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POLITICS

The Soviet Government and the Recognition of the Pre-War Debts.

by *Karl Radek.*

On the 28th of October, the Soviet government sent a note, signed by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to the Allied governments, in which it declares its readiness to recognize the Czar's pre-war debts, if the Allies conclude a general peace with Soviet Russia, and give it the necessary credit for fighting the famine and for its economic reconstruction. The Soviet Government demands the calling of an international conference, where the Allied governments can present their claims, and the Soviet government its counter-claims; such a conference would settle all disputes between the Soviet Government and its former allies, and would establish general peace between the Allies and Soviet Russia.

Nearly four years have passed since the workers and peasants of Russia overthrew the power of the Junkers and the bourgeoisie. The capitalist world, shocked by the news of this great historical event, found consolation in the thought that only a few weeks would pass, and the rule of the workers and peasants would again be overthrown. The Allies never wished to deal officially with Soviet Russia. Weeks and months passed without the fall of the Soviet government occurring. The Allies then saw that it was not so simple a matter. The Soviet Power withstood the immense shock of the Brest-Peace, in spite of the fact that it was living in constant fear of German militarism, and in spite of the German troops' occupation of the Ukrainian grainregions. The Soviet-Power took deep root in the masses. Then the Allies decided to carry on open warfare against the Soviets. What is known as the great civil-war, from the uprising of the Czecho-Slovaks to the end of the Wrangel affair, and the great struggle on all fronts of the Republic was nothing more than the crusade of the Entente governments against Soviet Russia. The Russian bourgeoisie left to its own means, was only able to organize territorial outrages, or insignificant local riots. For the organization of a war against Soviet Russia it needed the aid of all the Allies who spent billions on the organization and arming of the White armies, the armies of their mercenaries. With the forcing of the Perekop isthmus, this period of the allied war against Soviet Russia ended. The fact that from the time when the Allies stopped financing the White armies, the Russian counter-revolution was not able, in spite of its infinite hatred of the Russian workers and peasants, to start a regular war against us proves that the Russian White Guards are not an independent force. The Allied demand that we recognize the old Czar-debts, is the best proof that they are beginning to understand: *Soviet Russia was, is and will be.* The raising of the question of debt-recognition is an expression of the fact that not only did the world-revolution fail to overthrow the capitalist governments, but that the world-reaction also failed to overthrow the Soviet government. If the necessity of recognizing the war-debts signifies a retreat on the part of the Soviet government, the fact that the Allies even demand this recognition from the Soviet government, signifies a retreat on the part of the Allies, who until now would not hear of a compromise with Soviet Russia, but intended the destruction of the first Workers' and Peasants government in the world.

The expeditions of the Allies, which could not defeat us, rendered Russia a country of ruins and conflagrations. Due to the war, our industries are shattered; in the course of many years they have not received any new machines or instruments; with the remainder of their strength, these industries served the war, and made our victory possible. By bringing us victory however, they could not give the peasant what he needed. Without getting any tools, our agriculture had to feed the army of five million men. Its low productivity fell still lower. Soviet Russia was not able to reconstruct its economic life quickly with the means available. As long as the war lasted, one could hope that the capitalist states would be destroyed; but the insufficient revolutionary preparedness of the world-proletariat, and the policy of compromise of the international social-democracy and the labor-leaders made it possible for the bourgeoisie to emerge from the world crisis victorious.

The bourgeoisie is indeed unable to regulate anew the machine of world-capitalism; the great universal crisis which shakes the foundations of capitalism is the best proof of it. The world-revolution is developing, but slowly. It rendered aid to Soviet Russia; this aid consisted of the struggle which the internationai working class carried on against intervention; a struggle which made our victory considerably easier. But the working-class cannot yet offer us aid by delivering machines; the means of production are still in the hands of the world-bourgeoisie. Conscious of this, the Soviet governmeant has, since the *Brest-negotiations* constantly proposed a compromise to the capitalist Governments. Even after intervention had already begun, it tried to take advantage of every allied defeat and every Red Army

victory, in order to renew its peace-offers and proposals of compromise to them. It valued the blood of the Russian proletariat; it thought it wiser to undertake certain burdens rather than to carry on an endless war which was constantly undermining the foundations of the economic welfare of the masses. In March of this year, England was the first of the big powers to recognize that it was unable to carry on war any further and concluded a trading-treaty with us. While negotiations were already going on betwen England and Soviet Russia, France was still hoping, now for the victory of the Polish arms now for Wrangel's victory. After Wrangel's defeat, a change was noticeable in France's attitude as well. This change of attitude is expressed by Briand's note of the 21st of November, 1920, in which he asked the English government to consider the question of Russia's debts as a condition for the beginning of peace-negotiations with Soviet Russia. The English government, however, was in no hurry to bring up this question. Since it was France which was the creditor of Czarism, and not England, the latter had no particular interest in the pre-war state-debts of Russia. At the same time England had every reason to be interested in dealing first with an isolated Soviet Russia, because it would insure England a leading role in Russia. The French government on the other hand, proved itself *incapable* of deciding upon a policy of peace with Soviet Russia. The catastrophe which struck Soviet Russia this year—the famine in the Volga region—compelled France to reconsider the question of peace with Russia. It is understood of course, that France is not moved by philantropic motives—on the contrary Briand wanted to sabotage all aid—but because the famine in Russia renewed its hopes for an overthrow of the Soviet power. This renewed hope found expression in the attempt to urge Poland and Roumania into war with Soviet Russia. Lloyd George's speech of the 16th of August, however, was a revelation for the French. They saw, that should it not succeed in strangling Soviet Russia with the bony hand of famine, and then killing it with the Polish-Roumanian armies, English Capital would then take advantage of its economic aid in order to win a monopoly of the Russian market. France knew that though not yet officially, negotiations were being commenced concerning an English loan to Russia. It was then that France decided to draw Poland into a war against Russia, and to ask for England's support in its demand for recognition of the Czar's debts. For this purpose, it took advantage of England's position on the eve of the *Washington Conference*. By threatening to support America against England in the struggle for control in the Pacific Ocean, France forced the English government to support it in the debt question. In substance, the Brussels Conference declared that the Allies will furnish the credits necessary to fight the famine only upon condition that the Soviet government recognize the Czar's debts.

This demand is a mockery of all that the Allies said about not taking advantage of Russia's famine for purposes of blackmail. This demand is the devilish plan which Lloyd George spoke of on the 16th of August . But the Soviet government knows that it is dealing with wolves, even though they be wolves in sheepskin. Not for one moment did it expect any philanthropy from the capitalist Allies to the workers and peasants; neither did it expect the Allies to be ashamed to demand the recognition of debts from te starving working-class of Russia. The Soviet government therefore makes the following declaration: in order to save millions of lives from starvation, and in order to hasten the rebirth of the country, ruined by the intervention of the Allies, it is ready, in the name of these suffering masses, to undertake the obligation of paying tribute to the hyenas of the world—a tribute which is to be taken out of the hungry mouths of Russian workers and peasants. It deciares before the working masses of the whole world that, being weaker than world-capitalism, it is ready, in the name of the working-class, to pay the pre-war debts. In doing so, the Soviet Government does not retract a single syllable of what it said before: " No people is obligated to pay for the chains that bound it". The Soviet Government rejects the statement that a nation which refuses to pay for the jails, the gallows and the armament which led to international chaos and to destruction deserves no confidence when it says: " I am ready to pay for the aid rendered me in the building of schools, in the development of mines, and in the healing of wounds ". The ethics of the working class is not the ethics of the world-bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is stronger, and we take account of that. We also take account of the fact that at the same time that the French bankers are planning an annulment of France's obligations to England and America, and at the same time that rich England is also seeking an anullment of its debts to American capital, the recognition of the Czar's debts is forced from destitute and hungry Soviet Russia. Soviet Russia is ready to make good these debts, if only able to do so, and if it is enabled to recontruct and develop its industries and agriculture through free trade relations with the capitalist world, and through loans.

