

# SPECIAL NUMBER

English Edition

Unpublished Manuscripts — Please reprint

# INTERNATIONAL

Vol. 10 No. 10

# PRESS

25<sup>th</sup> February 1930

# CORRESPONDENCE

Editorial Offices and Central Despatching Department: Berlin C 25, Bartelstrasse 1/5, III. Postal Address, to which all remittances should be sent by registered post: International Press Correspondence, Berlin C 25, Bartelstrasse 1/5, III. Telegraphic Address: Inprekorr, Berlin. Telephone: Berolina 1169 and 2886

## International Women's Day 1930

### CONTENTS

N. Krupskaya: March 8th. . . . .	170	K. Tineva: The Working Women in the Struggle against Imperialist War . . . . .	177
Lene Overlach: International Women's Day 1930 in Germany . . . . .	171	Hedwig Merk: The Military Women's Organisations of the Bourgeoisie . . . . .	178
Celia Parker: The Increasing Role of Women in the Class Struggle in the United States . . . . .	172	A. Bogat: How the Working and Peasant Women of Russia Direct the Government . . . . .	179
Dubois: Capitalist Rationalisation and the French Working Women . . . . .	173	Bulle: Socialist Competition and the Shock Brigades in the U. S. S. R. . . . .	181
Lilly Webb: British Women Textile Workers in Struggle . . . . .	174	Yasinskaya: The Part Played by Women in the Peasant Revolutionary Movement . . . . .	182
A. Rasumova: The Position of the Chinese Working Women . . . . .	174	The Social Emancipation of Working Women and the Five-Year Plan . . . . .	183
Vera Novak: The Position of Working Women in Yugoslavia . . . . .	175	Miroshnikova: Working Women in the Co-operatives of the U. S. S. R. . . . .	184
Ita Mint: The Working Women's Position in Italy . . . . .	176		

## International Women's Day — the Day of Struggle of the Proletariat.

By Moirova.

20 years have passed since the Conference of Socialist Women at Copenhagen passed the decision that the 8th March was to be kept as International Women's Day for the revolutionary mobilisation of the broad masses of the women against the rule of the bourgeoisie, as a sign of the drawing of a line of demarcation between the revolutionary proletarian women's movement and the social reformist, women's rights, Chauvinist, nationalist and bourgeois women's movement.

During these years the proletarian women's movement has gone a long way, has reached every country in the world, has become an inseparable constituent of the general proletarian class movement, and has passed forward in a broad class front to an offensive against the organisations hostile to the proletarian class, including the women's organisations.

The mass employment of unskilled female labour in the capitalist undertakings equipped with the latest achievements of technics, and requiring only a minimum number of highly qualified workers, has altered the position of the women

workers employed in the process of production, and in the working class. The women workers are becoming more and more the main producers, from whom the fighting capacity, organisation, and class consciousness of the whole proletariat are greatly dependent.

In spite of the unbridgeable inconsistency between the influx of female labour into social production and the retention of the family hearth, and in spite of the enormous need for public institutions for the care of children, still the individual household, the education of the children in the family, continues to prevail as a system in the capitalist countries — but without the organiser of this household, without the working woman — it falls into decay, the workers' children are neglected, and the working men and women themselves sink into indescribably hard conditions of life

Social democracy has failed to bring forward anything better in the struggle against this unbridled exploitation, than the slogan: — "Women, stay at home, — your husbands must

replace you at the bench" — and now again they are attempting to mislead the working masses with this same slogan.

Instead of the slogan — "Equal pay for equal work" — the slogan issued is: "Working women, back to the family!" It need not be said that this is fresh treachery on the part of social democracy, which speculates on rousing contradictions within the proletariat and upon the direct support of the bourgeoisie, and which aims at propping up the shaking foundations of the capitalist world by robbing the working masses.

This year the International Women's Day occurs at a time of intensest class struggle. Never before has the fate of the whole proletariat been so graphically evident, or the will to fight against suppression so strong. Never before has the working woman striven so purposefully, so class consciously, to the "proletarian united front" against the bourgeoisie, and against its agents, the Social Fascists.

Was it not French working women who thronged the streets of Champigny, amidst a hail of blows from the police, crying: "Organise Soviets in France", "Long live the Red Army!", "Down with the social murderers!" Was it not Polish working women who drove the social Fascists from their meetings, and barred the way with their own bodies against the trams run by strike-breakers!? Was it not German proletarian women who were the first to lend a helping hand in the building of barricades on 1st May, and were these not the first to strike on 2nd May!? Was it not Czech women comrades who kept their places in the picket line, in the struggle against strikebreakers, until their hands and feet were frozen! Was it not the wives of the Greek workers who, taking an active part in the revolutionary struggle threw policemen into the sea! Have the women textile workers in India lagged behind the men in the revolutionary struggle, have the working women of Haiti not sacrificed their lives for the liberation of the oppressed people, and have the working and peasant women permitted themselves to be intimidated by class justice!?

On International Women's Day the working women, the workers' wives, the women agricultural labourers, the housewives, the women employees — all the women forced daily and hourly to begrudge themselves even bread in order that they may support the senseless efforts of the bourgeoisie to overcome the impending crises in the senile capitalist world by means of a savage exploitation of the masses of the people, by the extermination and robbery of whole peoples, by the persecution of revolutionists, by the prohibition of strikes, demonstrations, and the labour press, by bloody perversions of justice against the working class, against women and children, — all the oppressed, all the enslaved, all the exploited, must gather even more closely together in a firmly welded united front of the workers against capital, against its savage offensive, against the social Fascist betrayers of the proletariat.

On the International Day of the working women the joint slogans of the workers must resound more clearly than ever: "Equal pay for equal work, equal unemployment benefit", "Down with mass dismissals from the industrial undertakings, give us the seven-hour day!". "We demand the right of the working woman to leave of absence for confinement and full pay during the time. Down with the abortion laws". "Down with high prices, down with the taxes whose whole burden falls on the working masses!". "Down with bourgeois justice!". "Rights of demonstration and strike for the proletariat!". "Down with the calumination and repression of the communists!". "We will strengthen the Party of the proletariat by joining it in masses!"

Whilst the International Women's Day is held in the capitalist countries in the midst of the savage offensive of the bourgeoisie against the working masses, and of the revolutionary counter-offensive of the masses against the bourgeoisie, the celebration of the 8th March will take place in the country of the proletarian dictatorship, in the Soviet Union, in the period of the development of the building up of socialism.

The vast land of the Soviets stretches from the White Sea to the Black, from the Pacific to the Baltic, penetrates into the heart of the capitalist world, demolishes the remnants of capitalism, in spite of bourgeois encirclement, in its own country, by means of the mighty plans of socialist reconstruction, and undermines the international foundations of capital.

Factories and mines spring into being, mighty power stations arise, new railway lines cast their network across the

country, new socialist cities shoot up out of the ground, a new socialist village rises upon the ruins of the private property of the petty and big bourgeoisie. The whole development of the workers' State is subordinated to the interests of the workers. A great creative will was born of the liberation from enslavement of the proletariat by the October revolution.

The working class, having established its power — the power of the Soviets — is creating laws placing this state upon immovable foundations, laws increasing the power of the proletariat, creating the possibility of augmenting the importance and the technique of proletarian labour, of giving it the necessary recreation, of increasing wages, of adapting every material work, of freeing the working women more and more, of giving them equal rights with the men, and securing the lives of their children. Everything is for the workers, nothing for the enemies of the workers!

Is this banner, raised by the October revolution, not the banner of the whole proletariat?

The more hated by and intolerable to the whole capitalist world is the existence of the Soviet Union, and the more embittered and subtle the secret attacks of the foes of the Soviet Union.

Every proletarian woman recognises the importance of the Soviet Union. She sees that the struggle of the workers is not fruitless, she sees that the working class can be victorious and therefore must be victorious; she comprehends that the victory of the workers is no easy task, that this victory is not to be won by means of a class peace with the bourgeoisie, but by determined revolutionary struggle.

The International Woman's Day is being held amidst the intensifying revolutionary struggle. The 8th March will bind more firmly the ties uniting the ranks of the working women with the general ranks of the working class. The 8th March will increase the number of revolutionary fighters among working women. The 8th March will form this year an important chapter in the history of the proletarian women's movement, a chapter which will draw the fascinated attention of the future historian of the struggle of the international proletariat.

## March 8th.

By N. Krupskaya.

March 8th — the International holiday of the working woman, I am not going to repeat the story about the great part played by Clara Zetkin in this movement, a woman whose name is inseparably bound up with March 8th. Neither shall I repeat the well known stages of development of our proletarian women's movement. I would advise the reading of E. Blonina's pamphlet entitled "The Working Woman in the International" published ten years ago and written by the author just before her tragic death.

She wrote in her pamphlet that the III. International will be built not only by workmen but also by working woman.

"In this matter of drawing the working women of the world into the Communist movement there is a good deal that can be done by the Russian proletarian women. They are the first ones to live under conditions of the proletarian dictatorship, under conditions of socialism. They are the first ones who have in actual life and experience discovered the meaning of the Soviet Government for the working and peasant woman. The working women of Russia must establish close ties with their sisters of the West, they must tell them about all that the Workers Government has given them, they must call upon them to fight for the establishment of a Soviet Government in their own country, to ally themselves with Communism and with the Communist International. The working woman of Russia will thus hasten the development of the revolution and help in the speediest ushering in of Communism."

