrote :

“As an independent slogan, the slogan of the United States of the World would, however, hardly be correct, firstly, because it is identical with Socialism, and secondly because it is liable to a false interpretation as to the impossibility of the victory of Socialism in one country and of the relation of that country to the rest.

Unequal economic and political development is undoubtedly a law of capitalism. From thence follows the possibility of the victory of Socialism, at first in a few, or even in one capitalist country. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and organised Socialist production, would rise up against the remaining capitalist world, drawing with it the oppressed classes of other countries, instigating uprisings in those countries against capitalism, and, if necessary, bringing military force to bear against the exploiting classes and their states.”\*

On the other hand, the existence of two directly contradictory social systems involves the permanent menace of a capitalist blockade and other forms of economic pressure, and intervention and restoration. The sole guarantee of the **final victory of Socialism**, i.e., a guarantee against restoration, is therefore, the triumph of the Socialist revolution in other countries.

It by no means follows from this that the construction of a complete Socialist society is impossible in a backward country like Russia without the “State aid” (Trotsky) of more technically and economically developed countries. An integral part of the Trotsky theory of permanent revolution consists in the assertion that a genuine Socialist economy in Russia will become possible **only after the victory** of the proletariat in the most important countries in Europe.”

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\* V. I. Lenin, “Against the Stream.”

(Trotsky, 1922), an assertion which would condemn the proletariat in the U.S.S.R., in the present period to fatal passivity.

Against this theory comrade Lenin wrote :

“It is an absolutely stereotyped conclusion, which they learnt by heart during the development of West European Social Democracy, and which consists in the assertion that we are not mature for Socialism, and that in our country the objective pre-requisites for Socialism, as certain of their “learned men” express it, do not exist.”\*

In his remarkable article on “Left Infantilism,” comrade Lenin speaks of the famous “chicken.” He says :

“Socialism at the same time is unthinkable without the domination of the proletariat in the state ; that, of course, is elementary. History . . . has taken a peculiar course, and in 1918 gave birth to two separate halves of Socialism, one side by side with the other, exactly as though they were two future chickens within the single shell of world imperialism. In 1918, Germany and Russia incarnated all the striking realisations of the economic, industrial and social conditions of Socialism, on the one hand, and the political conditions of Socialism, on the other.”†

Let us remind you of what Lenin said in his pamphlet on the “Food Tax” (1921) :

“Take a glance at the map of the R.S.F.S.R. To the North of Vologda, to the South-East from Rostov-on-

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\* V. I. Lenin, “Note on Sukhanov,” Russian Collected Works, Vol. 18, Part 2, p. 118.

† V. I. Lenin, Russian Collected Works, Vol. 15, p. 268.

Don, and from Saratov, to the South from Orenburg and from Omsk, and to the North from Tomsk, stretches a vast territory on which scores of powerful cultivated states could find room. And throughout this vast territory prevail patriarchalism, semi-savagery and even savagery. And what about the out-of-the-way villages of the rest of Russia, everywhere where ten versts of uninhabited land, or ten versts of roadless territory separate the village from the railway, i.e., from material communication with culture, with capitalism, with large industry, and with the large towns, do not we there also find patriarchalism, Oblomism, and semi-savagery?"

"Is it conceivable," asks Vladimir Ilyitch, "that direct transition from the state of affairs which predominates in Russia to Socialism is possible?" He replies:

"Yes, it is possible to a certain degree, but only on the one condition, which we, thanks to a great and finished scientific work, now know exactly. That condition is electrification. If we construct scores of regional electric power stations (and we know how and where to construct them), if we convey energy from them to every village, if we instal a sufficient number of motors and other machines, then we hardly require transitional stages and intermediate links between patriarchalism and Socialism. But we very well know that this 'single' condition demands decades even for the performance of the first essential work, and the construction of this period, in its turn, is only conceivable in the event of the triumph of the proletarian revolution in such countries as Great Britain, Germany and America."\*

You see that this is a purely practical statement of the question. Vladimir Ilyitch takes the map and says: "Look towards the South-east from Rostov-on-Don, Saratov, Orenburg, etc.; see what patriarchalism, what semi-savagery, what Oblomism, what undeveloped social-relations and productive forces prevail everywhere, and nevertheless, in his opinion, this country which has been torn from the hands

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\* V. I. Lenin, Russian Collected Works, Vol. 18, Part 1, p. 51.



of the bourgeoisie, can be transformed into a Socialist country. It is possible upon certain conditions, namely, the electrification of the whole country. Vladimir Ilyitch, makes this statement without for a moment taking it out of its international framework. Lenin is an international revolutionary; he knows that the final victory can be obtained only on an international scale, that a complete guarantee against the restoration of bourgeois relations can be secured only by a victory of international dimensions. Nevertheless, he persists in the belief, and expresses it in his articles, that our country with its patriarchalism, its Oblomovism, and its semi-savagery, can be transformed into a Socialist country. In his last speech at the Moscow Soviet he charged us with is great behest, of transforming Russia into a Socialist country.

We must remember the programme declaration made by comrade Lenin in his last article on Co-operation, which is of special significance to us at the present moment, and which runs as follows :

“Indeed, the power of the State over the large instruments of production, the fact that that power is in the hands of the proletariat with the millions of small and petty peasants, the guaranteed control by the proletariat over the relations to the peasantry, etc.—is that not all that is required in order to build up a complete Socialist society out of co-operation alone, which we formerly regarded as petty trading, and which we are even now under NEP entitled to a certain extent to regard as such. It is still not the construction of a special society, but it is all that is necessary and essential for that construction . . . I am prepared to state that the centre of gravity could be transferred to cultural matters, were it not for international relations and the necessity of fighting for our international position.”\*

It follows from this that a country of the dictatorship of

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\* V. I. Lenin, Russian Collected Works, Vol. 18, Part 2, p. 140.

the workers, and which is the fundamental basis of the world revolution, must look upon itself as though it were a powerful lever. On the other hand, the dominant party of the proletariat in that country must exert every effort for the construction of a Socialist society, in the conviction that that construction may be, and probably will be, successful if the country can be defended against every attempt at restoration. In other words, the Russian Communist Party, by pursuing a correct policy, both as regards the peasantry within the country, and as regards the international relations, must overcome all the difficulties resulting from the slackening of the pace of the revolution.

We must not simplify matters too much. If the question is asked whether we should, whether we can, and whether we dare construct Socialism in one country, we shall answer, of course, we should; we can, we dare, and we must. We at present have the opportunity, and must take advantage of it, in order to do everything essential, in one country to support the revolution in other countries. As Lenin says, we are enjoying not a breathing space, but something more than a breathing space. We have a wide foundation on which to construct Socialism in our country, and we must construct it. We are no longer living in bivouac. We must not cherish the frame of mind of a man who is only just planting a forest and puts off building the house to the remote future. No, we must now build the house and not plant the forest. We must not tolerate the bivouac atmosphere; we are now not in bivouac, but in our proletarian staff headquarters. We must construct Socialism in our country, bearing in mind that our victory is part of the international victory, and that we are no small weight in the balance of world revolution. We are a sixth-part of the globe; we are the largest "weight" in the world revolution. The success of the world revolution depends upon our efforts and exertions and upon our economic and other successes.

In what way can we put into practice the words of comrade Lenin as to the necessity for doing everything possible in one country until the triumph of the revolution is achieved in the other countries? We can put them into practice by doing everything possible to assist the world revolution, beginning by supporting workers' uprisings in other countries and ending by producing cheap cotton goods for the popu-

lation of our own country. Both form part of our duties. The building up of Socialist economy in our country is at the same time the development and extension of the basis of the world proletarian revolution.

**“Ten to Twenty Years of Correct Relations toward the Peasantry and our Victory is Assured.”**

In a recently published volume of the “Bolshevik” appears the first draft of Comrade Lenin’s article on the Food Tax. The draft is a complete work. In it we find the following statement: “Ten to twenty years of correct relations towards the peasantry and victory on a world scale is assured.” (Even though the proletarian revolutions, which are growing should be delayed); otherwise, we shall have twenty to forty years of torments and White Guard terror

You saw that in March, 1918, Vladimir Ilyitch, like the whole of our Party, believed that the matter would be settled in a few weeks or months, and that if the German revolution did not take place we should perish. But in 1921, on the basis of the great historical experiment of the past period, he says that given ten to twenty years of correct relationship towards the peasantry and correct construction on that basis, victory on a world scale will be assured even though the world revolution be delayed. That is exactly how the matter stands now. We remain international proletarian revolutionaries in two respects: In the sense that, in accordance with the duty of internationalists, we must in our country, where we hold power, do the utmost possible to secure the triumph of the revolution in other countries; and secondly, in the sense that we are world proletarian revolutionaries, since we remember that Socialism on a world scale cannot be secured by our own efforts alone. This in its time was also true of the bourgeois revolutions. Did not the Great French Revolution conduct a number of wars? For what purpose? It perfectly well understood that if France was to be surrounded by feudal countries the bourgeois revolution could not stand. It had to see that a number of neighbouring countries should be formed on its own pattern, *i.e.*, that the bourgeois order should also be set up in them.

That was how the bourgeois revolution came about. Still more is it true of the proletarian revolution. The proletarian revolution cannot be finally victorious until it has triumphed in several important countries. As long as it is surrounded by imperialist bourgeois powers its victory may be very great and important, but not final. If it is allowed twenty, ten or even five years of breathing space, it must take advantage of every day and every minute and exert the utmost effort to secure the triumph of the revolution in other countries.