The recognition of the debts on the part of Soviet Russia, requires at the same time the recognition of Soviet Russia by the Allies. Without this, our recognition of the debts would have no international value. A check which is signed by an unrecognized government will not be discounted by any bank. By demanding the recognition of debts by the Soviet government, the Allies are placing *the question of recognizing the Soviet government upon the order of the day*. The national debt of Russia can only be secured through its natural resources. The Allies know that for a long time we shall not be in a position to pay debts in any other way than with concessions of the natural resources of Russia—the land whose womb coutains immense riches. If that is to be so, then Russia must not be an object of partition or attack; otherwise the Allies make it impossible for Soviet Russia to fulfill the obligations undertaken by it. The declaration of Soviet Russia takes place not only *after the Brussels-Conference,* but also *before the Washington-Conference,* where Eastern Siberia is one of the trading subjects under discussion.

The following question thus presents itself in absolute clearness to the Allies, " Do they desire to aid in the economic rebirth of Russia—a Russia which exists thanks only to the October Revolution, and to its historical four-years struggle for existence; or instead of profiting by the regeneration of that country, do they wish to carry on a policy of adventure, which cannot defeat us, but which brings misery and suffering to the Russian people, and which at the same time causes only damage and loss to the world-economy? " That is how the question stands. Hic Rhodus—hic salta!

We know very well that the declaration of the Soviet Government serves only to postpone the struggle, and not to end it. The demand for the " recognition " of the war debts, was to many elements only a *pretext* for the continuation of Soviet Russia's isolation and not the *cause* of their unfriendly policy. The same elements will in spite of Soviet Russia's declaration do every thing within their power to sabotage peace. They will do this in the hope that the famine will effect the overthrow of the Soviet Power. They will constantly make new demands; but the declaration of the Soviet Government knocks the main weapon out of their hands. They will have to fight against Soviet Russia under less favorable circumstances. For this fight the Soviet government will have to prepare on all fields. The development of the diminished but strengthened Red Army, the energetic carrying out of the new economic policy, and the cool parrying of every diplomatic coup, will be the weapons of the Soviet government, which knows that this winter will determine its position in the world. Should this winter campaign be won, the slow but sure recuperation of Soviet Russia will begin—the first country in which new life will begin to bloom upon the ruins of the old.

Moscow, Oct. 29, 1921.

The Vote of Confidence

by *I. Steklov.*

Elections recently took place in the capital of Germany, and now the elections which took place in the Northern capital of Soviet Russia are over. We see a vast difference in the conditions under which these two elections took place and in their results. The local elections in the German capital resulted in this proletarian fortress, which in recent years had rightly won the proud name of " Red Berlin ", ceasing to be red. It was torn out of the hands of the workers, and came into the possession of the united capitalist parties. Red Petrograd remained loyal to its traditions: the most advanced revolutionary party of the working-class, represented by the C.P.R. gained considerably in these elections. The group of "non-partisans " was ridden of its deformed social-traitorous elements, who concealed their white-guard soul under the mask of " non-partisanship ". The avowed social-traitors have completely disappeared and have so far received one delegate in a total of over a thousand.

According to Rosta the following election-returns were made public: Up to the 31th of October, 1215 members were elected to the Petrograd Soviets. Among them are 989 Communists, 231 " non-partisans ", 1 Social-Revolutionary, and no Mensheviks. (A symbol of the insignificance of the Menshevik-party.) The further results of the elections cannot considerably alter these results.

It is clear that the Communist representation is now stronger than it ever was before, that and the counter-revolutionaries have suffered a defeat greater than any preceding one. And this in spite of the fact that never before was the situation as seemingly favorable to the counter-revolution as now. Only recently the bourgeois-world started its orgy at the gates of Petrograd. In the spring of this year, the shameful Kronstadt episode took place. The social-traitors even assured us that the Petrograd workers sympathized with the Kronstadters, and were only held back by the Bolshevik terror. These Petrograders, upon whom the workers White-guardists staked their all, demonstrated through

their votes the falseness of the counter-revolutionary hopes to the whole world. They branded these shamless slanderers who attempt to drag the revolutionary virtue of the Petrograd proletariat through the mud by the very fact that they even based their hopes upon them.

The counter-revolutionists hoped to take advantage of certain misunderstandings connected with the transition-period which were created by the new economic policy. They hoped to take advantage of these misunderstandings and the provisional prejudices of certain groups and to use them in moulding the psychology of the masses. But in vain have the social-traitors shouted about the "mistakes" of the Bolsheviki, in vain did they seek to convince the uninformed that the new economic policy of the Soviet power was almost a plagiarism of the policy of the Mensheviks and of the Social-Revolutionaries, in vain did they attempt to inject the masses with distrust of the Bolshevik ability to bring economic life back to normal. The Petrograd proletariat has in these elections repudiated these calumnies, and prevented these social-traitors from profiting by the provisional economic difficulties of socialist reconstruction.

Finally, the counter-revolution hoped to make use of the bad harvest and the terrible famine in the Volga region against the ruling party. It failed however. Its hops were not fulfilled. Neither the workers of red Petrograd, nor the intellectuals, who until now were the main support of the Soviets enemies, and whose overwhelming majority voted either directly for the Communists, or for those non-partisans who,hand in hand with the advance-guard of the proletariat, wish to build up the new Russia for the worker and peasant. The accusers became the accused. The poulation of Petrograd has thus expressed its absolute confidence in the Communist party, and at the same time its absolute distrust of its enemies. To the latter it said: "Give up all your hopes!"

Under the present circumstances what does this answer of Red Petrograd signify?

1. The slander that the Soviet power is to blame for the existing famine was definitely repudiated. This slander was circulated not only by the exploiters who fled from the country, and by the large landowners and capitalists, but also by the social-traitors of all shades, down to and including the Social-Revolutionary leader Tschernow and the Menshevik Martow. The Petrograd proletariat has expressed its contempt for these calumnies and, by its vote, has shown that according to its opinion the blame for the famine is to be placed on the Counter-Revolution, which grants Soviet Russia no peace, and puts obstacles in the way of Russia's economic reconstruction. It has also shown that it believes that only the Soviet power and the Communist Party which is at its head are able to fight the famine effectively, and to create conditions under which a repetition of such an occurrence as the famine would be impossible. The vote of Red Petrograd is a ratification of those measures which were determined upon by the Soviet government for the fighting of the famine, and which have already been partly carried out.