Ten years have elapsed since these words were written. Ten years of stubborn struggles have day in and day out raised our entire movement onto a higher level.

During these ten years we have coped with ruin inside the land of Soviets, have made great strides on the economic front, have learned to take better account of what we do, have

learned to plan our work on a national scale. We have made undoubted success in the sphere of industrialisation and are successfully going over from the worn out peasant horse to the tractor and the combine. Of course we pay dearly for the lessons we got on the economic front. Many mistakes and failures are on our record but as a result we are building, we are raising our economic position, we are going forward, and rapidly at that. Agriculture is also making rapid strides. The Soviet farm "Gigant" is an example. "Grain factories" are growing quickly, they ensure the country against famine. The tractor has begun its work and there is a swift development of collective farming. Collective farming in its turn powerfully stimulates our cultural life, it gives rise to an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, to a want for an understanding of our environment. The masses are culturally growing.

The remote village is learning to read and write. Illiteracy is quickly disappearing among the women. In the schools for illiterates we are now teaching political subjects. Women who learn to read and write are being drawn into social work. The cultural level of the workers is rising. I had the pleasure of being at a meeting of Leningrad workers before leaving for the countryside to help in the building up of collective farms. There were 2,000 workers present. Most of them with a high school education. Recently I attended a large meeting of Moscow university workers. There were about 2½ thousand present. One could see an intellectual look in the audience. I found that students in the workers' university in Moscow are accepted after passing through the 7 classes and general 2-year courses. The cultural level of the town is growing and so is the cultural level of the village. The women are engaged in great work both in town and in country. They work in the trade union organisations, as women organisers, in the co-operatives, in the Soviets, in the collective farms; there are many women promoted in all spheres of work. The cultural aspect of the town is changing, the cultural aspect of the village is changing. Comrade **Sheboldaev**, secretary of the regional committee, said to the Leningrad workers on their departure to the lower Volga:

"Do not imagine that the modern village in anyway resembles the old, poverty stricken and dark village; the aspect of the countryside has changed."

There is a great upheaval now in progress, there is a great movement towards new forms of life. So far these questions are discussed chiefly in the towns; but attention to this problem is increasing daily. New homes, public feeding, modern training of children — all these problems rise in their full scope. Wash-tubs, pots and pans, cradles — all that has consumed the life of the toiling woman and prevented her from thinking of anything better, keeping her attached to the home, all these petty things are now crumbling, one can see already woman's emancipation, all details are already under consideration, details as to how best to get rid of this tedious mode of life.

Ten years have gone by since 1920 and the questions that stood before us then are still confronting us but we have totally different possibilities now of solving them.

Of course we need not cherish any illusions, we understand the hardships of the struggle which is still before us, we know how many obstacles we still must surmount.

One can see that our revolution is rising to a higher level even by trivial matters. Efforts are now being exerted in order to rouse the masses to a conscious life. The most ignorant strata must be roused by general effort. Cultural backwardness, like trachoma, like small pox, is contagious. A country cannot be safe, healthy, enlightened and happy, as was the wish of Lenin, as long as there are hungry, sick, ignorant and depressed people in it. The position of the poor, the position of the national minorities, the position of the working and peasant woman, are now in the centre of public attention. These strata must be roused and organised along new lines.

On International Women's Day the working woman of the Soviet Union feels that she can now much more easily obtain not merely formal, not merely juridical, but actual and real equality.

The first stage of the struggle when it was chiefly a question of obtaining equality is nearing its end. The second stage — the stage of struggle for real equality — is setting in. All organs of the Soviet government, all Party, trade union and cooperative organisations, will unite in order to bring about this real equality. All must be on guard!

## International Women's Day 1930 in Germany.

By Lene Overlach.

International Women's Day 1930 in Germany occurs at a time of struggle against the Young Plan, against enormously increased danger of war and for the defence of the Soviet Union.

At the beginning of 1929 a new offensive of big capital against the working class set in in order to consolidate capitalist German economy, which had become a bit shaky, and in order to pay the reparations and other debts. New rationalisation measures were introduced in the factories: workers were dismissed, labour intensity enhanced and wages depressed. The position of the working women can be seen from the following.

The participation of women and youths in production has increased. According to official reports, women were engaged in middle-sized and big works as follows:

1926 31.11 per cent, of whom 5.5 per cent. were girls up to 16 years;

1927 31.49 per cent. of whom 6.34 per cent. were girls up to 16 years.

From the membership figures of the sick insurance institutions it is to be seen that women are increasingly drawn into production, whilst the percentage of men is declining.

How rapidly capitalist rationalisation is being introduced by means of drawing in working women is shown by an example of the shoe factory Kaiser in Pirmasens. Formerly men were employed in this factory three of whom polished 400 pairs of shoes daily. They earned 30 to 40 marks weekly. Adult working women taking the place of the men workers, polished on the conveyer 850 to 900 pairs of shoes earning thereby a weekly wage of 30 to 35 marks. At present there are working in this same department girls of 16 years, who receive for the same amount of work only 10 marks a week.

The wages of working women are falling not only in comparison with the increased prices, but also in comparison with men's wages, i. e. the disparity between men's and women's wages is increasing. According to official statistics the working women received in

December	1926	60.1 per cent. of men's wages
January	1929	59.7 per cent. of men's wages
May	1929	58.2 per cent. of men's wages

These figures strikingly prove how the social fascist trade union bureaucracy has completely dropped the old trade union demand of equal pay for equal work, and is completely betraying the interests of the working women.

The following table of wages paid in the middle of 1929 by the Gardinen and Spitzen (Curtain and Lace) Manufaktur Dresden-Döberitz confirms the above assertions:

250 weavers received on an average 50 marks weekly  
500 working women received on an average 23 marks weekly  
300 girls received on an average 12 marks weekly.  
1000 unskilled workers received on an average 30 marks weekly.

Although unemployment is increasing more rapidly among men workers, the number of unemployed women has also considerably increased during the last few weeks. As unemployment benefit is paid out on the basis of the previous wages obtained, the worst paid working women get the lowest unemployment rates. According to official figures only 5.3 per cent. of the men workers, but 34.1 per cent. of working women formerly received a weekly wage of less than 18 marks.

In spite of the fact that in Germany almost 4 million workers are unemployed, working hours are arbitrarily lengthened, before all in factories where working women are employed. Even the German Textile workers' Union has to admit that, as a result of replies to questionnaires, it was ascertained that in 77 textile factories 2873 working men and women have been working from 49 to 60 hours a week. Of the 3.1 million workers organised in the General German Federation of Trade Unions, 42.7 per cent. worked in October 1927 from 48 to 54 hours weekly; in October 1928 this percentage had risen to 46.6 per cent. It must, however, be

borne in mind that these statistics do not include workers on short time.

The German working class is confronted by new tremendous exploitation measures of the employers, by great struggles for bread and against mass dismissals. The big bourgeoisie is not only determined to prevent even the smallest wage increase, but is proceeding to a systematic **reduction of wages**. Thus, for instance, the Firm Dierig in Langenbielau, after the lockout of the textile workers, by cutting down piece-work rates, reduced the wages of the skilled working women for a definite work from 11 marks to 7.50 marks. The spinners now obtain only 60 pfennigs per hour instead of 63 pfennigs previously.

Added to this there is the **increase of customs duties**, which will lead to an increase in the price of food, the increase of mass taxes, of rents and at the same time the cutting down of social welfare.

The working women are replying to the enormous pressure of the employers, to the rapid depression of their standard of living, by numerous isolated struggles in the factories. We mention only the successful wage struggle of the working women in the metal works of Lorenz in Berlin, the strike of the working women in the firm of Meyer in Bremen against the reduction of piece work rates by 15 per cent., the successful struggle of the working women in the shoe factory in Harta in Saxony, by which not only an intended 40 per cent. reduction of piece-rates was frustrated, but a 10 to 15 per cent. wage increase achieved. Under the leadership of the revolutionary trade union opposition there was likewise frustrated in the März works in Rödelheim (Hessen) a 15 per cent. reduction of piece rates. In the metal works of Ehrenreich-Büssendorf six departments of working women frustrated by means of a strike the impudent attempt of the firm to reduce the piece rates from 4 marks to 1.70 marks. In the rubber factory Elbe in Piesteritz, the working women, under the leadership of the Young Communist League, achieved through a successful struggle a 25 per cent. wage increase for specially dirty work. In the struggle of the Recenia workers in Hartmannsdorf, which lasted for several weeks, the working women stood solidly at the side of their men; at the demonstration against the intended conviction of 150 strikers, a textile working woman was arrested for attacking a police officer. In the strike of the taxi-drivers in Berlin the wives of the strikers were mobilised. The women also played an active part on the occasion of the **hunger marches of the unemployed in Berlin**, Worms, Hamburg and in the Ruhr district.

The revolutionary trade union opposition has set itself the task of increasing the mobilisation of working women and drawing them into the general struggles of the working class. At its Congresses the Opposition propagated the demands of the working women and put forward the necessity of drawing working women into the election committees, putting working women as candidates on the lists for the factory council elections, electing them as red shop stewards etc.

The Communist Party of Germany is putting forward the following demands for International Women's Day in accordance with the slogans of the Communist International:

Struggle against the Young Plan, for higher wages, equal pay for equal work, seven-hour day, against mass dismissals. The Party is propagating the international leadership of economic struggles, and international proletarian solidarity.