This behest is now of great importance for every one of us. The question of the partial "stabilisation" of capitalism in Europe is incorrectly understood by certain members of our Party, especially among the students, and is misleading them. We as a Party must explain the Leninist postulate that we can construct Socialism in our poverty-stricken country even though it is surrounded by capitalism in Europe; we have all realised that the world revolution has assumed a slower pace. Does that mean that petty bourgeois degeneration is inevitable in Russia? Does it mean a check to our revolutionary development, or even retrogression? It must be admitted that this interpretation has not assumed the form of a definite tendency, but that the frame of mind is faintly manifesting itself, and that that frame of mind is quite comprehensive in the present stage of the revolutionary movement. That frame of mind must be definitely eliminated.

#### IV. THE PRESENT TASKS OF BOLSHEVISM.

##### Two Possible Dangers in Estimating the Present Situation.

There are two dangers in the present situation. Something like the following frame of mind is possible among some of our comrades: if, indeed, a final victory is possible as the result of a world revolution, and since we admit that the world revolution will be deferred for a long time, and if we do not get sufficient support from without, shall we be able to construct Socialism in Russia? And have we not arrived at such a situation when—as one of our comrades, distorting and ridiculing this frame of mind, expressed it—it is time for us to consider "whether we should now draw in our lines"?

Perhaps the present situation means that we (the Russian Communist Party) are unable to fulfil our historic mission as a Bolshevik Party and as a party of the international proletarian revolution? That is one tendency which is already manifesting itself and making itself heard. Another possible frame of mind is that which we referred to in our thesis as the danger of national narrowness. I am referring to the frame of mind which can be expressed as follows: why should we worry about the proletarian revolution, we can get along very well alone; we have a vast country, we hold State power, we are in a position to consolidate our victory, and, fact, we need not attach great significance to what is going on in the international arena. This tendency has not yet definitely expressed itself, but one is already able to perceive that such a frame of mind exists. If we cannot say that it has already formulated itself, we must nevertheless admit that such a danger exists. It is for us, the party created by comrade Lenin, to look ahead and to foresee a possible danger. We must bar the path to such a frame of mind and forestall it. We must firmly remind our comrades that we remain proletarian revolutionaries, international proletarian revolutionaries, that we expect final victory only on an international scale, that we do not forget that, and cannot forget it even for one minute, and that having been successful in one country, we will do our utmost to support the revolutionary movement in other countries.

The necessity lies before us of protecting ourselves against those two possible dangers in our own ranks to which I have referred; moreover, it is our duty to keep in especially close contact with Comintern, to give it exceptionally warm support, to assist it in benefitting from theoretical Leninism, from our practical and political experience, and especially from the experience gained during 1907-14, in order to assist it to lead the international proletariat through all the trials and difficulties of the present situation. Of course, it would be far easier for all of us to speak in major tones, to spur on the masses to the fight, to call for immediate attack, and so on. It is much more difficult to restrain the international organisation from embarking on unconsidered measures, to check its revolutionary plan, and to point out all the difficulties of the present situation, in order to achieve the aim we desire. But at the present time that is an essential medicinal measure in order to keep Comintern a Bolshevik organisation.

## Our Peasant Policy and the Development of the Proletarian Revolution.

Of course, the resolutions adopted by the Plenum on the peasant question, the colonial question, and specially on the question of Bolshevism were all imbued with the spirit of Leninism and all fully corresponded with the tasks with which the Comintern is faced.

It is essential so that all the foremost comrades in our Party associate in their own minds our peasant policy with the policy of Comintern, and carry on this work with the utmost confidence. Many exaggerations in this respect also may occasionally be heard. After the publication of my theses on the subject of the present report, I received a letter from a comrade in the which he asked: "What is your opinion, is it true that the decided wave to the right in the policy of our Party in the villages is due to the international situation?" In this question all the elements of a correct comprehension of the situation are patently confused with obviously incorrect elements. There can be no doubt that our peasant policy is to a certain extent connected with the international situation, but it is wrong to say that it represents a move to the right. No, it is not a move to the right, it is a Leninist continuation of the policy begun by our Party in 1917 and even earlier. There has been no move to the right at all.

Even if the revolution were to develop far more rapidly we would nevertheless have to carry on a policy of alliance with the peasantry. During the Second Congress of Comintern, when comrade Lenin also thought that the revolution was moving rapidly forward, he taught us that when the proletarian revolution triumphed we should have fresh and great opportunities of winning over the peasantry as an ally. If is, of course, understood that if the revolution had developed more rapidly things with us would have been somewhat different; but our fundamental policy would have remained the same. It would in any case have amounted to a policy of an alliance between the working class and peasantry. That is why this confusion of ideas must be cleared up. There has been no move to the right in the Party policy; we

have a correct Party policy, which grew out of the an examination of the relations of classes in our country. Of course, even the relation of classes within our Union can only be properly estimated in connection with the international situation and prospects, since we are, in fact, a party of the international proletariat. But that does not alter the fundamental fact, namely, that our policy has been correctly outlined.

If we perform the necessary inoculation against the two dangers I have referred to, I think we shall have done all that is required to guide Comintern correctly in this difficult moment along the hard path which lies before it.

And I think, comrades, that if we consider the work of the Plenum of Comintern and the work of our Central Committee in the past period, and the work of the present conference, we will find that complete co-ordination exists between them. We have now, and will have in the future when our peasant policy is widely and profoundly carried into effect, a complete co-ordination between our task as a proletarian party which has already won a victory in one country, with the other task which Vladimir Ilyitch formulated thus: the duty of an internationalist if he has conquered power in one country, is to do his utmost to secure victory in all other countries. We must achieve this co-ordination in our practical and theoretical policy.

We have already quoted the words used by comrade Lenin in his draft for an article on the food tax, written in 1921. In this draft, which comrade Lenin wrote for his own use, he said that 10 to 20 years of correct relations towards the peasantry were required, and we should win on a world scale, even though the pace of the world revolution should slacken. It was not by chance, in my opinion, that this phrase was repeated in the article. At that time Vladimir Ilyitch still did not want to refer in print to such protracted intervals. Now we **must** speak of such intervals, we **must** refer to such intervals as ten to twenty years. But, of course, ten to twenty years are not absolutely essential. We shall willingly agree to reducing the interval if the pace of the world revolution permits it. But in prospect, we must have such a period in view: ten to twenty years of correct

relations towards the peasantry and a diminished pace of the world revolution. Of course, there must not be only correct relations toward the peasantry, but also a correct policy on the part of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, and still more, a correct policy toward the workers. If we achieve this we shall certainly win through all difficulties.

### **Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Unity.**

I should like to say a few words about our rapprochement with the British trade unions. We referred to that at the Plenum of the Central Committee. I should like here to supplement what has been said. We are aware as to the economic situation in England. It is not only our individual opinion. But the opinion of a number of well-known investigators, indeed, it is the general opinion, that in England to-day, under the Conservative government, a general revolutionary situation is being created, slowly, but surely. Therefore, the attempt at rapprochement between our trade unions and the British assumes tremendous importance, since it is in the line of the historical development of England. We are following a clearly expressed tendency in the historical development of England, the revolutionising of England, and her working class movement. The correct application of the tactics of the united front in England is of extreme importance. The Profintern must continue to develop until international trade union unity becomes possible. Nevertheless, we are doing absolutely everything that is in our power in order that the rapprochement between the British, the French, and the Soviet trade unions should develop and be carried further.

### **The Dispute with Comrade Trotsky on Comintern Policy.**

The following assertion may be heard from certain incorrigible oppositionists: since we ourselves at the Plenum of the Executive Committee of Comintern admitted the partial stabilisation of capitalism, and the slackening of the pace of the revolution, we by that very fact admitted the correctness of Trotskyism in Comintern questions. I should like to reply to this assertion.



We did not quarrel with Trotsky over the question as to whether the international revolution would triumph in 1923, or in 1925. We do not blame comrade Trotsky for having seen (as we saw) a slackening of the pace of revolution. No difference existed on that question, but rather on the question as to how a proletarian revolutionary Bolshevik was to act in a period of slackened world revolution.

That is where the difference lay. In 1908 we differed with Trotsky not on the question as to whether a certain slackening of the revolution was taking place or not. It was beyond question that such a slackening was taking place, and that we were passing through a period of temporary "stabilisation" of Tsarism. We quarrelled over the question as to **what tactics** a workers' party was to pursue in the Stolypin period of Tsarist "stabilisation." Trotsky at that time differed from the Mensheviks. For a whole decade, from 1907 to 1917, we quarrelled with Menshevism, including Trotskyism, not as to the nature of the revolution, not as to the pace of the revolution, but as to whether there would be a second revolution at all, and as to whether we were to work for it and prepare the party for it. The difference with the Mensheviks was that they did not want to work for the revolution.

And now this complex of questions arises on an international scale. It is clear to all that the pace of the revolution is slackening. There is no conflict on that score. The conflict is as to whether we should continue to prepare for the international revolution, and what should be our attitude in future towards international Menshevism. You know what were the conclusions of comrade Trotsky in that respect. He associated himself with Brandler and Radek on the question of Germany. The unfortunate thing is that Trotsky associated himself with the right elements of the German Party, with Brandler, Thalheimer and Radek, who proposed to the Comintern to interpret the tactics of the united front as tactics of coalition with German Menshevism.

You know that at the recent Plenum of the Executive Committee of Comintern a declaration by Radek, Brandler and Thalheimer was considered, as also the reply of the Central Committee of the Party to that declaration, which

was adopted by the whole congress. In their declaration Radek, Thalheimer and Brandler say that their proposal for a political coalition with the left Social-Democrats now loses all force. In other words, they themselves admit that they regarded the united front as consisting of a coalition and political union with the Social-Democrats and the so-called left Social-Democrats. That is where the essence of our quarrel with Trotskyism on Comintern policy lies.