2. The Petrograd vote signifies a ratification of the new economic policy of the Soviets. Through their vote, the Petrograd workers have recognized that the Communist Party has not only proposed the right way of effecting an economic reconstruction, but that it is also able to carry out this policy, to bring back order into economic life, and to develop the producing power of the country, not in the interest of the bourgeoisie, but in the interest of the working-class. This ratification of the new economic policy is particularly valuable because the workers of Petrograd were given the first opportunity to pass upon the new economic policy.

Finally, the results of the Petrograd elections mean a complete repudiation by the proletariat of the counter-revolution in all its forms and under all its masks. The vote of Red Petrograd is a new solemn warning to all enemies of the Soviet Republic who are misinformed by the false tales of counter-revolutionary emigrés, and by the idiotic sensations which are spread by prostituted provocateurs. This election is a warning not only to Russian White Guardists, but also to the international Counter-Revolution, which has not yet given up the idea of the approaching fall of the Soviet power *and its hope for a new intervention. The vote of Red Petrograd again shows these gentlemen that the Soviet power is now stronger than ever* that it is the actual government of the workers, the people's government in the fullest sense of the word, and that it is therefore invincible.

The proud answer of the Petrograd proletariat, which under the most difficult conditions manifests its loyalty as the advance guard of the Russian working-class to the Communist ideal, will carry weight everywhere. It is fully appreciated by the Russian workers and peasants and by the international revolutionary proletariat. Even our enemies will understand this answer—the Russian Counter-Revolution which hides itself in Russia or flees to foreign countries, and those irreconcilable cliques of the world-bourgeoisie, whose understanding is darkened by their hatred of Soviet Russia, and who do not want to give up the policy of direct attack against Soviet Russia. The international stock-exchanges and the capitalist states will take notice of this answer. It is a supplement to the recent notes of the Soviet government which set International Capitalism before the inevitability of recognizing the Soviet government, and the question of the actual raising of the blockade against the Soviet Republic.

CO-OPERATIRE MOVEMENT

The International Co-operative Congress at Basle.

by *Karl Bittel-Erdmann.*

After an eight year's interval, the International Co-operative League (I. C. L.) has just held its Tenth Congress in Basle. After its disintegration at the outbreak of the war during which it did not even bring to completion its proposed "manifesto" as required by its peace resolution of 1913, nearly three more years passed before the patching-up process was far enough advanced for an international meeting to be ventured.

Previous to this there took place the following substitute congresses: first "Entente" (1916, in Paris), then "Interallied" (January 1919, in London) and lastly "Neutral" (February and June 1919, in Paris).

In Basle 430 delegates were convened, representing twenty-four countries. *The I.C.L. claims to consist of 42,650 co-operatives, mostly consumers' societies, with a membership of 24,300,000 families.*

One might have thought that the Basle Congress would take a well-grounded attitude towards the enormous post-war problems, that it would attempt to find a way out of the serious crisis which the cooperatives are going through. We Communists were repared to take up the gauntlet openly and honestly thrown down to us, and we were delighted at the offer of an oppertunity to expose the difference in principles between reformist and revolutionary co-operatives. But not a sign of all this. Nothing but on evasion of decisive questions in the attempt to hush things up. Disgusting opportunist phrase-mongering. This was the spiritless sum and substance of the Congress to which sixty German "delegates" traveled, in oder to squander God knows how many thousands of marks. None of the decisive questions were even *seriously discussed.* How does the I. C. L. stand, for instance, regarding the abandoning of the veiled "neutrality policy" so that the consumers' societies may become Socialistic and join in the proletarian mass-struggle? What is its attitude towards the transformation of "free" consumers' societies into compulsory consumers communities to function in the cities as regular organs after the conquest of power by the proletariat? Most important of all, what will be the task of the movement during the *epoch of the Social Revolution?* Its duty was to take up such subjects, to discuss these problems, and to decide upon them firmly and clearly, with well-founded resolutions dealing with principles. Instead of this, there was evasion and resorting to the rule "wich accomplishes everything". Naturally, it was planued that an attitude be taken towards the *Communists,* not however, in any profound discussion, but simply through expulsion. That after all was the project — to outlaw and excommunicate the Communists, to exclude them from collaboration and to take away their rights — as is so well befitting for "Democrats" to do.

With this object in view, the *Central Committee* intoxicated itself months in advance with anti-bolshevik resolutions. In addition, in all countries the Communists were denied a delegation. And then the Central Committee gave up the entire Sunday previous to the convention in order by a coup de main to render impossible the election of Soviet co-operators to the Central Committee as was the case in April 1920. The Central Committee protested against the loss of the Russian co-operatives' independence and autonomy, and remonstrated against the attack of the Soviet Government upon the freedom of the co-operatives And a short time later, following the appointment of two new delegates by the Central Committee of Moscow, it passed the following resolution after two sessions: "The Central Committee repeats that it recognizes as representatives of the branches only such persons as have been regularly accredited by free and democratic branch-organizations. As for the present Russian representatives in the Central Commitee as well as the other representatives, since they have been elected for the time between one congress and the next, they retain their places, in conformity with the regulations of the International Co-operative League." The august congress would have gladly accepted this dictum if it were not for the fact that *General-Secretary Mai* set himself up as solicitor for co-operative-democracy. In spite of the fact that Albert Thomas intervened and forbade him as an employee to

express his own opinion (!), as the first speaker in the discussion, he branded as infamous and illegal the dealings of the Central Committee which for 1919 and 1920 had accepted large memebership dues from the Soviet co-operatives and now wants to rob them of their lawful rights. He treated ironically this farce of daily outcries that in Russia the free co-operative-societies were destroyed, and of still wanting to recognize the regular delegates of these destroyed co-operatives.

When the biggest delegation, namely the English, decided for the immediate admittance of the Soviet co-operatives (they did this admittedly because for reasons of practical opportunism, as they belonged to the conservatives) the proposition of the Central Committee was rejected. No further profound significance can be assigned to this decision, although as a matter of fact *two communist co-operative delegates are now sitting in the Central Committee of the I. C. L.* (and by what right was not one elected to the Executive Committee?) Those elected were comrade *Krassin* (who was not present because he and five other Russian delegates were denied the right of passage) and comrade *Dr. Pavlovtzeva,* who represented the Russian delegation (she left Russia three years ago).

Naturally there is already a great uroar within the movement over this "staggering" decision. The press of the Austrian co-operatives considers that one of the motives was "the consideration (read fear) of the communists back home", and the Frenchman Daude sooths his followers by telling them that this was only a "commercial Bolshevik-episode" and that it has not changed the positive program of the co-operative movement. This occurence is so unpleasant for the German co-operatives that Mai's statements are left out of the detailed report and an erroneous report is given of the decision of the Central Committee (Summary p. 380).

Only a short account need be given of the speeches which were entirely without significance and some what silly. Thomas, the former French Minister of Munitions, and one of the shining lights of the I. C. L. spoke about the international co-operative policy and expressed a desire to turn the co-operatives into an appendage of the League of Nations. He presented a resolution in which he says: "The co-operative movement calls for the abolition neither of tariffs nor commercial treaties", which was pure nonsense rejected even by the congress.