The Party is calling upon the working women in the factories and upon the unemployed women to demonstrate for their demands on the International Fighting Day against Unemployment. It calls to the proletarian women to be on guard against the increased war danger and to defend the threatened Soviet Union.

International Women's Day 1930 will carry the slogans of the Communist International into the broad masses of working women; it will call upon the working class to make the fight for the emancipation and for the equal rights of women the fight of the whole proletariat, which can only end victoriously with the overthrow of capital and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## The Increasing Role of Women in the Class Struggle in the United States.

By Celia Parker.

No longer is there any industry in the United States of America today that can be said to be exclusively the domain of men. Women have entered every industry in the country and their number in industry is constantly increasing. In even the heaviest industry, such as **iron and steel**, women in ever increasing numbers are replacing men as the capitalists, in their rationalisation drive, constantly, strive for cheaper labour and greater production.

Rationalisation has produced profound changes in the composition of the working class, not the least marked of which is the replacement of the labour of men by that of women and children.

As the result of the industrial and financial crisis in America there will be a new rationalisation drive, in an effort to place the burden of the crisis upon the backs of the workers.

In the developing counter-offensive of the working class under the leadership of the Communist Party and the new revolutionary industrial unions, the women in the United States are playing an important role. However this role is not yet commensurate with their importance in industry, but under the leadership of the Communist Party it can be developed to the point where their role in the class struggle will be proportionate to their role in industry.

In every recent strike, the working women of the United States have been prominent on the battle front. With every strike taking on, in its very earliest stages, the character of a political struggle as it meets the ferocity of the State, the women have shown themselves equal to the sternest demands of the class struggle. In the long bitter **Gastonian** textile struggle, **Ella May Wiggins**, a working woman, a real fighter for the liberation of her class, was murdered by a combination of police and private thugs in the direct employ of the mills. In **New Bedford** strike the number of women arrested on the picket line equalled that of the men. In the coal and iron district of **Eastern Ohio**, the scene of the recent bitter miner's struggle, a young working woman is under sentence of ten years' imprisonment for revolutionary activity, convicted of sedition against the State. On the **New York** furriers, cloak-makers, foodworkers, shoeworkers and other strikes, hundreds of women and girls have been frightfully beaten by the Tammany police and fascist socialist party thugs, thrown into jail and there subjected to police brutality. In the many political demonstrations before government offices and foreign embassies in defence of the Soviet Union at the time of the Manchurian border warfare, the women were in the front ranks of the struggle. On the **First of August anti-war** demonstrations they equally proved their readiness to fight and defend themselves from the police brutality. They gave a good account of themselves in the recent demonstrations against United States marine massacres in **Haiti** and in every other revolutionary mass political demonstration.

The radicalisation of the working women and the wives of the working men was dramatically set forth in the series of mass street demonstrations during the course of the **New Orleans tramway strike**. These demonstrations were spontaneous outbursts of hatred against the city government, whose police attacked the workers. In these demonstrations the women played a leading role.

American imperialism, by its very act, and particularly at this time when it faces a deep-going economic crisis, is driving headlong towards another world war. Every vicious attack against the working class is a part of its war preparations. Thus the organisation of women workers, the drawing of them into general revolutionary activity no doubt will strengthen the general revolutionary front of the American proletariat.

In the revolutionary fight of the working class against the capitalist class of the most powerful imperialism in the world, the women workers of the United States are already playing a most important role in the revolutionary struggles. They have already shown that they stand shoulder to shoulder as comrades in the general struggle of the proletariat against capitalism.

# Capitalist Rationalisation and the French Working Women.

By Dubois.

In France, women workers compose 40 per cent of the whole working class. In some sections of industry, for instance, in the textile industry, women's labour reaches 60 to 70 per cent. In metallurgy, owing to the introduction of new methods of work, men's labour is gradually being replaced by women's. Women are being gradually drawn into industry and are becoming a weapon in the hands of the employers on the industrial market for lowering and fixing prices, and a serious competitor of men in questions of wages.

The women workers in France are in very bad circumstances. Take for example the **textile industry** in which the percentage of women is very high. In the spinning sections they work without the minimum hygienic measures which are necessary for the protection of health. Everywhere the conditions of work are unsatisfactory. Nowhere dining rooms exist. The working women have to take their meals by their machines without stopping them. Women workers work almost naked, in stuffy and suffocating rooms, often in unbearable heat. The children of these women workers are born with rickets and skin diseases. Most of the industrial processes are exceedingly harmful to health, since they take place in an atmosphere filled with dust, which gives rise to a number of diseases. Workers in the spinning shops are greatly predisposed to tuberculous diseases. Such diseases often have a fatal ending. Finally, accidents very often happen since there are not sufficient protection devices.

Many women are occupied in **metallurgy**. They are in constant competition with men's labour. In this industry many accidents are taking place. The conveyor system destroys the health of women workers, from whom is demanded daily an increase of efficiency and of output. The capitalists make use of special "demonstrators" to increase efficiency. In one case, one of them, founding his judgement on the showing of a meter which he was using to time the work, compelled the workers to turn out in one hour 40 pieces more than the usual norm. Electric soldering machines are more and more coming into use. At Citroens Works, women do the same work as men but receive from 1 to 1½ francs per hour less. They are employed in injurious occupations such as nickeling, polishing, and painting automatic lathes, etc.

In the production of artificial silk, women's labour is supreme. Eighty per cent of the French production consists of the manufacture of silk gum and viscose filaments. 60,000 men and women workers are occupied in the French artificial silk industry. Among them 70 to 80 per cent are women. This work is absolutely injurious to health. The raw materials employed in this industry can be used for making poison gas. The artificial silk industry assists in war preparations. The French bourgeoisie are pouring their capital into this industry, and are getting a foretaste of the tremendous profits which it would be able to pocket in case of a new war.

In the rubber factories Michelin in Clermont-Ferrand and Bergougnan's factories in Toulon, 70,000 men and women workers are employed. Here capitalist exploitation reaches unheard-of proportions. At Michelin's works, all the workshops are working on Taylor's system, timing by chronometres is the regular thing. Michelin has introduced a system in which personality absolutely disappears and in which all feel their subordination to the employer. All that the workers use—their living rooms, creches for the children, co-operative stores, sport clubs, churches—all belong to Michelin. If any one wants a visitor, he must have Michelin's permission. The workers and their wives and children are compelled to go to church, and to buy everything in the employers' co-operative store and to be members of his factory club. The workers of Michelin's factory are in full moral dependence on their employer and the wages which they receive for their labour return to the employer's pocket owing to his system "serving" the workers. This is a new form of slavery and feudal dependence on the employer.

How do the working women of France react to this ex-

ploitation? Can we say that they are resigned to their lot? No, for numerous strikes prove the opposite.

During the last 18 months women have taken most active part in the economic struggle. For a number of years in France, we have seen how great is the activity of the women workers. The textile strikes in the North included thousands of women workers who demanded an increase of pay by 50 centimes. In these strikes the women workers showed their fighting powers and their initiative. They participated in the work of the strike committees, drove out the yellows and opposed the armed guards and the gendarmes, fighting them with great courage. Many of them were persecuted even arrested and imprisoned. This heroic struggle served as a commencement of the organisation of women in the Northern district. They entered the unitarian trade unions which were strengthened and have a great influence. Owing to this strike we discovered a large number of active women workers, and in the North a very favourable situation for work amongst women has been formed for the C.P. of France.

In Rouen-Darntal there was a strike of 6,000 workers, among them 90 per cent women. The strike was carried on successfully, in spite of the poor preparations made by the reformist elements of the trade union which put forward incorrect demands for increased pay for skilled workers only. The workers themselves demanded a general increase of 50 centimes for all workers. They did this after the comrades from the CGTU, had explained to them the meaning of a demand for increased pay for skilled workers only, which would be supported by the employer as he wished to bribe the higher ranks of the working class. During this strike women courageously opposed the gendarmes. In spite of the unsuccessful result of the strike in Darntal the membership of the union grew from 20 members to 900, and in Rouen from 200 to 1,300 members.

During the miners' strike at Garde the women played a considerable role. They called upon the soldiers to fraternise with the striking workers. At Grand Combe there was a clash between groups of strikers and the guards. In the front ranks of this group, women fought fiercely. After the conflict the group moved to the pits. There were soldiers guarding the entrance. But after the women had talked with them and suggested fraternisation, the soldiers admitted the group to the pits from which they expelled the strike breakers.

In the metallurgical industry in the Paris district, in Rouen, in Lavelalette, everywhere women were in the first ranks during the struggle. The women's commission of the CGTU, participated in more than 50 such movements.

As a result of this aggressive movement, which proves the radicalisation of the masses, the possibility arose of organising a number of **conferences of industrial women workers**.

A Conference was held at Lille (85 women worker delegates from 42 firms).

Then there was a conference of women workers in Darntal which included the whole textile district of Rouen (80 delegates from 44 firms). At the general congress of textile workers at Rouen, there were 96 women workers out of a total of 196 delegates.

The **National Women's Congress** has laid the foundation for systematic work among women workers, beginning with self-criticism of the past and deciding on the tasks of future work. Thirty-six women workers represented the basic centres of industry in the provinces and 28 represented the Paris district. The results of this conference confirmed the systematic growth of women's labour in industry, the drift to the Left and the growth of activity of women in economic struggles.