We say that it is just in such a period of comparative calm that our fight against the Social-Democrats and Menshevism must be particularly definite. It is in such a period that we forge our strength. If we now extend one finger to Menshevism, it will seize our whole hand. When did Bolshevism conduct an exceptionally obstinate and desperate struggle against Menshevism. In the decade 1907-17 we had to erect a whole system of trenches and fortifications, we had to "isolate" ourselves against the Menshevik infection and carry on a desperate struggle against them. And it is exactly the same thing, on an international scale, that we now have to do. Radek and Trotsky urged us on a policy of coalition with the Social-Democrats, to a policy of agreements and coalition with Menshevism. We say that in a period of general ferment we may sometimes succeed in breaking off a certain flank, group or section from Menshevism. That we saw in our revolution; in times of storm we succeeded in tearing away a certain section from the Mensheviks. That is possible in times of ferment, when the revolution grows from day to day. But during a period of depression there exists the very great danger that the ranks may be mixed. You cannot get the Mensheviks to break away then, and if you agree to a "coalition" with them, you will yourselves perish, lose all reason for existence, and transform your revolutionary Bolshevik party into a semi-Menshevik party. Internationally, that would be for us in the highest degree dangerous.

I shall not deal here with the question of the Anglo-American co-operation. The errors committed by comrade Trotsky on this question were, I think, brought out with sufficient clarity in my speech at the Plenum itself.

That is why what appears at a first glance to be a rear-

guard polemic, but which is in fact fully appropriate, is necessary just now, for the dispute centres round a burning question of the day, namely, what are to be our tactics in the present period of the revolution.

### Difficulties in Certain Parties.

You know, that as a result of the present transitional period certain painful processes have arisen in some of the sections of Comintern. It must be said that the most difficult was the situation in the Czecho-Slovakian Party. There three tendencies were at war, the representatives of which may be conditionally described as liquidators, as party members who have not yet become Bolsheviks, and as Bolsheviks guilty at times of certain errors. We so arranged matters as to create a bloc of the two latter tendencies against the liquidators. It seems to us that the line we took on this question was right. At least, the information we to-day received goes to show that the bloc will be formed. We are informed that the leaders of the liquidators (Roucek, etc.), are leaving the party. That is not a bad thing. And the bloc created with our assistance is working amicably. We hope that it will succeed in bringing the party on to the high road.

We should like to say a few words about the differences and difficulties within the German Party. There we shall still have to pay very dearly for every lesson in tactics, for the party, having made the Brandler experiment, was obliged to make a radical change of tactics, and once having burnt itself is now very cautious, and occasionally requires to be taught a very serious lesson. Infantile diseases of "leftism" are still in evidence.

### We Shall Remain International Proletarian Revolutionaries.

The important thing is that we should now give something solid to the vanguard of the international working

class. The important thing is that we should not only associate our work among the Russian workers with our international policy and with our work in Russia, but that we should associate our current tasks with the tasks of the international proletariat. The foreign Communist worker is highly interested in knowing how the slackening of the pace of the world revolution will affect the Soviet Union, whether there will not also be a slackening there, whether the Party will not undergo a transformation, whether it will not renounce its proletarian spirit and depart from Leninism. We must here formulate such a complex of views as will be suitable not only for our Party but also for the international proletariat.

I am certain, comrades, that we shall solve that problem. It is a very difficult one, it must be carefully studied. In our country also must we continue the policy which was begun in Comintern. The correct solution of the question will give us a correct line as to our policy both within our country and within the international organisation of the Communist International. As regards our internal work, we said that we must take advantage of every minute and every second for the continued construction of Socialism. Technically, backward though our country is, we can, and must and shall build up Socialism, in spite of the slackening of the pace of the international revolution. We plainly said that the final victory will take place in the international arena, but that the slackened pace of the revolution will not prevent the victory, but only postpone it. We were, and we remain, international proletarian revolutionaries. That is what we want to say regarding our work as a whole.

We know that tremendous difficulties still face us; they are also facing the German Communist workers who are now passing through a period somewhat similar to our own July days, during which they will be deluged in accusations of all kinds, and subjected to attacks from all sides. Hindenburg will take advantage of every opportunity in order to crush the Communists. The Social-Democrats will cry to the German workers: Cannot you see that there is no world revolution? You go to prison in vain, for there is not, and will not be, a revolution. I may remind you comrades that we Russian Bolsheviks have also lived through such periods. Our working class comrades were arrested, imprisoned, exiled

and the Mensheviks maliciously said: "Why do you go to prison in vain? The revolution is a chimera, you are going to prison not on behalf of the revolution, but on behalf of Lenin. Something similar is now going on in Germany. With us they would sometimes give a Bolshevik in prison the Bible to read, but now in Germany they give a Communist the *Vorwaerts*, or a Social-Democratic pamphlet, relating that Moscow itself has admitted stabilisation, that the revolution is finished, that the revolution is a chimera, that the workers are rotting in prison in vain, etc.

Of course, severe trials and great moral torment lie before the German Communists. Just see what the situation is in which the Comintern is now fighting. With us in Russia the fight was very severe, especially during the years 1909-11. It was different underground. But it must be frankly confessed that it is now not easier for the Communists in a number of countries. It must be admitted that some of them are now in a very difficult situation. We are now accustomed, to Communists being shot almost daily, and the White Terror is assuming dimensions we never dreamed of. After 1905-6 we were driven deep underground. Nevertheless, international Communism, as far as Europe is concerned, is passing through a much more severe period. It is more difficult for the European Communists because they have not the firm traditions we had, they do not meet with the sympathy with which the Russian Bolsheviks in their time met with from certain sections of the bourgeois intellectuals. It is true, that their fight is somewhat facilitated by the fact that behind them stands our victorious revolution, that behind them is the experience of our three revolutions, behind them is Comintern, and that there is still a place in which they enjoy great freedom. But on the whole they are passing through a period which is far more difficult than ours of 1908-12.

Such is the complex of questions that stand before us. The task of the leaders of our party here assembled is that they should themselves first of all effect the necessary political co-ordination of facts in their own minds. That will enable each in his own branch of work to do his little bit. But it is also of importance that those who are placed in various posts should also do their share on an international scale. Unless we co-ordinate our own tasks with the tasks of the whole Comintern, we shall be like blind men groping

in the dark. We want to look at the world with open eyes, we want to see and understand what is going on. While bearing in mind the period indicated by Lenin "Ten to twenty years of proper relations toward the peasantry and victory on a world scale will be assured, even though the pace of the world revolution should slacken" (of course, this period is not binding) we nevertheless hope that victory will be secured sooner and that the revolution in other countries will take place much earlier. But if it is necessary, if it is impossible to secure a final victory quickly, as we hope, then we shall work for ten or twenty years systematically, even though the pace of the revolution has slackened. If necessary, we shall work still longer. Our Party was, and will remain, the foremost section of Comintern, a Party of the masses, a party of the international proletariat, a party of the international proletarian revolution. (Applause.)

G. ZINOVIEV.



# Decline of the "World's Shop"

**N**OT very long ago the report of the big banks, the so-called "Big Five," namely, the Midland Bank, Lloyd's Bank, the Westminster Bank, Barclay's Bank and the National Provincial Bank, announced with enthusiasm that during the year 1924 their net profits had increased by 10 per cent. in round figures from nine millions to over ten millions. They also spoke of considerable improvement in the textile industry, the increase in the amount of foreign loans, which during the past year were floated in England to the amount of £125,000,000 (the greater proportion being loans to the Dominions, and so forth.

It is true that there were certain dark patches in this optimistic picture, as for instance, the fact that the British trade balance for 1924 proved to be an unfavourable one. Imports exceeded exports by £344,000,000, the largest figure known in the history of British trade. But, on the other hand, "invisible" imports increased from £300,000,000 in 1923 to £370,000,000 in 1924.\* Thus the deficit in the trade balance was not only fully covered, but there even remained in favour of England a net balance on her foreign financial and trading operations.

Nevertheless, as the weeks and months of the new year, 1925, proceeded enthusiasm steadily fell. Alarm has now set in.

What are the causes of the alarm? If one considers British trade for March, one observes a certain increase as compared with March of the previous year, namely, an increase of 9 per cent. on imports, and 15 per cent. on exports. The total value of imports, amounting in 1924 to £103,500,000 increased in 1925 to £112,750,000. On the other hand, the export of British goods, which amounted to £61,000,000 in March, 1924, increased to £70,229,000 in March, 1925, while

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\* "Invisible imports include interest on foreign loans, proceeding from the foreign operations of British insurance societies, and thirdly, the freights, earned by the British mercantile fleet. These revenues are not shown in the trade balance. In this figure is not included the sums privately transferred by British citizens engaged in the Dominions and colonies as civil servants, industrialists, merchants and workers.

the total value of re-exports remain the same, namely £12,750,000.

Nevertheless, examining these figures more closely, we find that the exports of the three main products of British industry, coal, iron and steel decreased in comparison with the previous year by £2,028,000.

What is the state of industrial development in England?

