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The Struggle in Moravian Ostrau.

By Victor Stern (Prague).

The ruthless brutality of the employers and the insatiable greed for profits of the exploiters, have driven the industrial proletariat of Ostrau into a struggle which is of decisive importance for the whole of the working class of Czechoslovakia.

A Paradise for the Exploiters.

The situation of the proletariat in the huge industrial district of Ostrau is a desperate one in the truest sense of the word. Whilst prices have continually increased, wages have been reduced in an unheard of manner, and at the same time from year to year an ever greater output has been squeezed from the starving workers. Whilst in the year 1921 the miners in the Ostrau district received an average wage per shift (including all bonuses) of 70,74 Czechish Crowns, in 1924 they only received 38,45 Crowns. This means therefore, that numerous miners earn no more than 120 Crowns (about fifteen shillings) a week. On the other hand, the production per shift in 1921 amounted to 6,49 Centner, in 1924 however, it had risen to 9,14 Centner. The exploitation has, therefore, been fearfully intensified in three respects. The output has been increased, wages have been reduced, and in addition to this the purchasing power of wages has been reduced as a result of the increase in all prices.

The number of miners employed in the Ostrau mines in 1924 had decreased by 4200 as compared with 1921, that is, from 47,900 to 43,700. The number of shifts sank from 11,900,000 in 1921 to 11,450,000 in 1924. In spite of this cutting down of the number of workers and the reduction of the number of shifts, production has greatly increased. Whilst the output in the year 1921 was 77,227,000 centner, in 1924 this had increased to 104,598,000 centner. The metal industry and the chemical industry are experiencing a decided boom. But in these industries also the wages paid are equally wretched. In the Witkowitz Iron foundries, and also in the chemical industry, the workers receive an

average wage of 20—22 Crowns a day, while many workers earn only 16 Crowns a day, that is not even 100 Crowns a week!

The Wage Slaves are Rebellng.

Under such conditions it is not to be wondered if the working class of the Ostrau industrial district regard their situation as completely unbearable. For many weeks past the workers have been showing an eager desire for fight. Supported by the Communist Party, our Red trade unions attempted some time ago to give expression in an organised manner to this fighting spirit of the Ostrau working class, without distinction of party, organisation or nation, and to exert pressure upon the various organisations in order to compel them unitedly to conduct the struggle which the workers desired.

A vote was taken in the mines and factories which was participated in by more than 98% of the workers and which unanimously decided on a fight for higher wages. The pressure of the working class forced the reformist and yellow organisations to act as if they wished to participate in the leadership of the struggle. A joint committee of action was elected which submitted to the employers the demand for a 20% increase in the wages in mining the industry and a 30% wage increase in the metal and in the chemical industry. When one bears in mind that the actual reduction of wages compared with the year 1921 amounted to 50%, and that in the last half year alone prices increased by at least 20%, one must recognise that these demands are exceedingly modest. Nevertheless, the demands were flatly refused the very next day by the employers who also rejected all negotiations.

Friend and Enemy.

The employers ventured to adopt such a provocative attitude in the face of the misery of the working class and in spite of their fighting spirit, solely because they were perfectly sure

that they could rely upon their truest allies, the reformist leaders. Against the pressure of the working class from below, there was exerted from the very first day the counter-pressure from above of the reformist head organisations. As a result of this pressure the reformist organisations of the Ostrau district, at the most decisive moment immediately after the handing in of the demands, repudiated responsibility and declared they would have nothing to do with the whole affair. But the pressure from below was so strong that they were compelled to add that they would remain in the struggle for the sake of solidarity and only repudiate all responsibility for the whole action.

In contrast to this the red trade union organisations and the Communist Party, right from the beginning, sided most emphatically with the Ostrau workers. A national conference of the miners organised in the red trade unions declared their solidarity with the Ostrau miners, and put forward the demand: for a general strike of all the miners, for the support of the fighting workers by the organisations of the whole of the working class, and for the widest possible extension of the struggle.

The First Stab in the Back.

In view of the mood of the whole of the working class, the capitalists and reformist leaders rightly feared that an outbreak of the fight in Moravian Ostrau could bring about a very dangerous situation for the capitalist economy. All means were therefore employed in order to intimidate the Ostrau working class. This was the main object of the national conference of the allied reformist German and Czechish Miners' Union, which took place on the 21st and 22nd of March. The Miners' Red Trade Union had demanded to be admitted to this Conference. They were allowed to take part in the public proceedings at the first day of the conference. But on the other hand they were prevented from taking part in the second day's deliberations which dealt with the question of the wage struggle and which were held in secret. All the proposals of our comrades were of course rejected. It was decided to submit a number of platonic demands to the government, the fulfilment of which should serve to ease the economic situation in the mining industry, and in the event of non-compliance with these demands it was decided to repudiate all responsibility for the consequences. A resolution was adopted opposing the Ostrau wage movement, but which admitted that conditions in the Ostrau area rendered an increase of wages urgently necessary, but at the same time characterised the struggle for such an increase of wages as a crime against the proletariat and called upon the members of the reformist organisations to "defend" the collective treaties against all attacks and to adopt an attitude towards the action of the communists in this sense. This was a fairly undisguised appeal to act as strike-breakers.

The Response throughout the Country.

The decision of the Ostrau workers to fight met with a powerful response throughout the whole of Czechoslovakia. The miners of Kladno decided that they should join in the struggle as soon as the struggle in Ostrau should break out along the whole line. A Factory Council Conference of North West Bohemia decided to do everything in order, when the struggle broke out in Ostrau, to bring about a general strike of the miners. A number of similar decisions were adopted in Slovakia. Many factories and workshops adopted resolutions expressing solidarity with the Ostrau workers. The North Bohemian textile workers, who are confronted with a serious wage movement, declared themselves to be ready for the struggle and if necessary to unite their struggle with that of the Ostrau workers.

In a number of big factories, for example, in the "Spiro" paper factory and in the "Hohenfurth" Electric Power Works in South Bohemia where wage movements were in progress, strikes broke out as a direct result of the impression created by the Ostrau struggle. The mere announcement of the strike in Ostrau caused a tremendous increase in the wave of wage conflicts in the whole of Czechoslovakia.

The Fight is Beginning.