The enthusiastic actions of the French women workers on August 1st against imperialist war and in defence of the U.S.S.R. is the best proof of the growth of the political consciousness, a guarantee of their further active participation side by side with the whole working class in the decisive struggles for overturning the power of capital.

# British Women Textile Workers in Struggle.

By Lilly Webb.

The increasing radicalisation of the working women in Britain is demonstrated most clearly in the struggle now taking place in the textile industry where the employers have launched their long planned offensive. This industry is one of the basic industries of Britain in the throes of an economic crisis. The vast majority of the workers are women (750,000 out of a total of 1,285,000).

Even before the recent attack the workers in the **Cotton Section** of the industry had suffered the following reductions in wages:

June 1921 . . . . .	60 per cent
December 1921 . . . . .	10 "
April 1922 . . . . .	40 "
November 1922 . . . . .	10 "

The cotton employers not accidentally decided to begin their attack immediately following the election of the **Labour Government**. Following the employers demands for 12½ per cent reduction in wages the Trade Union leaders balloted the workers. The result was that 90 per cent of the workers voted against any wage reductions. The employers then posted lockout notices and the struggle involving 500,000 workers began on July 29th.

The Trade Union leaders who were openly in favour of wage reductions decided to open negotiations with the employers on the basis of wage reductions. This decision was categorically rejected by the workers and the leaders had to revise their previous decision.

When it was obvious that the Trade Union leaders and the employers could not handle the situation alone, the Labour Government decided to openly intervene. Test cases were sent to the Ministry of Labour, appealing for unemployment benefits for the locked out workers. The Labour Government turned down this appeal. At the same time the Minister of Health sent a letter to the Boards of Guardians, pointing out that the granting of Guardian's Relief to the locked-out workers was an illegal act.

The anti-working class policy of the Labour Government was driving the working women over to the leadership of the **Communist Party**. In **Burnley** working women became members of a Committee of action under Communist leadership. In **Oldham**, women took an active part in the demonstrations organised by the Communist Party to demand relief from the Board of Guardians. It was at this period that the Labour Government decided to set up a Court of Arbitration. The workers were to return to work at pre-lockout wages, pending the decision of this Court. The vast majority of workers firmly believed that the Labour Government would protect their wages. The Court of Arbitration declared, however, for a 6¼ percent reduction in wages. The Labour Government thus succeeded in getting the workers back into the mills and then proceeded to cut their wages.

When the award was announced, the workers were seething with revolt. Protests and demands for action poured into the offices of the trade unions. Within a few weeks after the award, 10 spontaneous, unofficial strikes broke out in various parts of Lancashire. The revolt of the weavers, a big majority of whom are women, was so complete that the Trade Union leaders had to put forward demands for a 12½ percent increase in wages and for a minimum wage of 7/6 d for each loom.

A ballot on the question of strike action to enforce these demands was taken in January and has resulted, in spite of the efforts of the trade union leaders, in a huge majority for a struggle (92,142 for strike action and 43,531 against). Despite this definite decision, the trade union leaders have refused to go forward with a strike.

Inspired by the success of the Cotton employers, the **Woollen employers** put forward demands late in 1929 for an all round reduction in wages of 10 percent. The Trade Union leaders offered 7 percent reduction and the employers modified their demand to one of 8.3 percent. A ballot of the workers resulted in a 80 per cent vote against any wage reductions and for a struggle. The Trade Unions leaders were forced to make a pretence of fighting.

There followed a series of isolated struggles, one of the largest of which was in **Saddleworth** where 1,300 workers, mainly women and girls, were involved.

In the Woollen textile industry women constitute 150,000 of the 250,000 workers employed. Women and girls have played the most prominent part in these local struggles, picketing and showing great bravery in face of police persecution.

In the woollen textile dispute the Labour Government again played an open and decisive role as strikebreaker. Special contingents of police were sent into those strike areas where the strikers were militant and prepared to accept the leadership of the Communist Party. Following effective picketing at the Kinder Mill Greenfield, the employers sent a telegram asking the Labour Government to put into operation the Trade Disputes Act introduced by the Baldwin Government following the General Strike and which the Labour Party pledged itself to repeal. The Labour Government responded to this appeal. The Trades Dispute Act was also used to arrest the Communists active in the strike area; one, a woman, was sent to prison for one month for expressing her opinion to a blackleg.

At Lunds, a notorious "sweat"shop, employing mainly women and girls, the strike has lasted for 10 weeks. The girls and women have picketed every day although faced by special detachments of police. These strikers have repudiated their old leaders and have set up a strike committee under the leadership of the Communist Party. In all mills, excepting Lunds the triple alliance of Employees, Trade Union Leaders and the Labour Government has succeeded in driving the workers back to work on varying reductions in wages (Kinder mill 5½ per cent; Saddleworth mills 7½ per cent etc.).

In the **Cotton and Woollen Textile** struggles the Party mobilised all its forces and worked energetically throughout the struggles, conducting a wide-spread agitation and propaganda, distributing strike sheets and leaflets.

The mood of the workers was militant. This was the moment for the Party to come forward, to sharply expose the Social Fascist Labour Bureaucracy and to present itself as a revolutionary alternative and to make a determined and consistent fight for the leadership of the struggle. This, however, the Party failed to do.

The wage reductions secured by the employers have not succeeded in stabilising the textile industry. Instead the continued decline in the industry is leading to new attacks. The mood of the workers does not presage a period of peace. The weavers demands have shown that offensive struggles will arise in the period in front.

## The Position of the Chinese Working Woman.

By A. Rasumova.

Chinese industry has developed mostly in the last decade. The foundation of Chinese industry is the production of textiles. In China there are in all 122 textile mills, 49 of which belong to foreign capitalists.

The millowners prefer to employ women and child labour, as this is cheaper than adult male labour. The number of women employed in the textile mills already amounts to 70 per cent. of the total number of textile workers. In the Shanghai mills, where almost the whole of the textile and silk industry is concentrated, over 600 000 workers are employed, of whom 420 000 are women.

In the Japanese mills 49 per cent of the female workers are over sixteen years of age, and 29 per cent. are under sixteen, i. e. are children. In the Chinese mills 53 per cent. are over sixteen years of age and 23 per cent. are children. In the English undertakings the respective figures are 58 per cent. and 16 per cent.

The position of the Chinese working woman is incomparably worse than that of the woman proletarian of other countries. Wages amount to 10 to 15 Mexican dollars (one Mexican dollar is equal to about two shillings) a month with

a twelve-hour working day and no Sunday or other rest day. There is no labour legislation, no protection of labour and no insurance. Girls under sixteen earn from 5 to 6 dollars a month, and likewise work 12 hours a day. That is the position in Shanghai, but in Canton and other towns wages are even lower.

Even with the extremely moderate demands of the Chinese worker in the way of the necessities of life, these miserable wages do not even suffice to insure them against hunger.

Wages in the tobacco factories of the English and American Companies are somewhat higher. Here the working day is ten hours, and children under 14 years are not employed. The women, of course, receive lower wages even when performing the same work as the men. As in general, here also there is no weekly day of rest. In the whole year there are only three days holiday, i. e. at the New Year, but for which no pay is granted. An exceedingly strict regime prevails in the factories. Absence from work is punished with heavy fines, if not with dismissal. At the time of the Wuhan Government, it was proposed in the Hankow factories that every Sunday be declared free, and in addition that there be seven holidays in the year with pay. At the time of the New Year the factories were closed from 10 to 14 days, but of course the workers did not receive any pay during this time. Ching Kai-shek however, restored the old state of affairs.

The miserable wages of the workers are further shortened by other means. They are paid in copper coins, the value of which is continually fluctuating. The foreman speculates with the money by paying wages according to the official rate of the currency, which is always lower than the commercial rate.

The unbounded exploitation of the Chinese working woman has of course not failed to have an effect on her activity. At every time of the Chinese revolution and of mass movements, of revolts, demonstrations and strikes, the working women have taken part in all actions. In the years of reaction, after the overthrow of the Canton Commune, the Chinese working women did not give way, but took part in the daily fights for improving their working and living conditions and participated in the class struggle of the Chinese proletariat against militarism, imperialism and against the Kuomintang government.

The Chinese working women are for the greater part unorganised. They do not enter the yellow government trade unions, as they see that these do not represent their interests. Also in the red trade unions there are very few women, as they are illegal, a circumstance which prevents a big influx of working women. But the Chinese working women, who realise the necessity of organised leadership of the struggle, are creating their own organisations in the factories and supporting the red trade unions. The figures regarding the participation of women in the strike movement in China prove more than anything else that the Chinese working woman is conscious of her class position and has realised that the only path to the emancipation of the working class is that of struggle. In the year 1926, there were in Shanghai alone 169 strikes in 165 factories in which 202,297 workers, including 12,716 women participated.

In the year 1927 the working women of 83 silk spinning mills, 1000 women tobacco workers, 3000 working women in the Japanese textile mills went on strike.

In the years 1920 to 1927 there took place in China over 700 strikes in which working women participated. In the year 1928, in Shanghai alone 120 strikes took place. In these strikes 213,966 workers, including 122,807 women, participated. These strikes had partly an economic, partly a political character. 25 strikes can be regarded as purely political.