The *Saturday Review*, of March 9th, 1925, publishes an article by Sir Clement Cunliffe Cooke, the Conservative M.P. He points out, that although Great Britain possesses the best coal and the most skilful miners in the world, the export of coal is rapidly falling. In 1913, Great Britain exported 98 million tons of coal, whereas in 1924 she exported only 61,650,000 tons, and this figure includes the coal exported to Ireland which did not figure in the export figures for 1913. Compared with 1923, the export of coal in 1924 showed a decrease of 17,000,000 tons. We shall not dwell in detail on the cause to which the Conservative Member of Parliament attributes the decline in the export of British coal, namely, the increased working costs. The mining of coal in Germany costs 6s. per ton less, and the Germans export almost the whole of their black coal abroad themselves employing only brown coal, which undergoes a chemical process before use. Moreover, the average output per worker in 1924 fell by 13 per cent. as compared with 1913.

A further decline in the export of British coal is to be observed in the first four months of 1925. During this period coal was exported to an amount of £7,000,000 less than in the same period of the previous year. This fact, of course, could not but influence freights, shipbuilding, engineering, etc.

Let us see how the matter stands with another important article of British production—steel. For this purpose we have only to cite from the annual report of one of the largest British industrial concerns, Vickers, the British Krupps, which appeared in the English newspapers on April 16th.

This is what Vickers say. The report begins by stating that the hopes expressed at the last annual meeting of shareholders of an improvement in the state of affairs were not justified. The amount of business done did not increase, but, on the contrary, competition was more keenly felt, especially from the moment when Germany appeared in the world market.

“Several months ago the British public were astonished



to hear that one of the largest British shipowning firms had ordered five vessels in Germany at prices far lower than our own. Conspired by patriotic motives, they were prepared to pay British shipbuilding firms £10,000 per vessel more than the prices quoted by Germany, but received the reply that shipbuilding firms, including ours, were not in a position to accept the order at such prices without considerable loss. Similarly, many vessels have been sent for repair to Continental docks.

"Last week, news was received that the South African railways had placed orders in Germany for 15 locomotives at prices roughly 37 per cent. lower than those quoted by British firms. The newspapers reported similar instances, but the public are still not informed of the greater number of such orders.

"Mr. George Taylor, managing director of the firm of Taylor Brothers, during his trip to Germany, visited a number of steel smelting works. He told me that these firms are overloaded with orders for axles, ties, wheels and other railway material, placed by Indian and South African railways. Under normal conditions all these orders would have been executed by us.

"In spite of the loss of the iron ore of Lorraine and the disorganisation caused by the occupation of the Ruhr, German trade has recently shown rapid development and the German output of steel increased from six million tons in 1923 to nine million tons in 1924. Similar improvement is to be observed in France and in Belgium, although to a smaller extent. In the United States the output of steel in 1924 attained the enormous figure of 36½ million tons, although this was 13 per cent. less than the previous year (the position considerably improved towards the end of the year).

"The British output of steel fell from 8½ million tons in 1923 to 8,200,000 tons in 1924, which figure is only slightly higher than the production of steel of **fifty years ago**.

"I quote the figures for the production of steel because steel is the best index of the state of our engineering and shipbuilding industries, and because these figures show that our country is the only industrial country which is passing through a period of depression in this respect. We have long lost that foremost place we occupied fifty years ago. At that time we had cheap coal, and we devoted ourselves energetically to railway construction, which was then in its infancy, and the construction of iron ships instead of wood. We have no chance of recovering our predominant position.

But that does not explain why the engineering, shipbuilding and steel industries should constitute the largest contingent of the million and a quarter unemployed who are receiving unemployment allowances, not counting the hundreds of thousands who are receiving poor law doles."

Vickers also, of course, considers that the decline of British industry is due to her inability to compete as a result of the high cost of production.

Let us take shipbuilding. We know the important part shipbuilding plays in the economic life of Great Britain. Shipbuilding is also on the decline. The tonnage of vessels under construction fell from 1,297,000 tons at the end of September to 1,165,000 tons at the present time. The British press gloomily points out that during the same period the number of vessels under construction in Germany increased from 315,000 tons to 405,000 tons.

The decline of British shipbuilding becomes more striking when one remembers that in 1913 vessels were being constructed in British yards to a total of 1,898,000 tons per annum representing 59 per cent. of the world ship construction. Now, however, the amount of vessels being built in British yards is less than 50 per cent. of the world construction.

Matters are no better in the textile industry. In April of this year, a conference was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Ray, Chairman of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, which was attended by representatives of all branches of the textile industry, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and of the nine trade unions concerned with the various branches of the textile industry. It was stated at this conference that the cotton industry was undergoing a crisis which the experts regard as the severest known in its history. According to Sir Charles Macara the loss incurred by the cotton industry since the beginning of the crisis amounts to about £200,000,000.

As a result of the crisis experienced in the various branches of British industry, especially in the coal, engineering and textile industries, transport is also suffering from a crisis. From a statement made by the Gt. Western Railway, it appears that in 1924 this line carried  $7\frac{1}{4}$  million tons of coal less than in 1913. As a result the profits of the railway have also considerably fallen. They amount in all to 3 per cent. of the capital. Last year, in order to pay a dividend of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., the company was obliged to draw upon its reserves.

The decline of industry means an increase in unemployment. The British press has recently again begun to devote serious attention to this question. Unemployment formed the subject of a special debate in the House of Commons. The number of unemployed at the present moment amounts to 1,250,000 persons, that is, nearly 150,000 more than in the corresponding period in the previous year when the Labour Government was in power\*. This fact was exploited by the former member of the Labour Government, Clynes against the Conservatives during the parliamentary debate on May 14th, the Conservatives having declared that the fall of the Labour Government would result in greater stability and confidence in trade and industry, and would, therefore, reduce the number of unemployed.

An increase in the number of unemployed means a decrease of wages and a general deterioration in the condition of the working class. Astonishing facts in this respect were quoted in the House of Commons during the debate on the minimum wage.

The Labour member, Morgan Jones, referred to the calculation made by the *Economist* of March 7th, of the real and progressive fall of wages which had taken place. Although wages as compared with 1914 had nominally increased by about 45 per cent. for metal workers, and skilled workers generally, and from 70 to 75 per cent. for other workers, they had actually fallen, since during that period the index of prices had risen by 80 per cent.†

Particularly hard is the lot of women and unskilled workers in the garment trades and of shop assistants. Morgan Jones cited a number of facts taken down from the questionnaires supplied to the Labour Exchanges. For instance, a 20-year old shop assistant receives 20 shillings a week, a woman shop assistant 24 years old, 25 shillings a week, a woman cashier 22 years old in a public house, 18 shillings per week, women from 21 to 24 years of age employed in tobacco shops earn 26 shillings per week. Analogous facts are cited from all parts of Great Britain. In Cornwall the practice exists in certain shops of not paying a

\* The number of unemployed on May 4th, 1925, amounted to 1,179,800 persons, as compared with 1,040,600 a year ago, on May 5th, 1924. On May 5th, 1924, 960,000 persons were receiving allowances under the Unemployed Insurance Act, whereas 1,110,000 were receiving allowances on April 7th, 1925.

According to the *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, out of the 11½ million insured workers, the number of unemployed at the end of March, 1925, amounted to 11.47 per cent. and at the end of February, 11.6 per cent. whereas at the end of March, 1924, the figure was 9.9 per cent.

† On December 31st, 1924.

woman wages for a period of three years, but allowing her a small percentage commission on sales during her period of apprenticeship. In Plymouth, shop assistants working from 8.30 a.m. to 8 p.m. without a break for meals, receive £1 per week and pay 18 shillings per week for food and lodgings. The firm owning the shop has four or five branches throughout all of which the conditions of employees are the same.

As regards skilled workers, their wages, according to the *Economist* fluctuate as follows: steel smelters 56/6 per week, pattern makers, 60/11 per week, skilled shipbuilding workers, from 55/- to 57/- per week.

Morgan Jones quoted other interesting facts. He compared the fluctuation of wages with the increase of the income of the capitalist class.

In 1873 blast furnace workers received on an average from 25/- to 30/- per week. Twenty years ago their wages varied from 35/- to 40/- per week. In South Wales, in 1923 their wages were 59/- per week. It should be said that statistics prove that the life of a steel smelter is on an average 40 years, the labour of this class of workers being extremely severe.

As regards the income of the capitalists, the following figures are illuminating:

The excess profits tax during the year 1918-19 brought in £35,595,000. In 1924-25 the revenue from this source amounted to £62,680,000, or an increase of 76 per cent. The revenue from death duties increased from £30,262,000 in 1918-19 to £59,450,000 in 1924-25.

During the course of the same debate, two other Labour members, Baker and Hardy, quoted other official figures. The well-known English economist, Mulhall, in his famous *Statistical Dictionary*, places the national income of Britain in 1800 at £174,000,000, whereas in 1920 the national income amounted to £4,000,000,000, or 28 times more. Another author, Sir Josiah Stamp, to whom the Labour member, Baker, referred, states that the national wealth of England during the same period increased ten times.\*

Other figures quoted show that incomes liable to taxation in 1913-14 amounted to £985,000,000 whereas in 1921-22 they had reached £2,462,000,000. If from these figures are deducted the direct taxation paid in various forms: such as income tax, death duties, and Excess Profits Tax, the net

\* The population also increased: if one divides the figure for the national wealth for 1800 by the number of the population, the result is

income remaining to the capitalists in 1913-14 totalled £911,000,000, and in 1921-22, £2,011,000,000, which gives an increase of 120 per cent. during a period of eight years.†

The former Liberal Minister, Sir Walter Runciman, stated that a vast sum, namely £778,000,000 was in the hands of 15,000,000 "small capitalists," but Professor Henry Clay, of Manchester University, in reply to Walter Runciman, declared that more than two-thirds of the national wealth was in the hands of less than two per cent. of the population. As regards the £778,000,000 referred to by Sir Walter Runciman, they amount to only five per cent. of the national wealth, which Professor Clay calculates at £15,600,000. This figure includes the war loans of foreign states to Britain as well as the claims of British citizens on foreign governments. Sir Josiah Stamp calculated the national wealth in 1919 as £15,023,000,000. As to the distribution of the national wealth, according to Professor Clay, 75.4 per cent. of the population, each possessing less than £100 held 7.6 per cent. of the national wealth, whereas 0.3 per cent. of the population, each possessing more than £25,000 hold 37.6 per cent. of the national wealth.