On Monday 30th of March the struggle in the Ostrau industrial area broke out in full fury and spread with great rapidity. In spite of all the manoeuvres, in spite of the furious campaign in the capitalist and reformist newspapers, in spite of huge reinforcements of gendarmes, police and military, who of course were immediately on the spot, the number of the striking miners already on the second day amounted to 80%. The position of the

fight in the metal and chemical however is not so favourable. The great Vitkovitz Works, which it is true no one expected would join in the strike right at the commencement, is still working (on the 4th day of the strike). But even in these works a fighting mood is making itself felt. A number of great metal works and chemical factories are at a complete standstill, in others only a portion of the staff is at work and, what is the chief thing, the number of strikers in the metal and chemical industries is increasing. On the 4th day of the strike, 40,000 miners out of a total of 47,000 had downed tools, while in the metal and chemical industry out of 31,000 workers 10,000 had joined the strike.

A Signal.

The executive of the red trade union and the Central of the C. P. of Czechoslovakia, immediately after the outbreak of the strike, called upon the working class to regard this struggle as a signal for the struggle for higher wages in the whole of the Czechoslovakian Republic and to support it with all means. At the same time a large-scale action of collection and support has been initiated. The fight is having a great effect upon the social democratic workers in the whole Republic, and the social democratic papers are resorting to the vilest means in order to weaken this impression and to abuse the communist "seducers" of the proletariat.

The communists are exerting all their forces to achieve victory in spite of everything. But no matter what may be the result of the struggle, one thing is already certain: The fight of the Ostrau proletariat is in any case an important historical event in Czechoslovakia. For the first time in this State the non-Communist workers, in spite of the sabotage of their organisations and against the will of their reformist leaders, have set up their own leadership and have entered the struggle. The lackeys of the bourgeoisie are losing their influence upon the proletariat and are being compelled in the interests of capitalism to carry on their treacherous work so openly and so brutally, that even the eyes of the blindest workers must be finally opened.

POLITICS

The German Presidential Election.

By Arthur Rosenberg (Berlin).

At the German Presidential election on March 29th there were seven candidates: three black white and red, three black red and gold; and the communist. The black red and gold candidates Marx, Braun and Hellpach represented the three "Reichsbanner" parties, the Centre, the SP. of Germany and the Democrats, as far as it is permissible to describe the Centre as a Republican party for, as is well known, the Centre sits together with the German Nationals in Luther's Monarchist Government.

The relation of the three black white and red candidates to one another is much more complicated. A block had been formed in support of Jarres' candidature, to which belonged the German Nationals, the German People's Party, the Big Agrarians' League, the party for the protection of the Middle Classes, the Fascist party and the so-called German Social party. The parties enumerated remained true to Jarres with the exception of a group of the Fascist which, under Hitler's leadership, put up Ludendorff as a candidate. Ludendorff however met with a smashing defeat even in Bavaria, and the main mass of the Nationalist electors voted for Jarres. The Bavarian Prime Minister Held, was supported by the Bavarian National party, the Bavarian Peasants' League and the German Hanoverian party, i. e. conservative groups which however bring into prominence the particularism of the separate lands.

It is now a question of correctly comparing the election result of March 29th with the last German "Reichstag" election on December 7th. On that day, the Jarres block obtained the following number of votes:

German National People's Party	6,205,000
German People's Party	3,049,000
Fascist	907,000
Agricultural League	499,000
Party for the Protection of the Middle Classes	700,000
German Socialists	160,000
Total	11,520,000 votes.

This time Jarres obtained 10,788,000 votes and Ludendorff 211,000, i. e. altogether 11 millions votes. Thus the Jarres block had a net loss of half a million votes.

The Held parties obtained on March 29th the following number of votes:

Bavarian People's Party	1,132,000
German Hanoverian Party	263,000
Bavarian Peasants' League	300,000
Total	1,695,000 votes.

The Held group has thus a total loss of 700,000 votes. If we consider the election results in Bavaria and Hanover in detail, we see that hundreds of thousands of electors of the Bavarian People's Party, of the Peasant League and of the Hanoverian Party did not this time follow the instructions of their leaders and even in the first election voted for Jarres, so as not to split the vote of the black white and reds. Thus we have a total loss to the black white and red parties of 1,200,000.

What then is the position of the black red and gold candidates? The Democrats obtained this time 300,000 votes less than on December 7th (fall from 1,918,000 to 1,582,000); the Centre lost about 100,000 (fall from 4,092,000 to 3,989,000). The Social Democrats almost exactly maintained their position; they obtained on December 7th 7,881,000 votes and this time 7,837,000. Their loss therefore only amounts to 44,000 votes.

Finally the Communist candidate registered a drop of 800,000 votes (from 2,708,000 to 1,886,000).

The result therefore was: the Centre and the SP. of Germany on the whole maintained their position, the Right parties lost 1,200,000 votes, the Communists 800,000 the Democrats 300,000. These figures imply the following political movement: the workers took comparatively little interest in this election. Many hundreds of thousands of proletarians who voted on December 7th, abstained from the ballot this time. From all parts of Germany the same fact is reported, that the workers only took part in the election in small numbers. This is the immediate explanation of the loss by the Communist party. No one dared seriously to maintain that the 800,000 electors who failed to vote for us this time, had really turned their backs on the Communist party; but these workers said to themselves that the Communist candidate had no hope of success in any case, that in the capitalist Republic only a reactionary would become President, and that therefore there was no object in voting. Thus the worst enemy of the CP. of Germany was again, as on December 7th, not the bourgeoisie or the SP. of Germany, but the slackness and indifference in the camp of the proletariat itself. The party did everything in its power to persuade the masses to take part in the election, but only with partial success. The least reduction of votes was again in Berlin. The lesson of December 7th that our Berlin organisation is the most firmly consolidated in the whole CP. of Germany was confirmed.