Oerne (Sweden) reported on the "co-operative program". He started by saying that the more he had thought about the problem the clearer it seemed to him that the time was not yet ripe for a final solution. However, he pleaded once more for that old, unsteady neutrality, the union of labor with all consumers and the ominous "freedom" of the co-operatives. Professor Gide (Paris) revised the Peace Resolution of 1913 and presented a new one in which he says "The right and duty of self-defense shall not be denied to any nation" (!). In other words war should be abhorred but nevertheless one's country must be defended (!) It is further stated in this report that the congress "is not at all convinced that economic revolutions put an end to collisions between nations". „Gide lays a great deal of weight not only on the co-operatives but also on the establishment of free trade". In his opinion, the League of Nations, pacifist societes, co-operative journals and moral influence above all, are all more important than Socialism. These petty-bourgeois views wich openly control the co-operative bureaucracy, were even surpassed by Feuerstein (Stuttgart) who went too far by saying (as he had already done in Germany by advocating free trade) that that is the essence of communal economy. The motion was then modified and the following beautiful phrases were spun. "In case of war the I. C. L. considers it necessary for the co-operatives to unite for common action to force the warring powers through a decision by a council of arbitration to break off hostilities". This is only a phrase on the face of it, while the aforementioned proposition stops with the duty of "self-defense". It was nevertheless adopted "with great jubilation".

The most disappointing though not at all astonishing event for the members of the co-operatives, was the sad spectacle presented by the aged *Heinrich Kaufmann* (Hamburg), to whom was assigned the report on the international wholesale purchasing association. One would think that the co-operative experts, who are so ready to boast of their business ability might have been able to accomplish these practical tasks after fourteen long years of preparatory work. But instead of that, the work has gone *backwards,* and Kaufmann himself demonstrated this in his oral conclusions made in the report which is printed in the record. The congress "takes cognizance of the preparatory work" and assigned it to a commission. . . . . .

The other reports on relations with the labor-unions and on the League of Nations were without importance. Two citations suffice: "The Congress affirms that the co-operatives represent the organizations for the *gradual* transformation of the social system" and "the Delegates greet the idea of the League of Nations with the greatest hopes". Three spontancous resolutions were relatively the best—the one presented by Feuerstein *for the aid of famine-stricken Russia,* the one against the suppression of the Consumers' League in Horthy Hungary and the one against the military clique in Poland. None were however finally decided, none were fundamentally clear, and actually everything was done by petty-bourgeois in a moral-pacifist spirit.

The disappointment over this Basle Congress reaches far even into the ranks of those farthest to the right among the Social Democrats. Even a man like *Hans Müller* is dissatisfied, because he considers that the movement is in the hands of small, commonplace persons (see "Socialistische Monatshefte" 1921 No. 18/19 p. 793). Basle is not only a demonstration of the narrowness and corruption of the cooperative bureaucracy, but of the bankruptcy of reformist cooperative practice. In general things went so far that the speech of greeting by *Schultheiss,* the president of the Swiss Confederation, was considered as the culminating point of the Congress. In this speech which he made before an enchanted audience (these were "the competent representatives of the international co-operative movement") he proved from "the realities of practical life" the indispensable need of "vigorous private trade", and the impossibility of co-operative economy on account of the inefficiency of the bureaucracy. And for this they applauded him.

This Congress is an unheard of provocation of all Socialists and all class-conscious workers who indeed are the real support of the co-operative movement. This congress divided all questions over the heads of these latter, without granting them representation or without asking their opinion about them.

Will the masses finally come to their senses? Will they tolerate much longer the fact a powerful co-operative movement is not only prevented from assuming its role in the decisive struggle between capital and labor, but is used as a tool in the service of the enemy, in this struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat?

It is now clear to most people why we stand *opposed to the co-operative bureaucracy,* why we do not trust them and consider them as traitors to the cause. We Communist co-operators call upon all the members of the co-operative international to work with us in order to make the co-operative movement an essential factor in the proletariat's struggle for freedom.

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The German Trade-Unions in 1920

by *Jacob Walcher.*

> "The narrow mechanical bureaucratic understanding will admit the struggle only as the product of the organization. Living dialectic development, on the contrary, makes the organization originate as a product of the struggle."
>
> (Rosa Luxemburg, "Mass-Strike, Party and Labor-Unions").

As the storm of the Russian Revolution of 1905 forced the German workers to consider the question of mass strikes, it was chiefly the labor-union leaders who opposed the mass-strikes with a vehemence which is not very usual with this class of individuals. "General strike is general absurdity", the sceptical said. Others said, "We are not strong enough yet to be able to risk such a daring trial of strength." It was implied tacitly that in the first place the entire German working-class must be organized to the last man before a proletarian mass-strike is thinkable. Rosa Luxemburg retorted to the labor-union leaders at that time in the remarkable polemic from which we have taken the quotation given at the head of this article that this conception was entirely utopian and unacceptable.

She wrote, "The workers should be entirely organized before they can take up any sort of direct class-struggle! *But the relations and the conditions of capitalist society and bourgeois government bring it about that in the ordinary course of events without stormy class-combats, certain ranks and indeed the mass, the most important, the most deeply—grounded strata of the proletariat, the ones most oppressed by capital and by the government, cannot even be organized at all.*

This prediction, based on the Marxian interpretation of history, will be confirmed in a remarkable way by the following *yearly balance of the German labor-unions.* Before the war, for instance, the *Central Federation of Clerks* (now the Central Federation of Employees) had a membership of about 30 000. The average for the year 1920 shows 376,400 members. In comparison with per-war time this is *an increase of about 346,000 members.* Even more astonishing is the development of the organization

of rural workers. This organization which before the war had some tens of thousands of members, which number melted away to a great extent during the war, has risen to 695,695 members during 1920. The yearly report of the free labor-unions for 1920 which was published in the "Korrespondenzblatt" of the General German Labor-Union Federation (ADGB.) No. 42 of October 22, 1921, shows similar tendicies in all the organizations belonging to the ADGB. The membership of all free labor-unions was at the end of each year the following:

1918 . . . . . 2,866,012, of whom 666,392 are women
1919 . . . . . 7,337,477, of whom 1,733,705 are women
1920 . . . . . 8,025,682, of whom 1,697,939 are women.

The stormy forward development in the number of members did not continue, however, during the whole of 1920. It goes without saying that the unprecedented development of the year 1919 and the first half of the year 1920 could not advance much further, as the recruiting sphere naturelly was reduced in size. It would be a false conclusion, however, to blame upon this circumstance the stagnation which in the case of particular Federations amounted to a retreat (total loss in the second half-year of 1920 was 119,196 members). There are still millions of unorganized workers in Germany. If the labor-unions have no more power of attraction over these gigantic masses, it is because the revolutionary movement of the German proletariat is gradually sinking in the stagnant swamp of labor-unions. Before we determine how far this development can be blamed on the labor-union bureaucracy we should like to give some more facts from the above-mentioned report.

The *participation of women in the labor-unions* has increased greatly, in comparison with pre-war times and indeed it rose from 8.8 % in 1913 *to 21.7 % in 1920.* An inconsiderabie decrease in comparison with 1918 may be attributed to the decrease in women-labor.