We know how often and how eloquently the reports on factory conditions, of which Marx made use in his "Capital" referred to the tendency towards the physical degeneration of the British proletariat. More than three-quarters of a century have passed since then. Insurance against unemployment and sickness have been introduced, and the general conditions of the country have improved. Nevertheless, medical reports confirm the fact that the deterioration of the British working class is continuing. Recently during the debate on the proposal of the Labour Party to establish a minimum wage, the Labour member, Dr. Haden Guest said: "A large proportion of the sums which we pay for the maintenance of hospitals are a form of compensation for the fact that we compel people to exist on very low wages. If the honourable members desire to convince themselves of this, let them pay a visit to Guy's Hospital, not far from London Bridge, which recruits the larger portion of its patients from trades where unemployment is frequent and wages very low. They will see to what an extent these classes of workers suffer directly from low wages and under-nourishment. I have observed the same fact in my experience in school clinics where I came in contact with thousands of children. One of the peculiar results of the war is that the amount of sickness

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£16 14s. per head, whereas a similar calculation in 1920 gives £85 per head.

† These figures are taken from government Blue Books.

among children attending the London school has specifically declined. The figures fell during the war because families received assistance for the first time in their lives, and many perhaps for the last. Twenty per cent. of disease among children is the result of under-nourishment, or in other words, poverty."

Dr. Haden Guest proposed to the Conservative members to make a small experiment in order to convince themselves of the correctness of his statements. "Go,"—he said "to the best of the elementary schools in a working class district and examine the children; examine their growth, appearance and physical fitness, and then go to the secondary schools attended by the children of the same district and see the difference. Here there is no difference in origin or in local conditions. The difference is due to the fact that the parents of the children attending the elementary schools are paid worse than the parents of children attending secondary schools, with the result that the latter are taller, stronger, and are in a position to acquire a better intellectual development. All this is borne out by official reports."

Baldwin in a recent speech stated that of eight volunteers to the army, five are rejected on grounds of physical unfitness.

Characteristic of the psychology of modern England are the statements unanimously made by the representatives of all parties to the effect that Britain has definitely lost her predominant position in the world market; that the crisis through which she is now passing is not transitional, but chronic, and that a permanent process of deterioration of the British economic organism is taking place. No one now believes that the 400 mines which have closed down will ever be re-opened, or that the 160,000 miners who are at present without employment will ever return to their mines. All attempts to find something which would give a vigorous stimulus to British industry, reduce the number of unemployed and decrease the burden which weighs on the State, the municipalities, and the trade unions, amounting to £50,000,000 for unemployment alone, not counting poor law relief, have utterly failed.

The present Conservative government, in the King's Speech, at the opening of Parliament, declared that "all schemes advanced for the amelioration of unemployment, including unemployment among juvenile workers, will be examined with the greatest attention by the government, and the government will lay proposals before parliament provid-

ing for the continuation and extension of measures intended for the amelioration of the present difficult situation."

During the recent debate on unemployment, the Labour members asked the government, "What have you done to reduce unemployment?" to which the Ministry of Labour, Steele Maitland, replied by the further question: "And what did you do when you were in power?" He said that all schemes which had been proposed simply touch the surface of the problem of unemployment. "Therefore, when people like General Thomson with impatient insistence asked what schemes have been prepared, we reply that none have been prepared, that there are no schemes to prepare."

Which amounts to an official admission of the utter incompetence of the British bourgeoisie to solve the problem of unemployment.

Nevertheless, schemes without end have been put forward. Great ado was made regarding the proposal of one of the adjutants of Lloyd George, Sir Alfred Mond, which, however, did not meet with much support even among the small Liberal group. The main idea of Sir Alfred Mond is that the assistance which is now given for the workers should be given in the form of subsidies to the capitalists who would bind themselves, in addition to the workers they at present employ, to open new works and extend their present works, which would find employment for workers now unemployed.

Lloyd George, on the other hand, issued another slogan, namely, "Back to the Land," The salvation of England, according to the ex-Premier, lies in the contraction of industry.

In certain branches of industry the problem of unemployment is being solved very simply: the workers are beginning to emigrate. A delegation of metal workers, which recently called on Baldwin, declared that the most skilled workers among them, were leaving England for the Dominions and Colonies. The reduction of the number of skilled workers, they said, was a problem affecting not only the metal industry, but the whole economic life of Britain.

The characteristic of the British bourgeoisie always has been that they understand their business. In order to soothe the class instinct of the British workers, and as a form of insurance against revolution they would frequently resort to grants in the form of unemployment, sickness and other allowances. But they did so when they still held an industrial monopoly. Now, however, when these measures are dictated by consideration of their own safety, they are en-

deavouring to cast part of the expense on the working class, part on industry and the smaller part on the State.

An interesting illustration of type is the recent Bill passed by the House of Commons providing for pensions for widows and old age pensions.

But above all it should be remarked that the whole structure of the new Budget estimates which the Pensions Bill accompanied, clearly illustrates the present class relations in Britain.\*

In the new Budget the government makes the British bourgeoisie a magnificent present. Hitherto the income tax amounted to 4/6 per pound. In the new Budget, income tax is reduced by sixpence in the pound. This means that the revenue from income tax in the present year will be reduced by £32,000,000 and next year by £42,000,000.

According to the Pensions Act, the government, commencing from 1927-28 is to bear a charge of £11,000,000 per annum, gradually rising to £22,000,000 per annum at the end of ten years. But since war pensions which now amount to £64,000,000 per annum should in the same period be reduced by £22,000,000 as a result of the dying-off of pensioners, it follows that the government will not have to find a penny for the new pensions. On the other hand, the workers, in addition to the £11,500,000 contributed by way of unemployment and sickness insurance, will have to pay threepence per week contributions for the new pensions.

But the industrialists are also dissatisfied. They are vexed because beginning from next year £10,000,000 fresh taxation will fall upon industry, which, of course, will increase costs and cannot but make the position of British industry in the world market still more difficult. One of the most eloquent defenders of the interests of British industry during the Budget debates was the former Minister of the Board of Trade, the Conservative leader, Sir Robert Horne.

But what is the significance of these £10,000,000 cast on the shoulders of the capitalists when 44 per cent. of the national expenditure, amounting to £800,000,000 is required for the payment of interest on the National Debt. Excluding

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\* The largest item of revenue, by the way, is estimated from the excise duty on spiritous liquors. £300,000,000 per annum are spent in England on alcoholic drinks, providing the government with a net revenue of £180,000,000. There is a serious movement among the Liberals in favour of prohibition, with the argument that if these £300,000,000 which the workers spend on alcohol were used to purchase food, clothing and for building construction, it would improve their material well-being and create work for British industry



the £30,000,000 paid to America, the whole national debt of Britain is in the hands of the bourgeois class. The interest paid annually on this debt amounts to £550,000,000.

For the army, navy and air fleet, the new Budget provides for an expenditure of £120,000,000, of which £60,500,000 is intended for the fleet, £44,500,000 for the army, and £15,000,000 for aviation.

It should be stated here that counting the £370,000,000 received from abroad in the form of "invisible imports" chiefly from British capital invested in foreign loans and industries and undertakings, and the £325,000,000 (deducting American debt) received from the Budget, we get a total sum of £700,000,000, representing the income earned by the British capitalist class merely on financial operations. Here we observe a clear tendency on the part of British capital to transform itself into usury capital invested in foreign industry. But the fact that British capital is finding a wide field of investment in Germany, and especially in the Ruhr, and that together with American capital and with the help of the Dawes Plan it will still further penetrate into German industry in the future, does not ameliorate the position either of British industry or of the British working class. Unemployment will continue to grow.

Such is the gloomy picture of British industry.

The business of the "World's Shop" is going badly. Britain has lost her industrial monopoly—and has lost it for ever. But instead of seeking a way out of the situation in the liberation of the colonies, the emancipation of the Indian peasant who is living under degrading feudal conditions, in an extensive programme of house building, in public works, and in establishing normal relations with Soviet Russia, the British bourgeoisie is seeking a solution by pursuing its own class interests.

Unemployment is being used by the British bourgeoisie as a pretext for a great campaign against the working class. We shall not refer to the attack made by Churchill in Parliament, amid the general approval of the bourgeois press, and the stormy protests of the Labour members, in which he said that unemployment was becoming a profession and that many workers were pretending to be unemployed solely in order to get allowances. Something much more essential is at stake.

The campaign began by prolonged artillery preparations. For weeks and months it was unanimously declared at meetings, in Parliament, at dinners, etc., that British industry

was being defeated in the world market because **the cost of production in England was too high**. When public opinion was sufficiently prepared, the question was asked: But why are the costs of production high? Then began the second campaign, the cost of production was high because the workers **were being paid too much and were working too little**. British coal could not compete with German coal because the British miner worked seven hours a day. If building was not developing in England, it was because the bricklayer worked too slowly, and pursued a policy of ca'canny. The crisis in the cotton industry was due to the fact that instead of the number of employees being reduced, they worked in shifts, but only a few days in the week, ect., etc.