The disinclination of the workers to vote however not only affected us but was also a serious blow to the SP. of Germany. The SP. of Germany also suffered a loss of hundreds of thousands of proletarian votes at this election; it only made up for this loss by catching the greater part of those 1,200,000 voters who this time turned their backs on the parties of the Right. These 1,200,000 voters of both sexes are however recruited mainly from the camp of persons with small savings, small private means and other members of the middle class who are interested in the question of the re-establishment of the currency. The revaluation of those stocks and shares and securities (State and Government loans, municipal loans, industrial obligations, mortgages etc.), which, during the inflation became worthless scraps of paper, is at the present moment a crucial question in German politics. The German Nationalists allured half a million of members of the middle class at the last Parliamentary Election by promising to carry through this revaluation. We now have the German National Government, but the revaluation has not taken place, because the great capitalists have not the least intention of making any appreciable concessions to the middle classes. The small investors are consequently greatly embittered, and their wrath is directed in the first place against the parties of the Right who have broken their word. The SP. of Germany has, during the last few months, carried on a cunning propaganda among the people with small savings and private incomes, by persuading these petty bourgeois that Social Democracy will achieve this revaluation. The Communists have of course lost ground in this demagogic race, for we cannot make promises to the petty

bourgeois which, it stands to reason, cannot be fulfilled. The present position of German economics is incapable of standing any appreciable revaluation, and those groups of the petty bourgeoisie who have forsaken the German National party will, in an equally short time, leave the SP. of Germany in the lurch. It is estimated that this time at least half a million of those interested in the revaluation of securities and of other members of the petty bourgeoisie voted for the SP. of Germany, and thus compensated for a corresponding loss of workers' votes. There can be no question of the SP. of Germany having, at this election, in any way curtailed the influence of the Communists on the proletariat.

The true force of the SP. and of the CP. of Germany was clearly demonstrated on the day after the election. The CP. declared at once that they would use all the power and energy at their disposal in preparing for the fight at the 2nd ballot. The SP. however immediately declared officially that they would withdraw their candidate in favour of one representing the united republican parties. The SP. of Germany is thus, in spite of its 8 million votes, convinced that it will lose the succession to Ebert, and is therefore offering its votes to the Centre, the very party which plays the chief part in the Luther Government, i. e. in the monarchist Right Block of the Reichstag. The SP. of Germany is, it is true, still backed by large masses of the population but it has absolutely no power of attack and, in spite of the excellent working of its election machinery, the place it takes in the esteem of the bourgeoisie is in keeping with this fact. No one dreams of the possibility of a Social Democrat being elected President. Either the SP. of Germany, as already suggested, will at the 2nd ballot support Marx, or the Centre will decline this offer and will come to an understanding with the parties of the Right as to a common candidate of the bourgeois block, whose election would then be assured.

The considerable loss of votes of the Democrats once more points out the complete impotence of trade and of manufactures in the Germany of to-day as compared with heavy industry. The great clamour raised by the democratic papers in Berlin, Frankfurt a. M. etc., i. e. those financed by Jewish commercial capital for Hellpach, the democratic candidate, had obviously no effect whatever.

In this whole election campaign only the CP. of Germany took up a firm attitude and acted according to principle and, although its cause appeared hopeless in the eyes of the masses, it succeeded in collecting almost 2 million votes for Thälmann's candidature. The SP. of Germany made many demagogic promises but never went thoroughly into the questions. Even the black, white and red parties carried on the election campaign in a very subdued manner. Fear of the Entente prevented them speaking of the monarchy, the black white and red or of a war of revenge; the election leaflets for Jarres confined themselves to stating the praiseworthy facts that Jarres is a good German, a worthy father of a family with a blameless life, and a pious Christian. That part of the bourgeoisie which in Germany has most political power, the black white and red great capital, would like to have the choosing of the President, so that with his help they could establish a dictatorship in the country, but they have not the courage openly to raise this question of a black white and red dictatorship, and so the election campaign came to grief. Apart from the Communist agitation, the discussions actually turned mainly on the blameless family life of Jarres, on Braun's good heart and on Hellpach's fine gift of rhetoric. On the whole it was a typical election of the plain man in the street, and consequently the parties of the simple citizens came off best. The actual proportionate power of the various classes found no expression in this foolish performance.

The CP. of Germany will, at the 2nd ballot, use all its powers to stir up the indifferent masses and show them the danger which a great capitalist dictator as a President would involve, it being a matter of complete indifference whether this dictator is chosen by the Centre or the German National People's party. And even the man chosen by the SP. of Germany, were he elected which however is absolutely out of the question, would be the lackey of the great capitalists in the best Noske style. In spite of the loss of votes, the CP. of Germany will firmly follow the line of action which it has taken up in this Presidential Election. Our slogan for the 2nd ballot will continue to be the demonstration for the Red Republic against the Capitalist Republic or the Capitalist Monarchy.

Ferdinand Lassalle's Centenary.

(April 11th 1825.)

By Hermann Duncker (Berlin).

Does Ferdinand Lassalle belong to the ranks of great Communists from Marx to Lenin? It is true that Lassalle who was by seven years the younger, called himself Marx' disciple, looked up to Marx as the leader of the party and earnestly sought his friendship; nevertheless Lassalle was never a Marxist, either in his fundamental philosophical attitude or in his political tactics. This became glaringly evident on various occasions, and only Lassalle's early death prevented Marx and Engels from publicly disowning him during his lifetime, and meting out political justice to him as to a Proudhon or a Bakunin. Later on, Marx, in a pitiless way, ran down Lassalle in a letter to Kugelmann (1865) and, in the marginal notes to the Gotha programme, the programme for an alliance between the Bebel-Liebkecht group at Eisenach and Lassalle's partisans (1875), he smashed the essential points of Lassalle's theory into smithereens.

The leaders of Social Democracy, which pretend to be Marxist, indeed concealed both condemnations from the mass of their members for many years. The marginal notes were only published 16 years later, the letter to Kugelmann 17 years after the other letters had been printed. Even in the Marx-Engels correspondence certain very harsh expressions against Lassalle seem to have been suppressed by the publisher. This is how the SP. of Germany guards against any wrong being done to its party saint Lassalle. As a matter of fact, the SP. of Germany has much more in common with Lassalle than with Marx, although now it is far behind Lassalle in its "practical politics" and can no longer claim to be heir to his views, for he was at least always a bitter opponent of the bourgeois party.