In the year 1929 strikes were no less frequent. From May to August there took place in Shanghai 75 strikes involving 57,757 working men and women; in September/October there occurred 14 strikes and 75 disputes involving 113,167 workers. In addition there is the strike of the workers in the match factory Tsingtau, which has already lasted for several months. The repeated attempts of the employers to enter into separate negotiations with individual groups, have proved abortive. In spite of unemployment the working women remain firm and united.

The party of the "reorganisationists" (Left Kuomintang) has set up a programme for the "women's movement" which contains, among others, the following demands:

Elaboration of laws securing equality for women; guarantee of freedom of marriage; elaboration of a law on women's labour, stipulating equal pay for equal work and protection of mothers; improvement of the standard of living of working women, two months leave for working mothers after confinement; prohibition of trading in children etc.

The Kuomintang adopted a similar programme at its last Congress. The government trade unions likewise dealt with the question of women's labour and the last government Bill already states that women's work in factories injurious to health is forbidden, making however the reservation that the conditions injurious to health obtaining in the factory must be ascertained by the factory inspector. Also women's night work (from 10 o'clock in the evening to 6 o'clock in the morning) is forbidden; the trade unions are instructed to organise kindergartens etc.

Of course these laws do not bind anybody and their propagation among the working women has not called forth the same illusions as formerly. The working women are gradually realising that neither the Kuomintang nor its trade unions, neither the "Left" nor the Right are really doing anything for the emancipation of the working class, and they are consequently going over to the side of the Communist Party. The campaigns carried out under the slogans of the Communist Party and of the Young Communist League during the last year have resulted in winning a considerable number of working women. On the 1st of May, on 30th of May (anniversary of the general strike of the Shanghai proletariat), and on the 1st of August, the working women participated in the demonstrations which were dispersed by the police. They distributed leaflets, and delivered speeches. Many of them were arrested or simply shot. But all this cannot keep back the Chinese working woman from determined struggle.

## The Position of Working Women in Yugoslavia.

By Vera Novak

The chief forms and methods of capitalist rationalisation in Yugoslavia are the following: displacement of the labour of men by women's labour; displacement of the old and more qualified workers by younger labour power and unskilled workers; intensification of Labour; lowered wages; longer working day etc.

Official statistics give no exact information of the number of working women engaged in industry; however, from the material given below it is clearly seen that women are being drawn into the industrial process in ever increasing numbers, often squeezing out the working men. These figures cover women engaged in industry, handicrafts, and also domestic workers and trade clerks.

The number of insured women in 1923 was 84,797 (19.7%); in 1924 93,464 (20.3%); in 1925 101,242 (21.7%); in 1926 107,631 (22.7%). The highest percentage of women workers, according to 1929 figures, are in the following branches of industry: textile: 57.5%; food trades: 39.5% paper industry 39.3%; polygraphic: 31.9%; clothing industry: 27.2%; chemical industry: 19.2%; stone-breaking and brick-making: 16.1% and so on.

Over half of the insured women are under 23 years of age, one-third less than 20, and two-thirds younger than 27 years of age.

The average nominal wage in 1926 was 24.71 dinars for a man and 19.41 for a woman; in 1927 men received on an average 26.52, and women 19.99 dinars; in 1928: men 27.35, and women 20.44 dinars. From this table it is obvious that beginning with 1926 the difference between the wage of men and women has constantly increased.

If we take the average wage of a working man in London in 1914 as 100, then the actual wages in Yugoslavia are as follows:

London in 1929: 107 dollars; in 1927: 106 dollars, in 1928: 110 dollars.

Belgrade in 1926: 30 dollars; in 1927: 31 dollars; in 1928: 31 dollars.

Fifteen percent of the insured women earned less than 10 dinars 18 cents a day; 52% earned 11.60 to 20.30 dinars daily.

By the law covering working hours introduced by the militarist-Fascist regime of General Zivkovich, the 10 hour day in trade and handicraft undertakings has been introduced. For industry the law is still in force for the 8-hour working day, although the workers actually work 10 and more hours. As for trade and handicrafts, the given law is of no significance in their case, because several additional laws and regulations have been introduced, giving shops and handicraft undertakings the right to remain open 12 and more hours daily, and these hours can be lengthened at the will of the master.

Sunday work is prohibited, but the latter paragraphs of this law allow many exceptions, including cleaning and tidying of buildings, "if such work cannot be completed on a week-day". Night work is prohibited for women, but here again there are many exceptions. The law provides for one hour's rest after 8 hours work, but this regulation is rarely observed. Cases are known (certain knitting workshops in Zagreb) where young girls work from 7 in the morning to 6-7 at night, with only a half-hour break.

Apart from the prohibition of night work for women in Yugoslavia, there is no legislation protecting working women. Women are used for carrying heavy weights in the factories, they are to be found working in mercury and lead factories, and in pits (425% of the underground workers in mines are women), in which they carry sacks of cement, salt, flour. In the building trades, women carry the building materials, climbing high among the scaffolding.

According to the law for the protection of mothers and children, the mother has the right to receive relief from the insurance company for 14 days before and after birth. But this relief is so small that the mothers work up to the last minute, and they are carried from work to the hospital or home dietic, in order to return to work again after 10 days or often earlier.

The hard living conditions of the toiling masses and the lack of care in connection with the work of women and the protection of mothers and children, results in a high death rate among children. On an average in Yugoslavia about 20% of the children die annually, i. e. about 50,000 suckling babes. According to the statistics of the war Ministry, 33.63% of the total number of male children born die before reaching the age of 20.

In Yugoslavia there is no unemployment relief. There are only labour exchanges, controlled by the Government, which give out relief for unemployed entirely irregularly and as they will. The insurance companies provide the necessary means for these payments, and together with other payments collect dues from the labour exchange.

In 1927, 127,898 men and 14,174 women were registered as unemployed. These unemployed were in receipt of 1,869,427 dinars during the year 1927, which amounted to 48.79 dinars to each unemployed.

It would be difficult to describe the lack of social rights of the working women in every respect. There are not infrequent cases in Yugoslavia where the owners beat the women. Suicides among the working women are almost an every-day occurrence, being the result of unemployment, insulting behaviour on the part of the owners — this characterises the position of the working women and their lack of social rights more than anything else.

There are no official figures concerning the agricultural workers. All the following data, relating to the Voevodina province, give an idea of the position of this category of working men and women.

In 1900 the population of Voevodina was 1,352,844; of this number 899,641 earned their living in agriculture, 425,747 doing so independently. Actually 197,700 earned their livings by hired labour. In 1927 the actual wages (money earned and wages in kind) amounted to 56.80% for men and 53.64% for women of the 1913 wage. The working day lasts from dawn to dawn. There is no trace of social insurance. The agricultural labourers in case of sickness or other mishaps, are left entirely to themselves. Pregnant women are also uncared for, and receive no relief (In Voevodina in 1922, the number of newborn babies that died amounted to 24.13% in 1914 to 27.54%).

The activation of the working women goes ahead together with the growth of the percentage of women working in industry, with the increased capitalist rationalisation and the worsening conditions of the whole working class and in particular the working women. Instances of the participation of working women in the economic struggles of the men, in circumstances of a regime of bloody terror, the regime of military Fascist dictatorship, — such instances are particularly indicative of the growing activity of the working women of Yugoslavia.

## The Working Woman's Position in Italy.

By Ita Mint.

The working woman of Italy lives under most difficult conditions. Her wages are considerably lower than those of the man, even for the same work. Woman's wages have catastrophically fallen since the advent of the fascist regime accompanied by barbarous exploitation and rising cost of living. For instance, whereas in 1921 women in the textile industry worked 8 hours and earned 150 lire per week on an average, now they work 9-10 hours per day and receive much less than that. Their working conditions are particularly bad.

We shall cite here a number of statements by working women published in the illegal publication, the "Bulletin of the Women's Department".

Here is what a working woman of Turin writes:

"The women working in the spinning department where most strenuous effort is necessary can earn 5 lire a day working normally. By speeding up, for which unusual effort is necessary, they can earn another 3 or 4 lire at most.

"In the winding department work is not so hard but the conditions are extremely bad. The air is saturated with acids and dust, the temperature is very high. Once a doctor who enjoys the confidence of the employers took the side of the women for which he was immediately dismissed. The women in that department earn 9 lire a day.

"Women employed in the sorting department must have a good eye-sight and be able to read and write. Working conditions are very hard, just as in the spinning department, but the wages are lower. After 2 years of work the eye-sight weakens to half the normal strength. In the weaving department young girls are employed who earn from 6-9 lire a day.

"In the packing department where work is particularly hard, the elder women are employed: they earn from 10-12 lire per day.

"A deduction of 1.65 lire per month is made for social-insurance. The working woman has the right to benefits only after having paid regularly for 4 months. In case of illness she receives from the 5th day, 5 lire per day for a period of 3 months. Usually such women are discharged after a while and thus deprived of the right to receive benefits.

"On becoming a mother, the woman having paid regularly her insurance receives a lump sum of 150 lire and 3.75 lire in the course of one month prior to and after child birth. In substance she gets back what she has paid and in the period of confinement when she needs special care and food she has to live on 3.75 lire per day."