From the press and the debates in Parliament it became clear that the British capitalists had made up their minds to **lengthen the working day and to cut down wages**.

By the middle of April, these demands were being definitely expressed by the mineowners, the railway companies, the textile mill-owners, the engineering firms, etc.

The fight has not yet begun. The first negotiations between the workers and the capitalists in the above-mentioned classes of industry are taking place. Each side has reserved for itself the right to think over the matter and to meet again. But a fight in the very near future is inevitable.

The attack begun by the British bourgeoisie on the working classes, of course, being accompanied by corresponding political reaction in other spheres. It is known that an attempt was made, although subsequently abandoned (perhaps only until a more favourable moment) to prohibit the trade unions from levying dues on their members for the election fund of the Labour Party. There is now talk of legislation against the Communist Party. At the same time a campaign is being conducted against foreigners. The Conservatives, who are protectionists, think the moment opportune for an agitation in favour of protective tariffs.

It is now clear why such a furious campaign was conducted by the British press against the agreement of the British and Russian trade unions, and the other campaign against the Soviet Union in connection with the Sofia explosion. The British workers must be isolated from the Russian Communists, in whom they may find valuable moral and material support in the forthcoming struggles. Also the attempt must again be made to represent the Soviet Union in the eyes of the more backward and ignorant of the workers as an enemy of economic development.

# The British Working-class Movement, the Left Wing & the Communist Party

"The British working class is becoming gradually revolutionised. Slowly, but surely, the ground is being prepared for the creation of a real mass Communist Party in England. Small though the British Communist Party is at present, it is assured of a great future. The disintegration of the Labour Party is now inevitable. The dissatisfaction with the Right leaders is bound to increase. The time is not far off when the British Communist Party will lead under its banner large masses in the camp of the British trade union movement. . . . The next most important task of the Comintern is to create a mass Communist Party in Britain."—Zinoviev: "Seven Years," in "The Communist International," No. 8, Nov. 1924.

**T**HE decisive change in the British working class movement since the fall of MacDonald has now developed over six months. A number of big events have taken place, and several controversies have arisen as to our line. In view of the Glasgow Congress\* of the Communist Party, it is important to estimate the results achieved and the stage reached, bearing in mind the two dominating factors which (as indicated in the quotation given above from comrade Zinoviev) govern our tasks in the present period in Britain :

- (1) Disintegration of the Labour Party ; i.e., separation of the working class forces from the bourgeois leadership and the growth of a class struggle opposition.
- (2) Creation of a mass Communist Party.

## ESTIMATE OF RESULTS.

### 1. Progress of the Opposition.

A number of big achievements reveal the growth of real mass opposition forces, *i.e.*, of large bodies of workers dissatisfied with the existing leadership and desirous of change in the direction of class struggle and class solidarity. Some of the more important of these achievements may be noted :

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\* This article was written before the Glasgow Congress.

1. The Unity Conference, gathering representatives of 600,000 workers : growth of influence of the Minority Movement in the trade unions.
2. The Anglo-Russian Trade Union Agreement : ranging of the General Council for International Working Class Unity on the basis of the class struggle, and alliance with the Russian unions in open opposition to the Right-wing leaders of the Labour Party and of the Amsterdam International.
3. The Workers' Alliance movement towards solidarity in the approaching wage struggles.
4. Labour Party opposition to the re-election of MacDonald : heavy abstentions. Division on Prince of Wales vote and other issues.
5. Left-wing press developments (*Sunday Worker*, *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*) with immediate large scale circulations of 150,000 to 250,000.
6. Communist Party defeat of the expulsion campaign.
7. Sharpening of discussion within the Labour Party (forcing into *Daily Herald*, etc., controversies on Labour Government and strikes, royalty, etc.).
8. Local victories of Left in important industrial areas : e.g., Manchester Trades Council successful fight against Labour Party right, Glasgow Trades Council and Scottish Trades Union Congress adoption of our resolutions against Dawes and against any compromise with imperialism (including right of cession, etc.)

This is a prodigious budget of achievements for six months.

## 2. Present Weaknesses of the Opposition.

Against this list we must set the most important directions in which progress has been slow.

The Opposition forces have still to achieve some form of united Opposition bloc on a common programme on the central immediate issues facing the working class.

Politically the Opposition still lacks confidence. In the Labour Party, the central battleground of the movement, the Opposition expression is weak, uncertain and dispersed. Isolated issues are taken up. There is no central common basis.

In organisation, the Opposition is still heavily disunited.

The different groups, tendencies, movements—General Council Left, Labour Party Left, Minority Movement, “Cook” campaign, Plebs, Communist Party, Lansbury followers, Left Local Labour Parties, etc., are all dispersed. They each follow their own issues, and have neither common programme, nor the most rudimentary form of common organisation. In consequence they are not able to mobilise their forces as a whole for a given point of attack. The Right-wing is able to maintain power.

Thus both in political outlook and in organisation the Opposition forces are still at an early stage of development.

The next task in front of the Opposition is to achieve a united bloc on immediate issues.

### 3. The Progress of the Party.

Viewing the development of the Party during these six months, simply from the point of view of its development towards a mass Communist Party, we note the following :

1. In influence the Party has advanced very greatly. In press, publicity, propaganda and organised contact, with the masses, the Party has made great strides, The Party by the admission of all (not least of the bourgeoisie, as shown in the recent speech of Baldwin) is a factor in the working class movement which has to be reckoned with. The fruits of infinite work in the organised movement are now abundantly visible, and the Party is beginning to play a directly leading role in relation to large numbers of organised workers.
2. In the advance upon the factories, in which the first beginnings have been made, the Party has begun the advance to the essential basis of a solid mass party.
3. In numbers the Party still grows very slowly. If recruiting at the present stage were the only test, there would be no basis for talking of a future mass Communist Party. Local reports gives various reasons for this reluctance of workers, in sympathy with Communist propaganda, to enter the Party: heavy contributions, fear of victimisation, fear of overwork, discipline, etc. Comrade Murphy, in his article in *The Communist International*, No. 9, also mentions the non-understanding of the role of the revolutionary political party in this country. All this goes to show that the acuteness of the struggle has not yet reached

that visible stage which compels and drives masses of workers, in spite of all obstacles, to take up the burden of the Party and make it a force, because their class needs vitality demands it.

Thus the growth of the Opposition has not yet been translated into corresponding direct growth of the Party towards a mass Communist Party. This symptom need not yet disturb us, as the actual recruiting is clearly the last stages in the whole process; the point is, however, important to note.

## II. PROBLEMS ARISING.

With this estimate of the results before us we come now to the problems arising.

The discussion which has taken place so far ("Communist International," No. 8; by own article and article of A. Martinov, No. 9: article of J. T. Murphy) has not yet, in my opinion, brought out the actual problems. The question has been put as one of "for" or "against" assisting and supporting the development of a Left-wing Opposition. But on this there is not, and never has been, any controversy. The Party line has been clear on this for the past two years and more. The real question only begins **after** this has been taken for granted.\* The fundamental question is how this process of development through the Left-wing Opposition is

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\* My own article concentrated on the single question of leadership in order to show the absolute necessity of a mass Communist Party as the only possible leadership and the necessary outcome of the Left-wing leadership and the Left-wing process, and in consequence stressed (as I think, rightly) the absolute necessity of a militant critical and independent role by the Communist Party; but omitted (wrongly) to deal with the equally important task of organising and developing the Left-wing. This concentration on a single aspect, and failure to distinguish clearly between our ideological struggle for leadership and our task of assisting and encouraging those elements that are moving towards us, was incorrect in a general view of the situation, and gave rise to justifiable misconception as to the writer's actual position with regard to the Left-wing.

Comrade Martinov, while justly calling attention to this omission, and stressing the importance of developing the Left-wing as "a vehicle for the dissemination of our revolutionary ideas among the proletarian masses," was misled as to my actual position by mistranslation. I had written *of the Communist Party* "The remains of the 'Left-wing of the Labour Party' conception must be wiped out." This referred simply to the familiar point, made both at the Fourth and Fifth International Congresses, against the error of regarding the Communist Party as a wing of the Labour Party. Comrade Martinov received the phrase as "The remains of the 'Left-Wing' of the Labour Party's conception must be wiped out," and naturally understanding from this that I was against the development of a Left-wing *in the Labour Party*, proceeds to comment "he proposes to concentrate all our efforts now at this juncture on an attack on the Left-wing, to strangle it at its very inception," and then proceeds correctly to attack such a conception. But such a conception is not, and never has

to lead to the mass Communist Party, and, more particularly what must be the role and action of the Communist Party within the Opposition in order that we may reach to the mass Communist Party.

The problem may be set out in the three following questions, each of which expresses from a particular aspect the same central problem :

1. *The Problem of the Opposition—How can the Opposition Develop as a Political Force?*

Indirectly, the advance of the Opposition in the trade unions and in the local movements, is, of course, a tremendous political force. But the failure so far to achieve a direct Opposition lead in the central battleground of the Labour Party, or to combine the various Opposition forces and groups in a common army advancing on some approach to a common platform for the whole working class movement, is the greatest problem of the Opposition to-day. This problem must be solved if a real advance is to be made.

It is easy to give historical and general reasons for this situation—the traditional trade union basis of the movement, the identification of politics with parliament, etc., all making it easiest to advance at present in the trade unions.

But it is necessary to fasten on the precise factor and need of the present situation that is responsible for the existing political uncertainty and hesitation, and which the opposition has not yet measured up to. Once this is marked out, the necessary line of advance of the Opposition is marked out.