Lassalle was no doubt an eminent personality, a man of genius. Possessed of titanic ambition, of an extraordinary passion for work, of quick intellectual grasp, a clever and witty writer, one of the greatest orators of history — all qualities which made Lassalle prominent in the barren field of the intellectual life of the day in Germany, it is easy to understand how he must have struck all around him, how such extraordinary homage and admiration was paid him. The greater men with whom he might have been compared, Marx and Engels, had been abroad since 1849, and were thus remote from Lassalle. Lassalle had remained in Germany as the last of the Mohicans of the Communist revolutionaries. No wonder that the self-consciousness which characterised him even in his youth gradually assumed dimensions which led to painful conflicts and thus modified even his view of life in a way which made it still more difficult for him to accept the materialistic conception of history. An idealistic conception of history was more in keeping with his mental attitude, one that regards the great personality as the bearer and manifestation of the spirit of his time and, in a certain sense "makes history".

"You see here the remarkable spectacle of an agitation which has seized hold of the masses, which has roused a whole nation to take stand passionately on one side or the other — all this emanating from the conscience of a single man." (Speech at the Düsseldorf trial, 1864.)

Thus Lassalle could, on one occasion (1860) write to Marx: "Hatred in the masses can accomplish anything, if only there are five people in the whole country who possess understanding also." This is a Nietzscheanism which defies all socialism and shows a complete want of understanding of the significance and the nature of a revolutionary "party". Lassalle is possessed by an "ideologism" — as Marx once called it — which constantly limits his social discernment. This had the most serious consequences in his idealistic worship of the State, and in this connection led to the worst derailments in practical politics.

Lassalle cannot boast of a completely uniform philosophical and political view of life. He was an eclectic in the grand style, who to-day was under the spell of Marx, tomorrow under that of Rodbertus, but was never free from that of Hegel... In a letter to Marx, Lassalle refers to Hegel's conception of history, "to which I myself subscribe in all essentials". The spirit, the spirit of the people, expresses itself in history, embodies itself in the moral community, the State. On one occasion, Lassalle refers to science as "a neutral territory, a sanctuary which must on no account be devastated by the storm of political hatred". It seems that the State is to Lassalle almost another such "neutral territory."

This does not indeed prevent Lassalle on the other hand, in one of his writings, from representing the "actual conditions of power" in a very telling way as the native soil of constitutions. Lassalle believes in revolution, but does not want to bring it about, but to "humanise and civilise it". Lassalle organises the working class by the formation of the General German Labour Association on May 22nd 1863, but emphatically declines the thought of a dictatorship of the proletariat. In his speech "The Worker's Reader" (1863) he protests against:

"the enormity of having called upon the working classes to aim at a class supremacy over the other classes."

The liberation of the working class can only be effected by the working-class itself. Lassalle repeatedly violates even this essential Marxist doctrine of the later 1st International. Besides his passionate appeal to the working class, hope for help from above, for the help of the possessing classes, finally even for the help of a "social monarchy", is constantly cropping up. This places Lassalle as a Utopian socialist, back into pre-Marxist socialism.

"The fetters must be struck off your feet; but only in peace, through the initiative of the intelligenzia and with the sympathetic help of the possessing class", exclaims Lassalle in his "Speech on the Labour Question" (1863) to the German proletariat.

How did Lassalle imagine the realisation of socialism? Universal suffrage is to him the great instrument of peace which will make the State accessible to the wishes of the proletariat, without any necessity for the undesirable "wild proletarian revolution". The workers form productive associations, and the Democratic State — possibly even the reactionary Prussian State will make the start! — contributes the capital. In this way, private capital will gradually be ousted by competition in a perfectly peaceful manner, and there will be no need for a brutal expropriation of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary:

"The worker will never forget that all property which has once been acquired is inviolable and lawful." ("Labour programme" 1862.)

This being Lassalle's fundamental attitude, it is easy to understand his so-called "tactical evolution". Lassalle wanted action, he wanted most of all to see universal suffrage established as the political foundation. The General German Labour Association developed too slowly for him. Bismarck was already coquetting with the idea of universal suffrage. At this juncture Lassalle intervened personally in order to stimulate Bismarck, the Junker, to quicker action in this direction, in order to make history! Lassalle had a series of private political discussions with Bismarck in the winter of 1863—64. And in the agitation of the last year of his life — Lassalle died on August 31st 1864 — he made more and more definite references to this help from above, in other words, from the extreme Right.

"All extreme parties have a natural affinity for one another",

he said in his speech at the trial for high treason in 1864. Lassalle for instance addressed a telegraphic complaint to Bismarck with regard to the limitation of the right of assembly on the part of a Progressive Mayor, as he had also, as early as 1858, approached the "cartridge prince" with a personal petition, — all actions which to a revolutionary like Marx would have seemed absolutely impossible. Marx indeed jeered, and with bitter justification, at the "practical politician" Lassalle, who "wanted to play the part of the Marquis of Posa of the proletariat with the Philipp II of the Uckermark". (Letter to Kugelmann 1865.)

That which Lassalle with his own hand wrote in 1865 in his great letter to Marx and Engels about his Sickingen drama, came to pass in a terrible way on Lassalle himself:

"For, in the final analysis, Sickingen's diplomatic amalgamation of his insurrection with his non-revolutionary action, and the failure of the former, arose just from the fact that he was unable in his heart to make a final break with the past, with which he himself was still connected and which he represented."

Lassalle's political legacy had further disastrous effects on German Social Democracy. It euphemised that attitude towards the bourgeois State which was finally, but in a more cynical way, expressed by revisionism and, since 1914, has been sanctioned before the whole world as the supreme political practical policy of the S. P. of Germany within the peaceful precincts of the coalition policy. Lassalle's nationalism and Bernstein's reformism

form the theoretical points of support of opportunism against Marxism. It is thus no mere coincidence that in the present-day S. P. of Germany a new Lassalleism has been spreading for some time and that from that side the slogan is heard: Back to Lassalle! — whereas the class conscious proletariat of the 3rd International cries: Forwards to Marx and Lenin!

The Climax of the Tcheka Trial.

By A. R. (Berlin).