The tatements on the conditions of the treasuries shows a correspondingly overwhelming increase. The 52 free labor-unions had an income of 717,100,000 marks for 1920 as against the yearly expenditure of 543,800,000 marks. The recruiting of members works under the difficulty of an inititation fee but in comparison with many American labor-unions this is so low that it can hardly pay for the writing-material and book-keeping. Of the expenditures 108,500,000 marks were spent in strikes, wage-movements and lock-outs. The circumstance that almost as much is expended for relief, namely a round sum of 105 million marks, shows what an important role relief plays in the German labor-unions. The following kinds of relief are taken into consideration in the free labor-unions although it should be kept in mind that the same categories are not fixed in all labor-unions: *aid for travel, moving, unemployment, sickness, old-age, burial-expenses, aid in emergencies, disciplinary insurance, other measures of relief and protection of rights.*

All federations issue their own organs. Seventeen have, besides that, other organs (such as periodicals for the youth and trade periodicals) — 29 in all. The organ of the printers appears three times a week, 32 are published once a week, 14 every 14 days, 5 appear as monthly publications, of which one appears three times, and three appear twice and once a month. *The total circulation amounted to 8,404,960 at the end of the year.* Even though the labor-union journals are in part very tedious and in consequence are not read by all members, nevertheless the number of readers forms an overwhelming apparatus for influence, which almost without exception is exercised in a reformist, counter-revoluionary direction. Under these circumstance the Communist influence in the labor-unions ought to be esteemed very highly inasmuch as in the case of the Metal Workers' Federation there was a Communist vote of 30 to 35 % at the last elections.

In comparson with the free unions the other organizations possess less significance. The *Christian labor unions* comprise the next group. In 1920, 25 organizations with 10,966 branches belonged to the Christian labour-unions, with a membership of 1,105,894 during the year.

Those making the weakest contribution of all to the strengthening of German labor-unions are the Hirsch-Duncker labor —associations which are based on the theory of harmony between capital and labor. They comprise 17 organizations with 225,998 members. The increase is comparison with the previous year is 36,167.

In addition to these organizations, there are also the Syndicalist labor-unions. Although they had engaged in intense propaganda for many years even before the war, they have remained without significance in the German labor-movement. There are no estimates at hand on their strength in numbers. It is a very generous estimate to set their membership at from 30,000 to 50,000.

The "Revolutionary Factory Organizations" which collaborate with the K. A. P. D., are entirely of no significance as they hardly possess an actual membership of 10,000. One should not confuse with these the former free Gelsenkirchen Labor-Union which recently united with the Hand and Brain-Workers' Federation whose 6000 members are mainly employed by the Berlin Municipal Council, and with the Free Rural Workers' Federation, to form the " Union of German Hand and Brain Workers ". This organization whose influence is strongest in the Rheinish-Westphalian coal district, possesses 150,000 members and is the only German labor-union officialy adhering to the Red Trade-Union International. The " U. G. H. and B. W. " possesses great possibilities for development under certain circumstances.

The free labor-unions are the deciding factor in the German labor-movement. In comparison with the Hirsch-Duncker and Christian trade-unions 85.8 out of every 100 organized workers belong to these unions. Whoever wants to know what is to be done now and in the future must fix his attention on the free unions. What have the free labor-unions done to turn to account the proletariat's might during the capitalist crisis?

In the introduction to the yearly report we read, "The expectation bound up with the termination of the war that there would be an immediate revival of economic life, even though preceded by a painful transitional period, has until now proved false *It appears that capitalism can no longer find way out of the labyrinth*".

It must be hard to write this conclusion for the pen which for years did not tire of telling the workers that there is no other immediate way than the re-floating of the capitalist system. Unfortunately, however, their practise is in no way influenced by this better judgment. Now as much as ever, the labor-unions pursue the phantom of so-called general interests, now as much as ever they are the reliable support of the tottering capitalist government, now as ever before, they dare to exercise the might of the workers without any regard for labor-interests. The same periodical which arrived at the conclusion that " Capital can no longer find the way out of the labyrinth ", is not ashamed to write the following concerning Soviet Russia.

" The absurdity, the conceit of leading nations towards their own ideas does not apply only to the ' big Entente politicans ', of the West. It can with equal justification be applied to the usurpation of the East, which by means of the brutality of might has arrogated (!) to itself control over the Russian people, and brutally suppresses every attempt at freedom. This rule by force cripples and kills the vitality of this great land so rich in natural wealth, which even under the rule of the Czar was a source of supply of provisions and raw materials for other nations. Had the Russian people been able to set up and preserve *a democracy,* it would have had a remarkable and promising development *under the leadership of its intelligent circles,* and this would have been of great benefit for the German people. Instead of that there is a continual disturbance of political life originating from Eastern Europe, etc."

These phrases are not surprising in a periodical which already for years has been violently anti-Bolshevik. This same „Korrespondenzblatt" on Iune 25, 1921 praised the German labor-unions as the "Only strong dams which Germany has been able until now to set in the way of the Bolshevik flood".

The German labor-union bureaucracy which is guilty in making the fight for liberation so immeasurably painful for the Russian proletariat must in order to allay its own guilty conscience slander the heroic Russian proletariat. Everyone who has even a weak conception of the nature of capitalist society and of the enormous difficuties of livling conditions in Soviet Russia must realize how erroneous are the accusations of the "Korrespondenzblatt".

The "Korrespondenzblatt" praises the behaviour of the labor-unions during the Kapp-rebellion as a success:

"For the first time the labor-unions arose in the field of political struggle to use their overwhelming economic power for the rescue of Democracy."

The periodical is right, this stand of the labor-unions led to a " complete victory ". But it is now a question for whom this victory was gained. The Ebert-Republic was saved through the action of the labor-unions — and together with the Ebert-Republic also the open and secret traitors, who already trembled before te threatening raised fist of the proletariat. The " Korrespondenzblatt" presumes to place the responsibility for the nonfulfillment of the real guaranties demanded by the workers and at that time conceded to the labor-unions on paper, upon the "dark elements sustained by Moscow". As a matter of fact the impressive firmness which made its appearance in those March days of 1920 was frivolously frustrated by the labor union bureaucracy in the interest of the bourgeois republic. Only after the trade-union leaders had broken the back of the general strike, before it had achieved even the slightest tangible success, did a violent opposition assert itself, after the counter-revolution had already played and won. The " Korrespondenzblatt " again points out to-day the potent economic forces of the proletariat serving to revive humanity, and remarks that these forces can come into play in proportion as " labor in other countries "

realizes that the oppressed of all nations have the same vital interests. The same persons who trampled under foot these "vital interests of the International Proletariat" through-out the whole war, who went through thick and thin with their own bourgeoisie do not expect to-day that their empty declamation will make much of an impression on the comrades of foreign countries. There is only one means of awakening proletarian solidarity and activity — and that is the directing of the class-struggle in its own country against its own bourgeoisie.

How much misery and suffering will it yet cost the international and especially the German proletariat until its own leaders will realize the truth? A break, a ruthless break with its own national bourgeoisie, a break with all nationalist tendencies, a decisive entrance upon the road of the international class-struggle in the *spirit and sense of the Red Labor Union International* and the driving of the German Revolution towards the World-Revolution—that is the only means which the proletariat can create as a way out of the capitalist hell. This is also the only means which warrant not only the continued loyalty of the organized masses of millions to the labor-unions, but will also lead the large number of the indifferent to enter the class organizations of the proletariat.