2. *The Problem of the Mass Communist Party—what must be the Role and Action of the Communist Party within the Opposition in order to assist the Development to the mass Communist Party?*

Comrade Murphy in his article sets out four alternatives :

been, mine. This mistranslation (for which my own unclear expression is responsible) becomes the foundation of his criticism in an article with which I am otherwise in essential agreement, and which I gladly recognise as correcting the deficiencies of my own.

Comrade Murphy reinforced Comrade Martinov's point on the Left-wing in more detail, but did not actually carry the question further, though he developed a different view of the role of the Labour Party.

This controversy does not vitally affect the questions here at issue, save so far as it is important to note, to prevent misunderstanding, that there is no division within our Party on the fundamental question of working for the development of a strong Left-wing within the Labour Party and the trade unions.

1. To "help these masses to effectively challenge the leadership they resent."
2. To "attack the prominent leaders who are typical of the movement."
3. "The Minority Movement to attempt to harness these forces."
4. To "prevent the national Left-wing bloc taking shape in the Labour Party."

Of these four he advocates the first as the "only one course to take."

This is too simple a statement of the position. To lay down "Helping the Left-wing" as the whole statement of the Party's task in the present process is to reduce the whole statement of the Party's task in the present process is to reduce the Party to a simple element of the Left-wing and to omit entirely the distinctive task of the Party. But it is this distinctive task of the Party (which may even sometimes involve "attacking prominent leaders" *at the same time as* supporting the Left-wing in general) which must be clearly laid down, and on which the whole process through the Left-wing to the mass Communist Party depends.

3. *The Problem of the Labour Party—what is the Role and Future of the Labour Party in relation to the Development of the Mass Communist Party?*

This question, which has not yet been plainly brought out, will be found to lie at the root of the whole problem.

Comrade Zinoviev, in the above quotation, speaks of the "inevitable disintegration" of the Labour Party. In my own article I spoke of the "decomposition of the Labour Party in its old form," (*i.e.*, as an alliance between bourgeois leadership and trade union masses). Comrade Martinov speaks of our "liquidating the Labour Party."

On the other hand comrade Murphy emphatically insists that the Labour Party is not decomposing ("Can it be described as a process of decomposition of the Labour Party? Assuredly not. Rather it is a process of clarification." "The fierce discussions raging throughout the Labour Party are *not* the signs of decay but the manifestation of life and vitality") and on this basis declares that "the mass Communist Party grows from the foundations of the Labour organisations of this country."

What is the implication behind this apparent opposition? Partly it is a simple confusion of expression. The "disin-



tegration," "decompositions," "liquidation," which comrade Murphy attacks, is of the Labour Party as a Liberal or Menshevik workers' party, *i.e.*, of its present character, basis and leadership—a consummation which comrade Murphy desires as much as any. The "vitality" which he so loudly proclaims is of the masses—which nobody denies. But partly there is a real difference of view implicit which goes to the root of our outlook on the development of the British working class movement, and which it is necessary to examine in more detail.

This difference concerns our view of the Labour Party. Comrade Murphy sets out the following outlook :

1. The Labour Party is not decomposing, but undergoing "process of clarification," (p. 12).
2. The Labour Party has already broken with the "aims" of Liberalism, but has still to break with the "methods" of Liberalism. This is the struggle in front. (p. 7.)
3. "The Labour Party is increasing in strength as the workers become more class conscious." (p. 3.)
4. "The Labour Party will grow in numbers and strength as the working class in increasing numbers awaken to political consciousness. In the process, especially as the conditions of the workers become more difficult, the question of the ways and means of struggle will come increasingly to the fore until the bourgeois politics which dominate it to-day are cleansed from its ranks." (p. 16).
5. "Our concern must be . . . to help the working class organisations, the trade unions and Labour Party, to shake themselves free of the control of bourgeois politicians." (p. 16.)

What is the dominant character of this outlook? The essential character of this outlook is that the Labour Party is treated as a basic permanent factor of the British working class movement. The Labour Party is not treated simply as a stage, a battleground, an expression of the pre-revolutionary phase of the working class advance, which is bound to break up, as the workers advance to the revolution. The Labour Party is treated as actually advancing into the revolutionary period, becoming a revolutionary organ—"increasing in strength as the workers become more class conscious."

The effects of this outlook are tremendous and signifi-

cant. It means that the Labour Party inevitably becomes the centre of our outlook and propaganda. The Communist Party inevitably passes to a subordinate place in our treatment, and becomes an adjunct of the Labour Party. The whole effect and drive of our propaganda becomes to build up the confidence of the masses around the Labour Party, with the hope and implication that the Communist Party may eventually become its leader. This fundamental subordination to the Labour Party becomes the essential character of the daily propaganda of the Party.

Can we accept this outlook? A consideration of objective conditions will show that we cannot.

First, the experience of every country now shows us that the revolutionary "split" in the workers' forces is not accidental, but rooted in imperialist conditions and inevitable. Imperialism divides different strata of the workers, and creates strata allied to itself. This is the whole basis of Social-Democracy. The Right-wing leaders in the Labour Party are not isolated individuals, accidentally fastened on to the working class movement, but are social representatives of definite strata and forces. The present "unity" of the Labour Party is simply the unity of a primitive stage (like the "unity" of the Second International, uniting Social-Imperialists and Bolsheviks) before differentiation has begun. To imagine that this unity will continue into the revolutionary period as an idyllic dream contrary to the whole of international experience (even in a non-imperialist country like Norway the attempted transplantation of the Labour Party as a whole to the revolutionary plane was followed by immediate break up).

We must, therefore, count on the future probable split and break up of the Labour Party as an objective factor. To miss it out of our calculations, to give simply an idyllic picture of an evolutionary continuous development of the Labour Party to revolution—the Labour Party "increasing in strength as the workers become more class conscious"—is to give a false and misleading picture of the line of development, which gives a complete misunderstanding of our tasks and can become the cover of a complete opportunist identification with the Labour Party.

Second, we know as revolutionary organs the mass Communist Party, based on groups of revolutionary workers centred on the factories, and the Factory Committees as the widest organs of the masses. As mass organs from the period of capitalism continuing right through the revolution-

ary period we know the trade unions. All these have their role to fulfil. But what is the role of the Labour Party in the revolutionary period? The Labour Party is at present in form a combination of trade unions for parliamentary purposes. What then can be the future role?

The revolutionisation of the Labour Party inevitably means its disappearance, or even, as comrade Martinov says, its "liquidation." This is not simply a formal question. It means that the Labour Party is in its very character an expression of the pre-revolutionary opportunist period, a stage, a phase, an assembling ground, an organ of early experiences and struggles, a battleground of tendencies, which cannot survive into the revolutionary period, but must inevitably break up: and that, therefore, our policy must be based, not on building up the Labour Party as the basis of the future revolutionary party, but on building up the revolutionary mass movement within the Labour Party, which mass movement must develop to the mass Communist Party.

To speak on the one hand of the mass Communist Party, and on the other hand to speak at the same time of the Labour party "increasing in strength as the workers become more class conscious" and of our task as being to "help the Labour Party to shake itself free from the control of bourgeois politicians, i.e., become the workers' party: this is at the best a confusion of thought and complete shirking of the radical transformation and struggles in front, and at the worst becomes to open the way to the most banal identification of our revolutionary task with the development of the Labour Party, while repeating the phrases of the mass Communist Party.

Third, the question is not simply a question of future development, but of present policy. The uncritical presentation of the Labour Party as the essential organ of the working class, as the future revolutionary organ once the existing leadership is overthrown, leads to a fundamental continual approximation to the Labour Government and continual blurring of fundamental differences between the Communist Party and the Labour Party, and a continual underestimation of our revolutionary tasks.\* Most of this is simply

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\* This tendency of approximation to the Labour Party has already been before the attention of the International movement in the case of the congratulatory letter to the Labour Government, and in the case of the Kelvingrove by-election (both dealt with at the Fifth Congress). But the roots of this fundamental misconception have not yet been grappled with, nor its full extent realised. One or two examples from ordinary current propaganda (since the Fifth Congress) may be taken:

(1) *Labour Party Conference*, London, October, 1924 (debate on ex-

weakness of expression and confusion of thought, which is natural in a young Party and not yet politically serious. But there does also exist a definite tendency towards identification with the Labour Party, based on this fundamental misconception of the future role of the Labour Party and the line of revolutionary development, which has to be treated seriously. To treat the necessary fight against this as "sectarianism" is misunderstanding.

For all these reasons the question of the Labour Party and its role and future, a problem which has not yet been definitely formulated and discussed, must be taken into consideration at the same time as the question of the mass Communist Party and the Left-wing is considered.

Our task in the present period cannot be presented from within the confines of the Labour Party, as a simple process of "clarification" within an already existing workers' party. The task of revolutionisation in Britain is far more fundamental and can only be presented from a total view of the development of the working class and of objective conditions, a view which included the Labour Party as a phase, but accepts only the future mass Communist Party and the existing mass movement in process of development as the two poles of outlook.

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clusion of Communists from Labour Party):

Of our three speakers two (both parliamentary candidates) declared that there was "*no difference on matters of principle, "no fundamental opposition"* between the Labour Party and the Communist Party (it is not surprising that Ramsay MacDonald immediately singled out the former of these speeches for praise as "admirable" "excellent in tone"). On the other hand the leader of our delegation correctly declared that "whatever fundamental principles might separate them" the Communist Party was ready to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Labour Party on immediate issues against the capitalists.