The Leipzig Tcheka Trial has involved the parading of all the supports of the German Republic in a perfection and beauty which is rarely to be seen. Court officials and police spies, police commissioners and eager expert medical witnesses have for weeks dominated the proceedings. An exquisite example was furnished by the report of the medical expert on the mental condition of the witness for the prosecution, the police spy Felix Neumann. It is true that the grandfather of Felix Neumann died in a lunatic asylum, and that among his relatives there are quite a number of lunatics. While still a soldier he was subject to fits, and in fact had a fit during the trial, regarding which the medical authorities were of diverse opinion as to whether it was a fit of hysteria or an epileptic fit. But the medical expert stated in his report that only a layman would hold the opinion that because an individual's forebears were mentally unsound, the individual himself must also be mentally unsound. Neumann is sane and his statements are credible. Such a scandalous medical report is almost unique even in the history of German class medical jurisprudence.

It is not worth while repeating all the inventions and phantasies which were put forward by the police and their spies. This evidence was so feeble that even the bourgeois press of Germany almost disregarded it. Only the organs of the Social Democratic Party remained true to the Public Prosecutor through thick and thin. The prosecuting authorities had reserved the chief sensation for the end. This was the statement of Herr Vogt, the well-known communist-hater, the preliminary examining judge in the Tcheka trial. According to the principles of the German Criminal Code, the examining judge can only give evidence upon one point, that is regarding any contradictions between the statements of the accused at the preliminary examination and at the main proceedings. But the principles of German criminal law are no longer valid for this Court. In spite of all the protests of the Defence, Herr Vogt was permitted to deliver a cleverly prepared indictment speech against the C. P. of Germany which lasted for several days. Herr Vogt came to the court with a big attaché case. This contained a mass of papers which he claims were confiscated at various house-searches and with the help of these documents he delivered a furious anti-bolshevist diatribe. It was a regular onslaught upon the Defence, which declared that it was quite ignorant of the existence of this fresh evidence. The Defence further declared that it wished to examine this fresh material brought forward by Vogt, as it contained many things which were the products of spies. How feeble an accusation must be when it is compelled to have resort to such absurd methods! Thereupon the Defence prepared to deliver a counter-blow: as Herr Vogt had accused the C. P. of Germany, the C. P. of Germany must be given the opportunity of defending itself. The Defence submitted numerous proofs in order to reveal the fascist danger in Germany. In addition to this the Defence brought forward twenty witnesses, including communist and social democratic members of parliament, as well as simple workers, and party functionaries from Saxony, in order to give evidence as to what was the true state of affairs in 1923 and 1924.

This was replied to by a fresh monstrous act of violence by this exceptional Court. Since the foundation of the German Empire in 1871, it has been the basic right of the accused in a German criminal trial to call witnesses on his behalf. According to German Law, the Court is bound to hear these witnesses. In the Tcheka trial this right has been suspended for the first time. On the motion of the Public Prosecutor Neumann, the Court refused to admit the witnesses brought forward by the Defence. The Court will from time to time decide whether it will be gracious enough to hear one or other of the witnesses for the defence. This simply means that the High State Court can and will accuse the C. P. of Germany, but it will not permit the communists to defend themselves. This monstrous decision has

been given by a court of law to which two social democratic leaders belong, one of them being Herr Schilling, the chairman of the Leipzig Trade Union Federation.

The debates, which lasted for days, regarding the proofs brought forward by the Defence as to the existence of the fascist danger constituted in every respect the climax of the Tcheka trial. The speeches and the evidence of the Defence have thrown a fresh light upon the situation in the year 1923: the misery and the desperation of the working masses, the threatening fascist danger, the putch of the Right which was preparing and the attempt of the communist party leaders to create, along with the "left" social democrats, the workers' governments in Saxony and Thuringia as a bulwark against reaction. That the events of 1923 and 1924 provide material for criticism of the communist leadership at that time, is a well-known fact. But it is impossible on the basis of what took place at that time to bring a charge of high treason against the C. P. of Germany. During this trial in Leipzig the charge has been completely exposed. There remained nothing else than a manoeuvre of the German reaction and its social democratic confederates for the purpose of striking at the hated fighting party of the proletariat. In order to achieve this aim the class Court does not shrink from any breach of the law or from any baseness.

By these manoeuvres the Court has achieved the exact contrary of what it set out to achieve. A judgment based upon such breaches of the law will be completely null and void. It will be impossible to make use of it with the public against the C. P. of Germany, but vice versa: the proceedings at this trial constitute an uninterrupted defeat of capitalist reaction and its social democratic confederates. This Tcheka trial will not serve to injure the C. P. of Germany.

THE BALKANS

The Capitulation of the Raditch Party.

By A. Stoyanovitch (Belgrade).

The political situation in Yugoslavia is at present characterised by the capitulation of the Raditch Party (C. R. P. P., Croatian-Republican-Peasant-Party), which according to the latest declarations and speeches of its representatives in parliament, entirely repudiates its whole past and unconditionally recognises the Monarchy, the Dynasty and the Vidovdan Constitution, that is, the hegemony of the Serbian bourgeoisie. In its efforts to bring about a revision of the constitution, the Raditch Party differs in no way from the rest of the bourgeois opposition parties. The Raditch Party has been so eager in its capitulation that even its previous allies — the recently founded opposition bloc — are beginning to grow uneasy, but the ruling "radicals" are already seeing in the Raditch Party their future allies.

This change of attitude of the Raditch Party found its outward expression in the great speech of Pavel Raditch (a nephew of Stefan Raditch) at the conclusion of which he stated:

"I declare as the chairman of the Croatian Peasant Club and on behalf of the President Stefan Raditch, and in my own name as well as in the name of the Party leadership and of the chairman of the Party, that I am empowered to make the following statement: We recognise the political status quo, as expressed by the Vidovdan constitution, with the Karageorgevitch dynasty at the head, in regard to the carrying out of a positive policy in accordance with the will of the Croatian people, which has been clearly expressed in three elections, and on the situation based upon the political facts and conditions. To correct these facts and conditions should be the object of a revision of the constitution... We have never fought against this our State and its interests. We regard the State frontiers as the national frontiers of the Croatian people. The Croatian people is fighting within these frontiers for its existence, and on the basis of its programme it will defend these frontiers right to the end."

As regards the relations to the Peasant International, Pavel Raditch emphasised again in this declaration that the Party, in conferring full powers on Stefan Raditch, only expressed its confidence in him as President of the Party, and that the National Council of the Party had not yet adopted its final attitude to the question of the Peasant International. The Party has no obligations whatever towards the Peasant International. As soon as

it is possible the National Council will be convened, which will then decide that the Party can maintain no connections with the Peasant International.