The Revolutionary Syndicalists before the Split

by *A. Ker* (Paris).

A conference of Minority Syndicalists on October 31 and November 1 brought together the delegates of Revolutionary Syndicalist organizations and of the C. S. R. (Conseils Syndicalistes Révolutionnaires), with the purpose of studying the situation created for the minority by the secessionist manoeuvres of the C. G. T. leaders.

It is a fact that at the Confederal Congress in Lille the minority had won a victory on the question of exclusions, and that the majority, fearing a vote by mandates on that matter, beat a hasty retreat and reinstated the excluded labor-unions. But the minority, still having faith in the adversary's scruples, did not take full advantage of the first day's success and did not exact a formal and explicit renouncement of exclusion for an offence of opinion.

On this question as on all others, the Confederal Bureau hides its real intentions. In the same way as it covers up its neo-Millerandism by means of revolutionary phrases, it hides its wish for a split behind declarations of unity.

It was not long before it became evident that the retreat of the Confederal leaders was nothing but a pretence, forced by the evident disapproval of the Congress.

The Secessionist offensive after Lille.

Several weeks after the Lille Congress, it was learned from the famous letter by Rey, published in "L'Information Social", that the application of the Lille Resolution meant secession.

"At Lille", wrote Rey, "a resolution was presented by us, and adopted by a majority. Its spirit, if not its text, was discussed between us at length in the days preceding the vote. We knew well what we were proposing and we had given warning of the consequences. The opinion of all the majority-delegates had been that the decision once made at Lille ought to be aplied. And *the application of the Lille Resolution by the majority means the split. Such is the whole reality".*

Stupor among the minority, and even among certain reformists who, not having been in on the secret of the Confederal Gods, had not meant to vote for exclusion in voting for the Lille motion. It became clear as daylight that a plan for secession, drawn up in the dark, was about to unfold implacably, in spite of the workers' solidarity as affirmed in the great textile strikes.

In fact, the executive committee of the Federations of Agriculture and of Emploess resumed their measures of exclusion which they had withdrawn at Lille. Among the railway-workers, secession was made certain by the intervention of the C. G. T. in favor of the reformist wing attrough it had only 187 labor-unions with it, as against 275 on the revolutionary wing. Finally, in the Union of Bouches-du-Rhône the majoritaires, under the benevolent eye of the big chiefs, organized a dissident union.

A Phantom Majority in the National Confederal Committee.

The exclusions which not one majoritaire had dared to demand at the National Congress have just been decided in a session of the National Confederal Committee by an infinitesimal majority of two or three votes. It should also be remembered that the Secessionists were beaten by the majority of Departmental Unions, which are the direct expression of the unionized workers. They only obtained a ridiculous majority by the support of the Federations.

1. The condemnation of the C. S. R.

2. The exclusion of labor-unions which refuse to yield to this decision.

3. The automatic recognition by the C. G. T. of all minorities which secede from the Revolutionary Organizations on the pretext of recognizing the resolutions of the N. C. C.

These are the weapons which will permit the pseudo-majority to defy events and to pass from reassuring declarations to hostile acts.

On the morrow of the N. C. C. in fact, the Clothing and Metal Federations took up arms against the Opposition. The reformist executive of the Railway Workers announces its intention of summoning to the Unity Congress only the labor- unions which will repudiate Semard's executive — the revolutionary executive representing the majority of the union men.

It was at that moment that it was decided to convence the National Conference of the Minority, for the purpose of taking measures to deal with the exclusions.

The Retreat of the C. S. R.

The labor-unions excluded are those which maintained, as organizations, their collective adhesion to the C. S. R.

Should this adhesion be withdrawn, and the C. S. R. be retained simply as a group of individuals? Several hope to disarm the Confederal administration by this concession and to force it to choose another ground of accusation. This retreat permits the gaining of time and the arriving at the next National Congress without a split.

But the majority of the delegates to the Conference were very sensitive about the unpleasant results of this apparent capitulation. They made the objection that the C. G. T. had other weapons ready, other phantom injuries to turn to account, that certain organizations, such as the Federation of Employees, had already begun to exclude the union-men adhering to the C. S. R.

The C. G. T. wants total submission, the interdiction of open action against the opportunist doctrines of Amsterdam, or against the decisions called Confederal, that is to say, made by some tens of union officials. It wants the silence of opponents, or their expulsion.

The Technique of Secession.

One point only disturbs the Secessionists — that is the question of the laboring-class whom it is a question of dividing or gaining over. The mass of union workers is strongly for unity. The side which takes the initiative and the responsibility of secession will be lost and will remain without troops.

It is for this reason that instead of a clear break the leaders of the C. G. T. have prefered a secession by nibbles, the diffuse and indiscernible reponsibilities of which could easily be blamed on the adverse side. The minority, constantly attacked and beguiled, refuses to remain the dupe any longer. It will make a supreme attempt at conciliation with the Confederal Bureau. Then, on the morrow of the Railway Workers' Unity Congress, which is to take place at the end of November, a new Congress of minority organizations composed of delegates with the necessary power, will take the initiative, if necessary, of convening a Congress of all these desirous of saving workers' unity.

In the meanwhile, the economic war goes on, becomes more intensified, the eight-hour day is menaced, wages are reduced, and the working-class, unconcerned with the administrative preoccupations of the Confederal leaders, is deserting the labor-unions and going off independently into the strike-battlefield, only to submit to the law of the victorious employers.

Third International Labor-Conference

by *Z. L.*

The most important question on the order of the day at the Geneva Labor Conference was the one of the rights and protection of the rural-worker. France, which possesses a rather weak rural-workers' movement and a powerful landed proprietor class, did not relish very much the examination of this question. England, the country possessing the strongest and most reactionary ship-building class, had been able to frustrate in Geneva an international agreement on an eight-hour day for seamen. France was determined to do the same with regards to an eight-hour day for agricultural-workers. As soon as it become known that the International Labor Bureau intended to put the question of rural-workers' rights on the order of the day at the Geneva Conference, the leagues of landed proprietors engaged in a violent hostile agitation in the press, in Parliament and especially in the extremely reactionary Senate, and also in government circles. They declared that the examination of the question of rural-labor laws at an International Labor Congress threatened mischief and ruin for French agriculture, and indeed for French economy. And the French Government, the voluntary mouth-piece of the big and small Junkers, in turn raised a protest against putting the question of rural worker's protection and rights on the order of business at the Labor Conference, claiming that the conditions under which agriculture existed "render all plans regarding the

regulation of agricultural questions out of place, and besides, the sections in the Peace Treaty regarding labor in no way apply to farm-labor ".*

Notwithstanding these falsehoods the board of directors of the Labor Bureau retained these questions on the order of business at the Conference. The board of directors consists of twelve government-representatives—six employers and the same number of labor's representatives—and it decides questions by a simple majority. In this affair which came up for decision, the interests of landowners, bourgeoisie and capitalist governments in the various countries are in conflict, so that a number of their representatives, permitted themselves to support the representatives of labor. *But here is where the trap lies*—there is that notorious clause concerning a two-thirds majority according to which the Labor Conference can decide nothing, if the decision is not accepted by a majority thus " qualified ". This clause permitted the French bourgeoisie to frustrate the projected agreement upon an eight-hour day for land-workers as England's reactionary bourgeoisie had done in Geneva. *Therein lies the inborn deficiency of* this International Labor Bureau, which a priori condemns it to impotence and stamps its whole work as a social-political swindle. For through the firmly-established system of representation, the realization of the necessary two-thirds majority is out of the question, when any capitalist government opposes any agreement on account of its significance.