(2) *General Election, 1924.* Here is a quotation from an election speech of one of our parliamentary candidates (he was dealing with MacDonald's forged Zinoviev letter):

"One reason Labour needed a big majority was that they required sufficient power to be able to point out to the government officials that when they were working out a working class policy they were not going to allow themselves to be dealt with as they were in a minority government." The implications of this sentence: (1) complete identification of the Communists with the MacDonald Labour Government; (2) that the Labour Government was at war with the permanent officials; (3) that the Labour Government had wanted to carry out a "working class policy"; (4) that the Labour Government had only been unable to carry out a "working class policy," because it was in a minority; (5) that the Labour Government, if returned with a majority, would deal with the government officials—all these implications of one sentence of Communist election propaganda makes a rich harvest, but only a sample out of the field.

Examples from ordinary daily local work and propaganda would often show even more clearly the complete immersion in Labour Party day-to-day work, and interpretation of the Communist task is simply the winning of strategic leadership within the local Labour organisations.

### III. THE LINE OF SOLUTION.

To answer these questions it is necessary to get a clearer view of the whole line of development of the British working class movement in relation to the permanent stage.

1. *The British working class movement is undergoing a process of revolutionisation as a result of the fundamental change in British conditions.*

The British working class movement was formed under the condition of stable capitalism.

The traditional outlook of the movement has reflected, and still in the main reflects, these conditions: *i.e.*, acceptance of the fundamental capitalist framework of British capitalist democracy and Empire as a permanent framework within which to advance; endeavour to secure improvement of conditions within this framework; consequent confinement of methods to strikes of sections and parliamentary legislation; concentration on the interests of the Labour aristocracy, and sections, rather than the class as a whole; readiness to accept liberal and middle class leadership in the political sphere; indifference to the international movement and the coloured workers.

The characteristic form of this movement have been the trade unions and the Labour Party built upon them.

But to-day all these conditions have changed. The strength of British capitalism is mortally stricken. The industrial monopoly is gone; financial leadership has passed to the United States; the Dominions and colonies move to independence. Stagnation of home industries is continuous. The British bourgeoisie is increasingly investing and developing industry outside Britain, in Africa, and South America, and employing cheaper paid colonial workers to the detriment of the old favoured standards of British workers. For the past thirty years the standard of living of the British workers has gone down, despite increasing wealth of the British bourgeoisie. During the last few years, this process, leading straight to intensified class war has tremendously increased.

Thus the British workers are forced in the direction of revolution. They can no longer hope for improvement of their conditions within capitalism. Even now the capitalists

threaten new attacks on the top of the present lowered conditions. The workers are forced to recognise the necessity of a complete change of regime. They are forced to recognise the unity of their interests with the colonial workers and the international working class against the whole rule of the bourgeoisie. Socialism, the class struggle and international working class unity become the ever more clearly sounding signals of the new epoch.

*2. But revolutionisation demands a revolutionary transformation of the whole movement.*

But the new struggle demands new forms and a new outlook. It cannot be conducted through the forms, or within the range of conceptions of the old movement, which found its expression in sectional trade unionism and the electoral-parliamentary Labour Party.

The Trade Unions and the Labour Party are the shell within which develops the movement of the masses towards the new revolutionary struggle. But neither the Trade Unions nor the Labour Party are capable of conducting the revolutionary struggle.

Extended trade unionism and Labour Party politics, i.e., greater combination of Unions and more militant Labour representation in Parliament, can express and help towards the new tendency, but can never get beyond their own limits and provide the new movement and leadership required.

The revolutionary struggle sets completely new tasks :

1. It is necessary to conduct a common struggle against the rule of the British bourgeoisie throughout the Empire, involving the combination, not only of the working class forces, but also of the peasant forces of revolutionary nationalist movements, as the condition of effectively challenging the power of the British bourgeoisie.
2. It is necessary to prepare, not simply for a parliamentary, electoral or economic struggle, but for a unified and intensified political struggle, subordinating all partial struggle to the supreme aim of the struggle for power, and leading eventually to the point of civil war.

3. The character of the work demands a complete break with all the old illusions of parliamentary democracy, bourgeois pacifism, labour imperialism, "industrialism," etc.
4. The unified struggle demands a centralised leadership of struggle, which must be, in the critical period, not simply the all-inclusive representative leadership of the widest mass organs, but a homogeneous compact leadership with striking power.
5. The unified struggle demands a class unification of the workers' forces, such as can only be achieved on the basis of factory committees and corresponding organs.
6. The realisation of the centralised leadership, not only on top, but throughout the working class, demands the living leadership of a revolutionary mass party throughout the forces of the working class.

All these tasks indicate the complete transformation of the whole movement from top to bottom, in outlook, leadership and organisation, which is necessitated by the revolutionary struggle to which the movement is in fact gradually advancing, but which cannot be accomplished by the simple adoption of some decision on "methods" by the existing movement. (The experience of the Triple Alliance is the most illuminating example of the fate of an attempt simply to adapt the existing movement, by a change in machinery to a fundamentally new revolutionary purpose, without a deeper change in consciousness, preparation and political outlook right through the movement).

The revolutionary transformation, itself only reached in the process of developing and advancing more and more the united struggle, is the supreme task of the British working class in the present period as a whole.

The eventual form of the new movement is inevitably, by universal experience, the mass Communist Party working through the widest mass organisations of the trade unions and the factory committees.

3. *The First Stage of Change is the Development of a Limited Opposition within the old Movement.*

Against this background of the fundamental task of the British working class in the present period, as a whole, we can proceed to take the immediate stage of the rise of the Left-wing.

What does the rise of the Left-wing mean? It means that the complete change in British conditions is producing its reflection within the working class and within the old movement.

But the immediate reflection is not yet at once conscious of the new period and the new tasks. The first stage is simply dissatisfaction with the old, and the desire for a change in the direction of greater solidarity and class struggle. The dissatisfaction has not yet clear conscious direction and goal.

The range of ideas still remains confined to the old limits. The demand is for a "stronger" policy; for a "more vigorous" policy, for a "working class" policy; for more combined trade unionism, for more unified strikes, for more militant Labour representation in Parliament.

The new tasks, the fundamental changes, are not yet envisaged. As soon as any fundamental question arises, all the old conceptions are revealed on State, Empire, Parliament, Democracy. This is the basic stumbling block, the key to the weakness, the hesitation and the uncertainties of the Left-wing. The Left-wing is still beating against the wall of its own limits.

The wish is strong but the expression is still weak. This is the dilemma of the Left-wing which must be broken down if a real advance is to be made.

4. *The Task of the Communist Party is to Develop and Transform this Limited Opposition into a Revolutionary Mass Movement.*

But the very fact of this dilemma of the Left-wing makes clear the task of the Communist Party.

The limited Opposition which develops within the shell of the old movement, is of tremendous importance, because



it represents the rise of new forces, the advance of the working class towards revolution, the elements of the future revolutionary mass movement.

But it cannot *of itself* move forward to its goal. It is still politically bound. Its first old leaders and spokesmen are still linked and tied in many ways to the old movement.

These bonds must be broken by *conscious action* on our part. They cannot simply be broken by the "natural process of events," the "development of the struggle," the necessities of action," etc. All experience proves this, not least the all-important experience of the two previous "unrest" periods of 1911-1914 and 1917-1920.

The breaking of these bonds, the driving home of the new conceptions, demands active, militant, ceaseless, relentless warfare on our part—warfare in the ideological sphere, but nevertheless warfare. It must not be such as to shatter and disperse, instead of stimulating and pushing forward, the gathering mass movement (including those leaders who are developing, even partially, in our direction). Nevertheless, the task must be performed, or the gathering mass movement shatters itself against futility. (*In this sense, and in this sense alone, the ideology of the leaders and spokesmen within the camp of the Left-wing is even more important to us, in relation to our future tasks and the development of the consciousness of the masses, than the pure class-collaboration of MacDonaldism which is the direct enemy.*)

Only revolutionary Communism can perform this task. From no other source can come the new current which alone can magnetise and fire the rising mass forces that are clamouring for expression.

The Communist Party must express the rising movement of the masses, voice the demands and discover the line of advance which the masses are seeking, unify and consolidate the gathering movement in a common purpose, point the way further to the ultimate goal, and so more and more clearly establish itself as the real leader of the new forces.

This is the supreme task of the Communist Party in the present period, and this is the inescapable condition of the advance of the Left-wing to the mass Communist Party.

The Left-wing leaders *will not do our work for us* (however much they may work for us).

We have a distinctive role to play and we must play it.

5. *The Twofold Character of the Party's Task in Relation to the Question of the Left-wing.*

Thus the task of the Party in the present period, in relation to the problems raised by the new developments of the British working class movement and the rise of the Left-wing is twofold :

- (1) To stimulate and help forward every advance that is revealed within the existing working class movement, towards class consciousness and class activity, to assist in developing, organising and strengthening the Left-wing forces and to unite with them in the battle against the Right-wing leaders, and to work for and take part in the formation of a united Opposition Bloc on the basis of the class struggle.
- (2) To conduct at the same time, and in the midst of this developing movement of class struggle, an unceasing ideological fight for our fundamental revolutionary conceptions and tasks, and a relentless warfare against every form of illusion and confusion that stands in the way of the advance of the working class.

To omit either aspect of this twofold task is to fail in our task. To state that our task is simply to "support the Left-wing" or to "form a United Front with the Left-wing" is an adequate statement of our task. The Left-wing is not for us an objective in itself, but a means. The objective is the revolutionisation of the working class.

R. P. DUTT.



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