The treacherous capitulation of the leadership of the Raditch Party and the bankruptcy of its policy have their roots in the policy which this Party has recently conducted. Originally a mass organisation of the peasants, it opened its doors to the Croatian bourgeoisie in the shape of the "Croatian Union" („Hrvatska Zajednica"), which managed to creep into the Party and gradually got the leadership of the Croatian Peasant Party into its hands. In this the Croatian Union was supported by the Serbian bourgeoisie and military clique, which arrested the National Council of the C. R. P. P., along with Raditch, and thereby enabled the Croatian Union to seize complete control of the Party.

The Croatian Union then led the Raditch Party into the camp of the other opposition parties, that is, of the Davidovitch Party, an outspoken monarchist Party which only differs from the governing radical party by reason of the fact that it wishes to bring about the hegemony of the Serbian bourgeoisie by another means, as it has already proved in practice. Under the fatal influence of the Croatian bourgeoisie, the leadership of the C. R. P. P. fed the Croatian peasant masses with pacifist illusions, which checked the revolutionary mood among these masses which has already become a powerful political factor.

The C. R. P. P. allied itself with the treacherous Croatian bourgeoisie, instead of setting up a united front with the working class, of creating an alliance of the peasants with the workers, as indicated by the Peasant International. This idea of an alliance between the peasants and the workers has already struck deep roots among the masses of the Croatian workers as a result of the agitation of the C. P. of Yugoslavia in the last election.

As an immediate result of the treacherous policy of the leadership of the Raditch Party there may be expected an inner process of ferment within this party, which will lend important political expression to the existing social differences in it by the rise and growth of a Left wing. For the capitulation of the C. R. P. P. as the leader of the Croatian peasant masses does not merely mean a formal political or tactical act, it means much rather the complete handing over of the Croatian working masses to social and national oppression by the ruling Serbian hegemonistic bourgeoisie in alliance with the Croatian big bourgeoisie.

The Croatian peasant masses will draw from the capitulation of their leaders the historical lesson that alliance with the bourgeoisie only hinders the emancipatory struggle of the peasants, and finally betrays it, and that their natural and true ally can only be the working class.

The Communist Party in Yugoslavia is now faced with the great task of promoting this salutary process in the Croatian peasant masses, the more so as the Croatian working masses, after this act of treachery, will look for leadership to the Communist Party, the only true champion of their interests, and will see in it their ally.

ECONOMICS

The Prospect for British Capitalism.

By M. D.

Ever since 1921 when the post-war trade depression involved British capitalism in such a catastrophic "slump" and tumbling chaos, the capitalist leaders in Britain have followed a curious see-saw policy in their search for a solution. First, we had Lloyd George's efforts to stabilise Europe by an agreement with France, which ended in the inconclusive Conference of Genoa. Then we had the "Tranquillity" of a Bonar Law — retiring to the folded arms of a haughty insulation, that the dust of continental turmoil might be shaken from English feet. Later we heard talk of "Empire development" — taking an improved colonial market in compensation for the lost markets of Central Europe — and suggestions of an artificial stimulation of the home market by Protection or "a little inflation". Finally, when the fresh European chaos, impelled by the Ruhr occupation, had sternly

refused to allow British capitalism to enjoy "Tranquillity", and when the dangers of a Franco-German steel trust haunted the sleep of English generals of heavy industry, we had the return of British capitalism to Europe, and ... the MacDonald experiment to secure "stability".

Throughout this period on the economic field British capitalists had been straining every sinew to stop the disastrous fall of prices and to stimulate trade revival. Wages were reduced by a series of sledge-hammer blows at the unions, in order that costs might be reduced and to render production profitable again, and so by starting activity and buying in one industry, to trust to its spreading in a growing demand for the products of all industries. Combines and associations and price and output agreements were formed to stop prices falling further.

Sir Allan Smith, an engineering employer, called upon the government as zealously as a Sidney Webb for State aid to industry, — government expenditure on "development work" and State credit-guarantees. Longingly they turned their hopes from European markets away to colonial demand, then in despair to the home market and finally back again to the European market. The result of all these efforts was that British capitalism managed to struggle out of the actual 1921 trough of collapse, but showed few further signs of revival; whereas U. S. A., enriched by the war and unencumbered by the political entanglements of Europe, was able to fling off the depression speedily, and to be on the way to "booming" trade again in 1922. While the steel and iron production of the U. S. A. in that year had increased to 20% above 1913, in England pig iron production, having fallen from 855,000 tons per month in 1913 to 218,000 in 1921, did not rise above 420,000 till 1923, and only to 610,000 in 1924. Steel production in Britain having fallen to 309,000 in 1921, maintained only an average of 490,000 in 1922 (as compared with 639,000 in 1913) in spite of a probable 50% increase in productive capacity during the war, but managed to rise above the 1913 figure by about 7% in 1923 and 1924. The volume of British exports, having fallen to below 50% of pre-war in 1921, did not manage to rise above 70% until 1923, and has not yet risen more than a few points above that 70%. Unemployment, having touched 20% in 1921, recovered to about 11% in 1923 and to 8 to 9% in 1924. Wholesale prices having reached the bottom in 1922 at about 60% above pre-war (as compared with a "peak" of 225% in 1920), have since risen a little to about 75% at the end of 1924*).

The Result of the London Agreement, the stabilisation of the Mark exchange, and a greater settlement of trade conditions in Europe has, therefore, meant a slight betterment of conditions for British trade and industry, and total profits have increased in 1924 to the "satisfactory" figure of about 10%. Some bourgeois economists, indeed, like Mr. Keynes, who does not see post-war capitalism in a "rosy" light, believe that this is all the "trade boom" that Britain will have, short of the unhealthy stimulant of inflation, and that unemployment will remain at the figure of a million at the best of times. Even so, however, British capitalism is by no means happy, and finds the results poor copies of its expectations. A bourgeois economist, Mr. J. W. F. Rowe, in the Annual Review of the "Manchester Guardian Commercial", for instance, points out that unemployment was only $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent less in 1924 than the previous year, and that it rose somewhat steeply at the end of the year, doubling in the case of coal miners, and showing serious increase in steel and shipbuilding. The total national production he estimated to have remained steady in 1923 and 1924 at approximately 90% of 1913.