Until the last moment France did not give up its active opposition to the treatment of the rural-workers' question at the Geneva Conference. According to the information respectfully imparted to the Agricultural Commission, the Minister of Agriculture, M. Lefebvre du Prey, in argreement with the whole Cabinet, gave instructions to the French representatives to demand the elimination of these controversial questions from the order of the business, on the grounds of untimeliness as well as " irrelevance ". The Agriculture Commission of the Senate even strengthened the hands of the government representatives by replying in this connection that it would be dangerous to permit the considerations of untimeliness to preceed that of irrelevancy, because this proceeding would permit the participators at the Conference to place the question on the program of the next Conference. The Commission expects that, through their firmness and tenacity, the French representatives "will know how to protect French agriculture from an international guardianship " (" Information " of October 28). The leading French bourgeois newspapers, the " Journal des Débats " and the " Temps ", declared that any international agreement whatsoever made in this connection irrespective of the position taken by other members of the " International Concert ", would be absolutely inacceptable to France (" Journal des Débats " of October 26, " Temps " of October 28) and M. Bunot who was in Geneva as representative of the employers declared beforehand " In case the Conference dec ides to draw up a plan for an international agreement on the rural-labor question, it will do so without France's participation, *since it knows that, as a matter of course, France does not dream of ratifying such an agreement*". (" Information " of October 27.) In this connection M. Bunot expressed the interesting opinion that the International Labor Bureau must restrict its activity within the bounds of common material interests, and that it ought not to burden the Parliaments continually with new agreements for ratification. Furthermore, in his opinion, an International Labor Conference once every three or five years (instead of once a year) was completely sufficient.

A surprise was in store for France even before victory. Whereas a victory was obtained in the question of the elimination of an eight-hour day, it was defeated in the matter of the competence of the conference. This was due to the fact, as we have already stated, that in this question there existed a conflict of interests between the land-owners of various countries. Thus, Italy wanted to bring about an international agreement because according to the declarations of its representatives, the Italian peasants " *were beginning to discuss the right of private-property in land and soil*". On this ground (thus declared the representative of the Italian bourgeoisie to the correspondent of the " Information "), the Italian land-owners would like to have an international law concerning rural workers in order *to maintain its right of property by the aid of the agreement and in case of need, to have the protection of the government.* Likewise, England must consider its million rural workers, according to its representatives. Still other countries, especially agricultural countries like Argentina, for instance, pronounced themselves for the competence of the International Labor Organization to take up the rural-labor question although they are in fact opposed to an international legal decision because they will lose their membership in the Labor Bureau the moment that it is recognized that agriculture is not an industry.

In this way France was beaten on October 27th in the question of the competence of the Labor Bureau. With 74 votes against 20 the conference declared itself competent to deliberate over labor-conditions in agriculture. However the " Temps " correspondent and the French bourgeoisie consoled themselves with the consideration that this defeat was only an apparent one. In fact, next day *the decision on the eight-hour day which was the most important of the questions as regards rural labor, was made in accordance with France's endeavors.* The incorporation of this question in the program of the conference was recommended by a vote of 63 votes against 39, and in this way the necessary two-thirds majority was not secured and the question was thus shelved.

The " International Press Correspondence " has already branded this vote as a betrayal of the rural workers. We think it is more than that—it is *a challenge against the rural workers* on the one hand, and on the other it is *the forerunner of the general attack of the bourgeoisie against the eight-hour day.* As for the first, the fact was already effectively shown, when even the representatives of the Christian rural laborers, the German, Behrens, as president of their international league, and the secretary of the league, the Belgian, Karells, protested against the elimination of the eight-hour day question from the order of the day. They " entreated " the Conference to show the workers that the Labor Bureau is no humbug but that in fact it stands for the defense and the protection of the workers (" Temps " Oct. 29).

As was stated, the Geneva vote mean even more. First of all it meant an attack by the world-bourgeoisie on the eight-hour day. We have already mentioned the words of its recognized spokesman, Herr Schultheiss, president of the bourgeois Swiss Republic. According to the detailed report, he told the " Information " of October 26 the following: " At the end of the most horrible of all wars, the world wanted to make a concession to labor, to express the hopes which it fostered, to pay a debt of thankfulness. But to-day, in view of the economic world-crisis, many interests which at the time of the peace-declaration and even at the first Labor Conference favored the carrying out of important reforms, are no longer adherents of such reforms. *Especially the shortening of the hours of labor encounters an ever violent opposition in the countries where it is attempted. Voices arise which demand its abolition. The best proof of this is that the most important of the Washington agreements was ratified by only small number of governments* ".

We can point to any number of circumstances in all countries in order to confirm the correctness of the assertion made by Herr Schultheiss. If we limit ourselves to the establishment of the fundamental fact the efforts of the bourgeoisie described by Schultheiss spells the bankruptcy of the International Labor Bureau of the League of Nations and together with that, *the bankruptcy of the policy of the Amsterdam Labor Union International, which is based on collaboration with the bourgeoisie in the League of Nations.* We will treat further of this matter another time. We will only establish some facts proving our conclusion.

According to the reports of the telegraph agencies and even according to the reports of the " Deutschen Tageszeitung ", the " Temps ", the " Information ", the Geneva vote created a violent dissatisfaction among the labor-delegates. For a period of several hours it was feared that the Congress would be broken up by a secession of all the labor delegates. No wonder! According to the significant remark made by the English government-representative this vote was a first-class burial. After the main theme of the transactions had been shelved the work of the Conference lost all interest (report in the " Temps ", Oct. 3.). But it was not difficult for the bourgeoisie to find something with which to sooth its pupil of the Amsterdam Labor Union International. It was not difficult for Jouhaux, Baldesi, Caballero, etc. to find a resolution which hopes that the question of an eight-hour day will be put on the order of business of " one of the coming Congresses "—a resolution which according to the correct estimation made by the " Temps " does not change the fact that the eight-hour day for rural workers was buried at Geneva by the world bourgeoisie. This decision on paper aimed to reconcile the vexed Amsterdam heroes with the Labor Bureau. They remain, and they are not going, although the bourgeoisie which is always less equivocal toward them—in Holland, Poland, and Argentina their representatives were not named as labor-delegates—the bourgeoisie says: " The Moor has done his duty, the Moor may go ". *They are not going because they are unable to confess the bankruptcy of their policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and because such a confession would mean the final bankruptcy of their influence among the laboring masses.*

* See the memorial of the French government to the International Labor Office, published in its Bulletin vol, III, pp. 103 ff., idem vol. IV, pp. 129 ff., pp. 354 ff., the note of the President of the agricultural commission of the Senate, the well-known reactionary Jules Melinc in the same Bulletin.

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

The Norwegian Labor Party and its present Situation

by *Hans Heggum* (Christania).

The Norwegian Labor Party is a truly proletarian organization. It consists of the entire membership of the trade unions and of various party sections. In no country is there a party belonging to the third International, which in its structure resembles the Norwegian Labor Party.