From Empoli (the province of Toskan) a woman employed in the Fuchin and Rossel match factory writes:

"Our work is most injurious to one's health and very hard. But notwithstanding women have to work 11 hours a day for which they receive 7 lire. The match makers whose health is totally ruined after a few years work are working on piece rates and the most they can earn is 7 lire per day. Nothing whatever is done for the protection of the health of the woman and mother. It is impossible to keep on this way any longer."

From Monte Lupo they write:

"In the Nardi glass factory women earn 5-6 lire per day. Only some of the older women, those of 30-40 years, earn from 7.75 to 8 lire per day. We call them old because most of the workers in the factory are girls of 14-16 years. The temperature in which we have to work



is either extremely high or extremely low and one can easily imagine what affect this has on our health. Our factory is a regular nest of tuberculosis, the more so that, as already stated, most of us are under 20. Such are the blessings of our youth."

From another town they write:

"The new labour agreement concluded by the fascist unions for the hatmakers is advertised as a great victory, but figures show better than fascist praises what this great victory is. Experienced and skilled cutters having learned the trade in the course of years, earn from 6½ to 8 lire per day. Finishers earn some 4—6 lire, operators — 5.25 to 7.50 lire and pressers from 7.50 to 8.60 lire per day. The latter has to learn many years before she is considered a skilled worker and can receive the highest pay. However, the bosses enthused over the spirit of class collaboration hastened to dismiss us as soon as we are entitled to receive the highest pay. They hire younger ones instead of us and force them to produce more than they can, for which they pay them 'learners' pay".

The wages of women in **Como** are very low

"From the collective agreement in the textile industry in the province of **Como** we take here the most characteristic figures namely, the wages paid to the silk spinners.

"Apprentices receive 4.80 lire in the first and 4.60 lire in the second spinning department. Winders in the first category receive 5.55 lire in the first and 3.35 lire in the second spinning department. Winders of the second category receive 6.35 in the first and 6.10 in the second spinning department. Transmitters of the first category receive 7.15 in the first and 6.85 in the second department. Transmitters of the second category receive 7.95 and 7.65 liras respectively. Spinners receive 8.75 and 8.40 liras respectively. Spinners of the highest category receive 9.55 and 9.15 lire respectively. Sorters receive 6.80 and 6.35 liras respectively.

"For an apprentice to become an experienced worker she must work 7 years. This means that most of the girls at the age of 20 and even more can earn a maximum of 4.80 lire per day."

The dying plants of the province of **Como** write:

"According to the present agreement concluded by the fascist unions dying factories employing less than 100 workers, have the right to reduce the wages fixed in the agreement by 10%. What happens in most of the dying factories in **Como**? The "good" bosses who stand for 'class collaboration' so organise their business that the number of workers they employ is never more than 90. If owing to a lot of work a factory sometimes has an extra worker he is soon dismissed and the others are made to work overtime. Naturally this is done in order to deprive the workers employed of 10% of their earnings allowed by the fascist regime.

"**Como** dying factories become historically known for their '99' principle."

Fascism in its effort to secure a surplus of hands and cannon fodder for its aggressive wars advocates a higher birth rate among the workers.

Fascism severely punishes for abortions and grants 200 lire to those mothers who have borne 10 or more children. Burdening the working class family with many children, fascism only increases the poverty of the workers. Starvation wages, growing cost of living, the absence of any form of protection of the mother and child, lead to an extremely high infant mortality rate, to a high rate of illness of pregnant women and mothers.

Monstrous exploitation, starvation wages and endless deprivation, drives the Italian working women to resistance. Notwithstanding the vicious terror used by the fascist system, working women take part in the general struggle of the Italian proletariat against the capitalist order and against fascism. Many of them have lost their lives at revolutionary posts, many of them are languishing in fascist prisons. On March 8th the revolutionary working women of Italy will remember their advanced fighters in the prisons — **Jordina Rosetti**, a textile worker sentenced to 18 years for Communist propaganda, **Felicita Ferrero** of **Turin**, **Anna Povan'a** of **Como**, **Lee Jacata**, **Vlane Isila**, **Corone Francesco** of **Padua**, **Dzairé Czanki** of **Florence**, and many others who have sacrificed all for the struggle of the working class.

Notwithstanding the fascist threats the working women of Italy will march on March 8 together with the whole working class under the slogans of the Communist Party, fighting for the demands put forward by the General Confederation of Labour — equal pay for equal work, prohibition of injurious and night work for women, prohibition of dismissals of pregnant women, paid vacation to prospective mothers, 2 months prior and 2 months after birth, free medical aid and allowances for the nursing of the child, etc.

Fascist terror, jails, torture and violence will not break the fighting spirit of the Italian working women. In place of each victim snatched out by the fascists, hundreds of new revolutionary fighters arise from the ranks of the proletariat.

## The Working Women in the Struggle Against Imperialist War.

By K. Tineva.

During the period through which we pass, the contradictions between two systems—the socialist and capitalist, have become considerably sharper and deeper. Capitalist competition and the contradictions of the capitalist system are growing, denouncing the theory of the social-Fascists about the planned economy of organised capitalism, and the theory of the Rights about the lessened inner economic contradictions.

The mortal struggle of countries and whole continents for world markets and sources of raw materials, the considerably sharpened world contradictions and, in the first place, the contradictions between the capitalist world and the Soviet Union, have increased considerably the danger of new wars, and in particular the imperialist war against the U. S. S. R.

The bourgeoisie, faced with the inevitability of a new imperialist war, are feverishly preparing for it. Under the mask of "peace" treaties, partial "limitation" of armaments, prohibition of "aggressive" wars—a mad competition in armaments is taking place. War is being prepared not only technically, but also politically, psychologically.

The toiling women are not forgotten in this preparatory work. **Boncour's new law in France**, the preparation of similar laws in **America** and **Poland**, caters for the mobilisation in case of war of the entire population, including women. In all countries, the bourgeois women's organisations, with the support of the social democratic women's committees are preparing the women workers also for the coming imperialist war.

The struggle of the toiling women against war in the past bore an unorganised character; often it was a mere protest of a handful of class-conscious women who, not submitting to the treachery of the social-democrats, went to war against war. Thus, for example, a section of the German social-democratic women during the imperialist war fought against the treacherous policy of the Social-democrats. In Italy during the imperialist war a strike broke out in a munitions factory; in Bulgaria demonstrations and street fights took place in many towns. The women demanded bread and the return of their husbands. On the eve of the February revolution, the toiling women masses in Petrograd came out into the streets demanding bread and the cessation of the war, thus giving the signal for revolutionary action.

In all anti-war campaigns, in the moment of increased danger of imperialist war and an attack upon the U. S. S. R., the women took an active part. At all the women's meetings, conferences, demonstrations, the question of the struggle against war is gradually becoming the central question. The revolutionary women's press explains to the working masses the danger of the approaching imperialist war and the war against the U. S. S. R., calls all the forces of the proletariat to organise and be prepared to make use of this war for revolutionary purposes. During recent years International Women's Day has become more and more a demonstration against war, in defence of the Worker's State of the U. S. S. R. All direct, concrete slogans put forward on March 8, are linked up with the main political slogans of: "Down with imperialist war", "Long Live the U. S. S. R.!", "Turn the imperialist war into civil war!"

Particularly characteristic is the mass participation of women in the anti-war campaign of the "August 1". To prepare for the participation of toiling women in the campaign in

various countries, considerable work was done. Meetings, conferences, etc. were arranged to explain the tasks of August 1, as the day of struggle against imperialist war, to the working women. August 1 was the day when the toiling women went to meetings, went on strike together with their comrades, participated in demonstrations, in street fights, defended their speakers from the attacks of the police, fraternised with the troops, and fearless of both truncheons and bullets marched to prison, etc. etc.

In **Germany** several district women's conferences were organised, which embraced large masses of working women from the factories, for the purpose of drawing women into active participation in the struggle against imperialist war. Besides these conferences, meetings were held in the factories. In Germany no strikes were called on August 1. The only strike took place on the initiative of the working women in the textile factory of Kessel, where all the women stopped work for half an hour. The All-German Congress of Toiling Women, which took place in October last year under the slogan of war against the war danger, and in defence of the U. S. S. R., reinforced the August 1 achievements.

In **Great Britain** several factory meetings of working women, and conferences were called, and united front committees formed for preparing the August 1 demonstrations. This work bore fruit; the women participated in the campaign, in some parts most actively. On July 28 in London a demonstration exclusively of women was held with delegations from all districts, in which 5000 women took part. In the August 1 campaign in London and August 4 campaign in the provinces, the women who took part, put forward their own speakers at large meetings.

**France** carried out its August 1 campaign under the slogans of the Communist International, and strikes took place almost everywhere. In the innumerable strikes and demonstrations the women also took an active part. In several factories there were strikes one hour before the day's work ended, and in some a one-day strike. In all the demonstrations in the provinces the working women took part in considerable numbers. In Saint Rouen, in the factory belonging to the firm of Alstham, work was stopped on the initiative of the women themselves. In Lavoulouille, a strong detachment of police attacked a meeting at the Citroen factory. The women took an active part in defending their speakers and afterwards 500 working women and men ceased work and shouted anti-war slogans at the gates of the factory. In Lisle at the spinning factory "Manette", where many hundreds of women are engaged, a strike was declared after 12 o'clock in the daytime. In the big textile centre, Roubaix, despite the prohibition of the police, 3000 working women demonstrated. In Perihesse, after a big demonstration, the secretary of the Bookbinders' Union was arrested. The women bookbinders as a sign of protest called a general strike. In Rouen 3000 textile working women demonstrated, and the same thing took place in Boukot, the centre of the metal industry. In Bezirre, the centre of the wine industry, the agricultural workers and women held several demonstrations. In the town of Sette, during a big demonstration, the police appeared and the women hurled the slogan "Fraternise!". One soldier threw down his sabre, others jumped from their horses, a fight took place, and the women and youth fought relentlessly, defending their rights.