"Stabilisation", indeed, is having very mixed effects. While the reopening of Central European markets is providing some relief to English textiles, the revival of foreign competition is causing apprehension to capitalists in coal and iron and steel. On all sides in the capitalist press one is hearing two laments: first, the increase of imports; and second, the lack of extension of exports. The latter means that improved markets in Europe are being counter-balanced by keener competition. The former is partly accounted for by an increase of raw materials (which, presumably, manufacturers will buy for stock if they anticipate better trade); and certain staple raw materials, such as cotton

*) The index numbers differ slightly according to their composition. "The Economist" index number for February 1925 gives an 86% rise, the Board of Trade a 68%.

and wool, have increased in price considerably — a further unfavourable feature. But, in addition, there have been increased imports of competing manufactures, which serves to remind that foreign competition is to be felt in the home market, as well as abroad. Accordingly, exports of manufactures stand at 80% of pre-war in volume, while imports are more than 100 per cent larger; and the raw materials and food among this latter are rising in price.

British capitalism before the war always had an excess of import values over export — a so-called “unfavourable balance” — which was paid for by shipping and banking services and by interest-receipts from foreign investments. But in 1924 this had increased out of all proportion until it amounts to £ 344 millions. Now, this tendency, if it continues, can only be maintained by reversing the traditional position of British capitalism as an international creditor, and by its sale of foreign investments or by resorting to borrowings from America. And this brings us to the other matter about which capitalist circles are intensely exercised — the restoration of the Gold Standard.

Up to the end of February a marked “favourable” movement of the London-New York exchange was noticeable; and this was explained partly by the rising price-level in U. S. A. and hence depreciation of the Dollar; and partly by investment of funds, both for short-loan and long-term purposes, in London. Then in the beginning of March, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York raised its bank rate on loans from 3 to 3½% and the Bank of England answered a week later by a rise from 4 to 5%.

This action of the financial community has been somewhat resented by industrial capitalists, since it means “dear credit” to business, and if by contraction of bank advances, it tends to lower the price level, it will retard the recovery of the home market further. On the other hand, it is defended as the logical pursuit of the policy to restore the prestige of the £, so that it may be able to compete as an international banking standard with the growing influence of the Dollar. It is, indeed, the logical pursuit of this policy; and it is highly significant. It shows that British finance can only restore itself to anything approaching a pre-war position by so raising interest-rates in London as to attract American capital and credit. This is the meaning of the “unfavourable balance” of trade, made possible by an exchange-rate moving in favour of the Pound, as indicative of the penetration of U. S. A. capital into Britain. Another writer in the Annual Review of the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* laments: “The cessation of the export of capital from this country is in curious contrast to the great expansion of foreign investment which occurred during the year in the United States.” British capitalism is being forced to yield its place as international creditor: it is beginning to “sell out” to U. S. A. finance-capital.

But what does this mean to the British worker? The return to Gold means, as has been said, Deflation and high interest-rates in England. This must hamper British industry until it adjusts itself to production at a lower price-level. Already there are sounds of the whetting of steel on the grindstone in the enemy's camp. The recent steel contract from the shipbuilding firm of Furness Withy going to a cheaper German offer is being much advertised. A Commission on Production representing employers' interests (set up under the MacDonald government) is preparing a report. An official enquiry into wages and earnings is being instituted. Much play is made with the lower wages and longer hours of German workers. A great deal is written and said about the difference in the wages in “sheltered” trades producing for home demand and wages in “unsheltered” trades producing for export, with the corollary that the former need to be drastically reduced. Meanwhile, in the hope of drawing off the opposition of the Trade Union leaders of the Thomas, Clynes, and Cramp type, Mr. Baldwin preaches with that charm of manner in which the British bourgeois is adept, the blessings and advantages of an “industrial truce”. The attack is being prepared. The objective conditions are ripe for a united class resistance by the workers, a rallying of the workers to a militant standard.

Conditions have moved fast since Black Friday of 1921. Now an organised Minority Movement exists in the British Trade Unions as it did not then. It remains for this movement to see that in the struggle that is before us 1921 is avenged, and that the treacherous pilots who betrayed us on Black Friday be finally cast off the ship.

THE WHITE TERROR

The Polish Government Murders two Exchange Prisoners.

By J. Kowalczyk.

The Polish government of murder is at work. Two officers named **Baginsky** and **Wieczorkiewicz**, who had been condemned to death by the Polish white justice for alleged “bomb outrages” and whose sentences were afterwards commuted to imprisonment for life, were murdered on the 30th of March by practiced police hands. The two victims were about to be liberated.

The Polish authorities had agreed to exchange the two prisoners for some Polish spies and counter-revolutionary priests who had been condemned in the Soviet Union. They were already in the train which was to convey them to the Soviet frontier. In a few hours they should have trod the soil of the Soviet Union liberated by the workers and peasants. Shortly before the train arrived at the frontier, however a Polish hireling of the police fired several revolver shots. **Baginsky** was killed on the spot, the second, **Wieczorkiewicz**, died in fifteen minutes.

The Polish government is already attempting to wash its hands of the affair. It is trying to present the murder which it instigated as being an “individual action”. It promises to have the perpetrator brought to trial.

This was to be expected. It is the old method employed by all governments of white terror. This murder is not an “individual act”. It was carried out in the atmosphere of white terror which is demanding fresh victims every day; it was carried out in a country in which the government, the bourgeoisie and the entire bourgeois and democratic press are conducting an unceasing campaign against the revolutionary labour movement, and where every class-conscious worker is out-lawed.

The Polish government is seeking to cast the blame from itself by talking of the “individual act” of a fanatic. But who then is this fanatic? He was the police officer into whose custody the Polish authorities had handed the murdered victims. The Polish press writes today that this police officer had been condemned to death in the Soviet Union and only escaped by a miracle. He was an old counter-revolutionary. And it was precisely him to whom the Polish authorities handed over the captured revolutionaries. The responsibility for the deed, therefore, rests not upon the mere tool, **Muraszko** — the police officer in question, but upon those who placed the revolver into his hands, upon the bloody government of the Polish bourgeoisie.