In order to understand the present situation of the party, and its international position, we must recapitulate its development within the Norwegian labor-movement since 1918. That year marked the revival of political activity and agitation among the great masses of the Norwegian working-class. The driving force which rendered this movement almost irresistable was the general great economic pressure upon the workers, a natural consequence of the world-war. Carried by the mighty wave of the masses, the left wing of the party made great progress, and determined the direction of the whole party. The party congress which took place at Christiania in 1918, cleared away social-democratic reformism and its policy of passivity. Mass-action was finally recognized as the decisive weapon for Socialism and its realization. Concurrent with this party-revolution — for such it was — was the establishment in the whole country of worker's and soldier's Soviets. That was certainly an event of great significiance, insofar as it manifested the spirit and will of the masses. And indeed, as in every other country in 1918, the general Norwegian situation was very favorable to the labor-movement, and it is only natural that some of the more impetuous comrades at that time overestimated the possibilities of the immediate future.

In the following year 1919, a new party-congress was called at Christiania. At this juncture the party recognized the Soviet-idea and the dictatorship of the proletariat. A joint-committee of the party and the unions was appointed to develop these principles.

In 1920 the results of the committee's deliberations were presented to the party in a form of a motion for acceptance. This motion took a clear stand for the socialization of the means of production on the basis of factory-councils, also for the Soviet-system and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The great majority of the Congress voted for its acceptance, only a insignificant group of 30 right-socialists voted against it. With this program the party appeared before the masses and introduced itself as a revolutionary Labor Party.

When the Moscow theses were published, the party was shaken to its foundation. A great agitation against them was started in the organizations, and for some time confusion reigned. The right-socialists, who were instrumental in these occurences, clung to the party, hoping in vain to be able "to catch fish in muddy-water" . . . . At the same time, the Norwegian ruling-class, which is just as powerful in Norway as its brother-classes are in other countries, started a vigorous attack against the party and its leaders. But the class-conscious followers of the party were not scared away; on the contrary, the party closed its ranks and formed an irresistible battle-front. And the sharper the attacks of the capitalist press and of its right Socialist lackeys became, the stronger became the support of the party by the organized workers in the whole of Norway.

During this time it became clear to every impartial observer, that the vehement attacks against the party-organization were the direct cause of the latter's gain of power. The loss of membership in 1920, (from 105.348 to 97.585) was not so much caused by the inner disputes over the Moscow Theses, as by the general economic situation, by the standstill in the trades of various industries, and in the maritime trade, which weakened the economic effectiveness of some groups of workers. As a matter of fact no party split was called forth by the Theses. Only an insignificant group, which counted a dozen of socalled well-known names, went over-board, left the Labor Party, and embarked upon the sad enterprise of founding a Social-democratic or "Judassocratic" party. This took place in February and March of this year.

Nevertheless, the party has lived through hard times during this year. Unemployment grew steadily since 1920. At present there are about 40,000 unemployed; a number to be counted with in a country with a population of only about 2,500,000 people. This condition reacted to a certain degree upon the party, through the unions which suffered from the unemployment. The fact that the party consists of the entire union-membership thus has its good and bad sides. The good side is that the party is enabled easier to reach the great masses; on the other hand however ,it is impossible to establish that positive action and propaganda which are the true nuclei of a Communist Party, as long as the unions are dominated by the old union-bureaucracy, which does not hesitate to fight Communism within the organization, with all means available.

Having control of the labor-organizations is not the same as having control of the masses. And what is still more important, a joint-membership does not strengthen the foundation of actual control over the member-organizations, and that is why the party is exposed to outside fluctuations and tendencies, which create uncertainty in its ranks. Of course it cannot be denied that the Norwegian Labor Party counts among its members a goodly number of avowed communists, who are doing their very best for the Communist cause. On the other hand, it is equally undeniable that the party is far from being what a leading, influential and fighting Communist Party should be. The work already done, and which is being done, the school in the headquarters of the party at Christiania, and the evening-schools in the whole country, 40 to 50 in number, as well as the union-committees in some of the big labor-organizations, have contributed much to the strengthening of the party. But as we have already said, the party-organization is not as strong nor as effective as it should be. According to the recent Party-report, 35 papers are under its control. Fourteen of these are dailies. "Socialdemocraten", "Arbeidet" (The Work), "Noj Tid" (New Times), "1st of May" and "Frem Fiden" (The Future) are the leading Journals of great influence.

The party is also its own publisher, and issues a monthly "The Twentieth Century".

One of the most useful and well-known party institutions is the "Socialdemocratic Press Service" in Christiania. Its influence grew steadily in recent years. To it belong as special correspondents, Philips Price, Frederic Kuh, Giovanni Giptio and Paul Louis, all of whom are well-known contributors to the Communist Press of various countries. It has branches in the larger cities of Norway, and the spreading and distribution of news in the country is in good working order. It was the "Socialdemocratic Press Service" which first entered into regular wireless connections with Moscow.

The election to the Storting which took place on Monday October 24 th singnifies the recognized position of the Communist party as the exponent of the working class in Norway and its leading representative. The great majority of workers rallied round their old party organization which bases its policy and tactic on the principles of the Third International, while on the other hand the reactionary party of the Right was further strengthened by the support of wide masses of the bourgeoisie.

The leading issue of the Rights was said to be the fight on the liquor prohibition law, enacted in September, their slogan being "personal liberty". But this foolish speculation fell flat in face of the grave economic situation that confronts the working class at present. The people had not forgotten the merits of the *Halvorsen* government which during the great strike of June disclosed itself as nothing but a tool of the Employers' Association, by mobilizing troops against unarmed workers and making every possible effort to crush the trade organization. The amount of popularity which the government gained by its action naturally was confined to the capitalists and petty bourgeoisie who wanted a "strong" man to run affairs and liquidate the revolutionary movement.

For the first time the labor vote this year was divided owing to the schism last winter, when the reformist group left the party and started out to build a new one. In this the leaders were instigated by the bourgeois politicians who encouraged them to demonstrate their independence of "Moscow influence" and openly made big boasts about them. This fact however, proved to be fatal for the new party, the workers reacting averywhere.

At the election the Social-democratic vote amounted to little more than 80,000, compared with 190,000 votes cast for the Communist Party ticket. The parliamentary leader of the Social-democrats, Buen (speaker of the Storting) was overwhelmingly defeated in his home district, as was Magnus Nilssen, head of the party organization, in the capital. Four others of the group, consisting in all of ten members, likewise met their fate at the polls. The new party succeeded in electing only 8 representatives while the Communists put in 29. If they had stood together, the two parties could have had ten more—a total of 47 members as against 18 in the previous term. As it was these seats went to the labour foes which naturally profited by the split.

The Rights mustered about 300,000 votes and obtained 57 mandates, the Lefts (Liberals) 177,000 and 37. The new party of Agrarians secured 17 seats and the Radicals (Democrats) 2. The total vote is nearly 900,000.

As no party has a qualified majority, the parliamentary situation is as entangled as ever. The probability points to a coalition of the extreme Conservatives and Agrarians which eventually will control about half of the house. The cabinet, formed recently by the Lefts, is expected to offer its resignation when the session opens in January.

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