In **Czechoslovakia**, in **Austria**, in **America**, even in the illegal countries, everywhere where the call of protest against war could be heard, the toiling women answered the call side by side with their comrades in work.

The struggle against the danger of imperialist war, which the proletariat of the whole world is waging, becomes the central slogan not only of the advanced sections of the women proletarians, but of the broad sections of toiling women also.

The **Ped Women's and Girls' League** in Germany, the **Fraternel Union** against war in France, the **Women's Section** for struggle against the war danger in the **Ex-Servicemen's Union** in England are carrying on a systematic struggle against war.

In fighting against the danger of a new imperialist war, and in defence of the U. S. S. R., in reply to the attacks of capitalism, in reply to the provocation of the Fascists and social-democrats, the women workers are actively participating in the worker's self-defence organs, are strengthening the united front of all toilers against capitalism.

## The Military Women's Organisations of the Bourgeoisie.

By Hedwig Merk.

The increased capitalist offensive against the proletariat in all countries with a capitalist regime is noticeable also in the attitude of the bourgeois women's leagues of these states: more and more open support of the fascist system and the imperialist policy.

In **Poland**, the "Riflemen's League" is training in special women's sections Polish women for service in the army. The police are superintending the military training of these battalions of fascist women. The women are partly drawn into the telephone and postal service, ambulance work, the catering and clothing departments, etc. But women are to be trained above all for the espionage and scout services. The government is openly declaring that military espionage is women's most important task, Pilsudsky's closest collaborators superintend these sections. In all high schools and universities of Poland there are special sections of women riflemen who drill and attend courses under the guidance of officers of the Polish Army. Side by side with it, Poland has a social-fascist "workers' self-defence" organisation which has also many women in its ranks and is working under the leadership of the fascist, **Jaworowski**, leader of the Right Wing of the social-democrats. Very strong in Poland is also the influence of Catholic women's organisations.

In **Latvia**, the bourgeoisie is fascistising women through the so-called "self-defence organisations" which have men's and women's sections where military training takes place. The "Self-defence League" in **Estonia** is organised on the same lines. **Finland** has the well-known "Lotte Sward" organisation which embraces about 47,000 women. The whole aim of the organisation is military training in riding, shooting, fencing, etc. It is divided into military districts.

There are several humanist, nationalist-housewife and reformist organisations in **Scandinavia** which are endeavouring in the well-known manner of women's rights organisations to delude working women by fostering feminist and pacifist illusions.

**Boncour** has introduced in **France** the military service law, which places the whole nation—men, women and children—under arms.

In **Great-Britain** too alleged love of peace of the female bourgeoisie is very strong, so strong that during the great coal strike of 1927 the bourgeois women's organisations organised big demonstrations for "labour peace" and demanded immediate cessation of the strike.

In **Germany** where the bourgeois women's leagues have risen to unexpected importance and recognition, thanks to their social-democratic advocates, were able to consolidate themselves organisationally and to grow numerically. Well subsidised out of public funds (state, provincial and municipal subsidies) favoured by schools, clergymen and all authorities, the erstwhile liberal, freedom and democratic women's leagues have become loyal auxiliary organs of the Neo-German imperialism.

In the factory sport leagues most of which are under fascist leadership, women workers are trained in shooting, ambulance service, etc. under the slogan "physical vocational equalisation". The employers are providing sportgrounds and equipment, they even give premiums for good sport results and organise records between the factory sportsmen of various enterprises. The organisation of German gymnasts makes sports-women march on the occasion of fascist parades under black-white-red banners and with nationalist songs; this organisation alone embraces 360,000 sportswomen. A means which is being used more and more frequently to influence women is factory welfare. In all enterprises which employ many women, factory welfare workers are making their appearance with the approval or by direct order of the factory management. These welfare workers have special consultation hours when they give women workers advice, enlighten them and are supposed to put the best complexion on their hard lot. They naturally make use of this opportunity to recommend to the women to join their fascist and nationalist leagues.

The **Kölnin-Luise-Bund**, the women's organisation of the **Stahlhelm**, teaches gymnastics under the guidance of a retired

army captain. Young women workers who have succumbed to fascist influence, are taught riding, shooting, route-marching, ambulance work, etc. on drilling grounds provided by the Reichswehr. Many factories get their women workers, if possible, only through the labour bureau of the Luise-Bund, or make adherence to it obligatory. At demonstrations, the Luise-Bund appears in its military colours. Military whistles as a signal, cornflower blue dresses or sailors' blouses as uniform. The so-called "Rote Hakenkreuz", the German Women's Order, is also run on military lines. The Wehrwolf-Frauen (wolf-man women), called "Opfergruppen" wear uniforms and are very akin to the Jungdeutsche Schwestern who embrace, like them, mostly women from petty-bourgeois circles and wives of tradesmen.

The reformists are supporting the system of factory welfare and also the plan of military service for women advocated by nationalist and fascist women. Also in regard to the anti-Soviet campaign, these women's organisations, ranging from democrats and pacifists to fascists and nationalists, are of one mind.

There are bourgeois women's leagues in the Balkan countries of which one hears only when some women's congress is held in one of the bigger capitalist states.

In 1922, the fascist organisation "Koku-Su-Ikei" was established in Japan, to which a women's organisation is affiliated. The main task is: struggle against Communism.

Turkey had formerly a women's organisation which pretended to be national-revolutionary and to fight for the liberation of Turkey from the imperialists. But since the Turkish bourgeoisie has been reinforced and is participating in the imperialist spoliation of the Turkish masses, this women's league has betaken itself to a purely philanthropic domain.

At the time of the sanguinary fighting in Palestine when the Zionist fascists attacked the native Arabs, the "Zionist Women's League" was in the forefront against the Arabian uprising. This is a purely fascist organisation. It is well financed and is publishing a newspaper, the "Geisha".

Egypt had in 1919 an organisation called "The New Woman" which had in its programme struggle against imperialism and the British exploiters of Egypt. To-day this organisation is associated with British imperialism and rests content with philanthropic feminist demands. In the periodical "Egypt" questions concerning female police, militarisation of women, etc. are openly raised, the training of women for the protection of the interests of the native and foreign oppressors being advocated. The programme contains only demands such as prohibition of child marriages, opening of colleges for women, social reforms, etc.

There is a "Patriotic Women's League" in Argentine which has a series of branches of a denominational and philanthropic character. A number of well made up women's periodicals carry on religious propaganda systematically.

The women workers of the United States are joining gradually their struggling male fellow workers. The bourgeois women's leagues are therefore doing their utmost to spread pacifist illusions and to keep women quiet with the promise of gradual democratic development. The bourgeois women's leagues of the United States have held about half a dozen conferences in the last six months. A conference called in 1929, with "National Safety" on the agenda brought together women speakers of all shades of opinion, to demonstrate against enemy states and elements of unrest and anarchy in the country. Military service for women was demanded, and violent attacks were made on the pacifist and liberal women representatives. To-day already every woman who wants to become an American citizen is to declare that she is willing to defend her country by force of arms. In April 1928, the "Daughters of the American Revolution", formerly a bourgeois-revolutionary organisation, held their national congress and spoke in favour of the imperialist military programme, the naval system and in favour of an even more far-reaching defence programme.

To gain influence over young women workers, there is in the "Young Women's Christian Association" which has one million members, a special industrial group which ingratiate itself with women factory workers and is trying to inculcate them with a narrow sentimental, introspective pious philosophy.

The Scout organisations have special girls groups with hundreds of thousands of members who receive military and sport training. A "National Federation of Girls Camps" co-ordinates these Girls Scouts on a national scale. The notorious vehmish jurisdiction organisation, the "Ku-Klux-Klan" has also women's formations.

We notice throughout the world that the bourgeoisie can no longer get on without the women, and is abstaining more and more, in the interest of imperialism, from propaganda against the "unwomanliness" of military training and activity. We witness more and more among the bourgeoisie the endeavour to make proletarian women, especially industrial women workers, fit for the physical and military point of view in the interests of the imperialists, in order to include them in the bourgeois front. But women workers in the factories, especially the young ones who can no longer be influenced by the churches and are daily, nay hourly, exposed to ruthless exploitation and arbitrariness, can no longer be tied so easily to the carriage wheels of the bourgeoisie. They refuse to serve the employers as blacklegs, informers and speeders-up, and will not be driven into fascist organisations.

## How the Working and Peasant Women of Russia Direct the Government.

By A. Bogat.

Every year of creative work which passes brings forward new cadres of peasant women — activists. These peasant activists assist the Soviets to carry out measures decided on by the Party and the Soviet Government. Every Soviet election concentrates bigger and bigger masses of peasant women around the Soviets. About 17 000 000 women in town and country came to the election meetings for the Soviets this year. Three hundred thousand of them were elected as members of town and village Soviets. They discuss questions of government. They are reconstructing life in a new fashion.