But not only the government. Everywhere, along all the blood-stained paths of the rulers of bourgeois Poland, there follows devotedly and obsequiously their faithful servant, the Polish twin brother of Ebert and Noske, the P. P. S., the **Polish Social Democratic Party**. In this case also it has not abandoned its masters. Scarcely had the news appeared in the press of the possibility of the liberation of **Baginsky** and **Wieczorkiewicz**, when the P. P. S. came forward. With a cynicism of which only the P. P. S. press is capable, it began a campaign in which it called upon the government not exchange the prisoners, in fact to keep them in prison in order that “justice” be not violated by their liberation. This campaign contributed not a little to the stirring up of nationalist fury which found vent in **Muraszko** exercising lynch “justice” upon the two defenceless prisoners.

It is not the first time that the P. P. S. has taken part in the shedding of workers blood. It was under the rule of this Party that, in 1919, the members of the Soviet Russian Red Cross Mission, with comrade **Veselovsky** at their head, were murdered. The same excuses were also resorted to at that time. The P. P. S. maintained that this act was the work of bandits, whilst as a matter of fact — as was admitted later on by the Polish bourgeois Courts — it was the work of Polish gendarmes who were subordinate to a “socialist” Minister.

The Polish and the international proletariat will never forget that in its struggle against the bourgeoisie and the white terror, it always has the P. P. S. against it, that the leaders of this party allow no opportunity to go by in order to attack treacherously in the rear the working class which is fighting for its emancipation.

The Executive of the International Red Aid has sent telegrams to the General Council of the English Trade Unions and to the Labour Party informing them of the murder of Baginski and Vieczerkovicz, as well as of the death sentence pronounced upon the soldier Segal and appealing to the General Council to make a protest and asking for further support for Lantzukzy. The proletariat is waiting for the response of the English proletariat.

In the telegrams sent to the leaders of the English Minority Movement and to George Lansbury and Colonel Wedgwood, the Executive of the International Red Aid expresses thanks for the support afforded to Lantzukzy, informs them of the murder of the Polish revolutionaries and requests the support of public opinion against the white terror in Poland and against the death sentence upon Segal.

Powerful demonstrations and mass meetings against the Polish terror are taking place in all parts of the Soviet Union.

UNION OF SOVIET REPUBLICS.

The Amnesty in Georgia.

An Interview with the Deputy People's Commissar for Justice and Chief Public Prosecutor for the Republic, Comrade Krylenko.

In the capitalist countries the terrorist justice is raging more furiously than ever. And the social democrats are more eager than ever to support this system of bourgeois terrorist justice. They are conducting a systematic campaign in order to drown the cry of the revolutionary fighters for an amnesty which again and again is arising from the masses. One of their most favourite means is to point to the "terror" in the Soviet Union. Apart from the fact that the protégés of the social democrats are counter-revolutionaries and adventurers, who objectively and in almost all cases subjectively further the interests of international imperialism, and against whom the sharpest counter-measures are necessary and justified in the interest of the Soviet Union and of its working class, the campaign of the social democracy is absolutely mendacious.

Their outcry over Georgia is still fresh in every one's memory. All the old anti-bolshevist stories were served up in order to praise and glorify the Georgian Mensheviki, who, by means of money supplied by the Entente, attempted a counter-revolutionary putch.

The Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union however at its last session, which was held in Tiflis and which was enthusiastically received by the Georgian population, decided, among other important questions, upon an amnesty for Georgia.

The Deputy People's Commissar for Justice and Chief Public Prosecutor, comrade Krylenko, explained to us regarding the decision of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union as to the amnesty question as follows:

"The III. Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union was held in Tiflis. The main reason for this was in order to furnish palpable proof of the close connection which exists between the Central government and those sections of the Union which formerly, as border States, were subjected to a regime of national oppression by the tsarist bureaucracy. This proof has been furnished by the welcome accorded to the government in the capital city of the country where the national question is particularly complicated (Georgia is inhabited by about 10 different nationalities). The

reception of the government in Tiflis was a unique triumph, especially the reception accorded by the working population. It has shown that the position of the Soviet power in Georgia is so firmly consolidated, that there cannot be any talk of any hostile attitude, in spite of the counter-revolutionary putch attempt of the Mensheviki which took place as recently as August last.

The demonstrative reception has shown that the government acted rightly in deciding to grant an amnesty, after it had become evident that the working population of Georgia are unanimously behind the Soviet power. The evidence against those who participated in the putch is to be once more examined. This will mainly affect the members of the menshevist organisations.

The amnesty extends still further to sentences which were imposed last year in consequence of failure to pay taxes. This item of the amnesty will particularly contribute to link up still more closely the connections between town and country, as besides craftsmen it is the peasants who are mainly affected in this connection.

Finally, it has been decided to grant an amnesty for criminal misdemeanours. Here, of course, it is impossible to examine the evidence. Therefore the sentences of those who have been already condemned will be reduced by a half. It would have been possible to dispense with this measure, but as an amnesty had been decided upon it was thought it would be as well to include in it these poor and uncultured elements.

The amnesty will still further strengthen the position of the Soviet power. It is also a good lesson for the Renaudels and Vanderveldes, who in recent times have used Georgia as a pretext for an unexampled campaign against the Soviet Union."

The facts expose the social democratic campaigns of calumny.

During the last elections in Germany and France the social democrats gave promises of an amnesty in order to capture workers' votes. After the elections they sabotaged with all their powers the workers' demands for an amnesty. The terrorist regime in Germany finds staunch defenders in the social democrats. In France the case of Sadoul shows how much the promises of an amnesty by the social democrats and the Left Bloc were worth.

They continually attempt to convince the workers that it is impossible to grant an amnesty to revolutionary workers in Europe so long as the counter-revolutionaries in the Soviet Union are not given an amnesty. The amnesty in Georgia destroys this argument of the social democrats.

Liberalism is dead! Long live Liberalism!

"Outside the House of Commons what did Liberalism represent? Its spirit had gone. It had cast aside its binding clothes and its spirit was enshrined in the Labour Party. Although he did not believe in the transmigration of souls he believed in the transmigration of political principles."

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald at Bradford I.L.P. (Vide „Daily Herald“ April 2, 1925).