Five thousand peasant women are directing village Soviets in the position of presidents. These are the best cadres of peasant women, who are fulfilling responsible historical tasks. They are guiding the construction of the new collective agriculture.

One of them, Comrade **Nikolko**, is president of the village soviet and deputy president of the Executive Committee of the German Volga Soviet Republic. Concerning herself, she says very simply: „I was promoted in 1924. I am already 40 years old. My family consists of 9 persons, 8 children and a husband. But my family does not tie me down. They are all members of a collective farm where they work. I live 30 kilometres away from them. I only go to them twice a month.“ „In our district 75 % of the peasant farms have been collectivised. I think that our republic will be one of the first in the matter of collectivisation. We are trained to improve the living conditions of the peasant woman, to liberate her from household cares. The delegates assist us to carry out this work. The cooperative societies give us money to build children's creches and playgrounds. In former times the peasant women worked in the fields, and babies at the breast lay there by them under the burning rays of the sun. Now they leave the babies in the creches under the care of experienced people.“

„We have now tractors working in the fields. There are still very few of them. The workers in the town must quicker turn out the new machines for agriculture. The collective farms are waiting for tractors. But in order to build peasant life anew, we need education. Therefore we are compelling all peasants from 15 to 35 years of age to learn to read and write. I myself travel round and see how old and young peasants are learning grammar.“

„We are now working along new lines,“ said the president of the village Soviet, the peasant woman **Doroieeva**. „The village Soviet is reconstructing peasant life on a collective basis. In our district we have organised two giant collective farms, two big communes and many other collective farms. We attract the mass of peasant women to this work, and we carry on political campaigns with their help. But there is much work ahead. We are building creches, we shall liquidate illiteracy. In the fields of our collective farms, new machines

are beginning to work. The work of the peasants is being replaced by machines. With united forces and with the help of the whole collective, we are working along new lines. In the commune there is no private property, all instruments of production are socialised. The commune receives all the necessary factory products through the cooperative."

Another peasant woman told that she had worked on social work for 6 years; in the old Tzarist times she had borne off her shoulders the oppression and violence of the landowner. She fought for her rights during the days of the October Revolution. Now she is building the new life of the commune with her own hands.

In the Soviet country, peasant women also sit in the central government and decide on problems concerning the whole country.

About 700 working and peasant women are working as members of the central and all-Russian Executive Committees, of regional executive committees. They come together from all parts of the Soviet Union for a government session, and decide difficult and complicated questions of socialist life. They address congresses concerning their practical work in the lower Soviet organs. These women workers and peasants return from the congresses to their factories, works and collective farms, with new directives. How do these women work as members of the government? This is what a member of the all-Russian Executive Committee — peasant woman **Suprun** — relates about her work on a session of the Central Executive Committee in Moscow:

"I work in a village in the North Caucasus, as the president of an agricultural commune. I am a member of the commission for grain collections which sees to the fulfilling of the tasks set by the government. Our village Soviet has fulfilled its tasks for grain collection by 105%. The government set a task of collecting 295 tons of seed corn, but we have collected 327 tons. The work of the village Soviet in general goes along well. I received a special task to enlarge our enterprise, and I have fulfilled it. We are introducing new systems of working the land. The collective farm increases the yield of the harvest, and the situation of the whole of the collective is improved."

One member of the government, a woman worker called **Tishlakova**, came to the session from the far northern region. "I work in industry", she said. "I carry out the directives of the government in practical work, on my machine, with regard to lowering the cost of production. We are trained to increase the efficiency of labour, we are developing socialist contests in the factories. The women workers of the factory, together with the workers, are strengthening the industrialisation of the country."

A woman worker, member of the government, told that during the course of 32 years, since she was 11 years old she had worked in industry. "We are illiterate and backward since the old times" she said. "We won our rights to live in a new way in the days of the October Revolution. We have to build up our lives ourselves. For this we need education."

The Soviet government has organised study courses for women who are presidents of Soviets. Women come to Moscow from all parts of the Soviet Union to the central courses to learn to be leaders of Socialist construction.

"After going through the central courses" writes the president of a village Soviet in one of the Western districts, "I was sent to two village Soviets for carrying on the campaign for collecting grain. I carried out my task. I was appointed to perform a big task on the district executive committee, a great and complicated work lay before me. I had to prepare for the campaign for electing mutual help committees. But the course helped me. I was thankful to the government for my education. It was much easier for me to work. Previously I had difficulty in understanding a decree, but now I can understand all the questions which arise. I deliver speeches, and I have learned to direct work. I am constructing a school in the village. In this school not only children will learn but adults and old people. There is a great desire for study."

Three thousand women — presidents of village Soviets — who have been prepared in these courses, continue their work for the socialist reconstruction of the country with new energy.

Women have won for themselves an honourable place in all parts of socialist construction. About a hundred women

are working as Red directors in works and factories. This responsible and difficult work they carry out with honours.

"I was promoted to the situation of director" related Comrade **Latkova**, on a session of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. "Before my promotion to this position, I had been elected as a member of the government by the mass of the workers. I thought that I could not perform such business work. I had worked in the factory since I was 13 years old. At the time of the revolution I was working in a weaving works in Leningrad. For two years I worked in the trade union organisation of the province. Then I was elected as the first president of the factory committee. After that I once more worked in the factory, on the machines. And now I have been appointed as the director of a factory."

"Our work is not easy. It is difficult to pass from the machine to the management office of a factory. But I have come up to my task. I am considered to be a good director. The men and women workers support me. The engineers receive my orders and carry them out."

"Every cook must learn to rule the country", said Lenin. In the Soviet country this behest of Lenin is transformed into fact. Women workers in the USSR, occupy various responsible posts. They work in all collegiums of the Peoples Commissariats. The woman worker **Ivanova**, a member of the collegium of the Peoples Commissariat of Labour of the USSR, is one of these. She is directing a large and complicated department — the defence of labour. She is watching the life of hundreds and thousands of factories and works. An old textile worker called **Ikrianistova**, who worked in the factory for 30 years, decides complicated questions in the collegium of the Peoples Commissariat for internal affairs.

Who amongst the women workers does not know her? They have many times listened to her vivid speeches in the factories and works at crucial moments. During the civil war she organised battalions of workers and together with them she defended the revolution. Energetic, vigilant and steadfast she was always in the first ranks. **Ikrianistova** was one of the first women workers to be sent on to responsible work in the Peoples Commissariats.

A textile woman worker from Ivanovo Voznesensk called **Shustova** decides questions concerning the health of the workers in the collegium of the Peoples Commissariat of Health. During the first years of the revolution she was elected by the women workers for the construction of children's institutions. She applied a great deal of energy to this great business. The children's settlement at Ivanovo has served as an example for many others. The textile workers remember her right up to the present time. Always energetic, with an unending reserve of strength, Comrade **Shustova** remains the same in her responsible post.

Comrade **Korneeva** is directing a responsible part of the work in the collegium of the Peoples Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection — the department for constructing new socialist towns.

A woman worker called **Belova** is directing the work in the collegium of the Peoples Commissariat of Agriculture for the reconstruction of peasant farms.

**Serina, Chernisheva, Avdeeva** and many other women workers are members of the government and carry out the decisions of the proletariat. They are constructing socialism.

There is a wave of promoting women workers onto leading posts. About 7000 working and peasant women have been promoted in a single year in all parts of socialist construction. New women's reserves are being prepared. Hundreds and thousands of special courses have been organised to prepare these women for their work. During the next eight months, new cadres consisting of 6000 women workers will be prepared for leadership work. Promotion carried out occasionally has been replaced by mass promotion.

The advanced women workers carry with them the millions of women activists in the struggle to build the new life. The mighty power of the proletariat has thrown off the chains of violence and oppression.

The proletariat of USSR, is firmly treading the new road to socialism.

# Socialist Competition and the Shock Brigades in the U.S.S.R.

By Bulle.

The idea of labour competition promulgated by Lenin in 1918 is becoming more and more a giant factor in the building up of socialism. Socialist competition has made it possible to raise the task of carrying out of the Five Year Plan in four years, a task, the solution of which is no longer questioned.

The appearance of shock brigades is to be dated back to September 1926 when 120 working girls of the "Krasnyi Treugolnik" in Leningrad started to work on the basis of scientific organisation of labour. In 1927 at the initiative of Young Communist nuclei and progressive workers a movement of socialist competition rose up in the various parts of the Soviet Union — in Moscow, Leningrad, Tver, Dniepropetrovsk, Siberia, and the Urals. This movement started with a struggle for greater output and better quality of production, for careful treatment of machines, instruments and other equipment.

Socialist competition acquired a mass character at the end of 1928 and in the beginning of 1929. It was the reply of the working class to the call of the Party fully to realise the Five-Year Plan of socialist construction.

As the movement of socialist competition grew, the cost of production was rapidly declining in our factories. Socialist competition has, in the words of Stalin, become a Communist method of socialist construction. It has at the same time become instrumental in the socialist education of the masses. It has given rise to new relations and to new forms of labour discipline.

The first shock brigades were organised at the beginning of 1929 spontaneously and very often without the support of the trade unions, and without the aid of the directors. By December 1929 over 200,000 working men and women had already been involved in this movement, in Moscow 25,000, in Leningrad 30,000, in the Urals 35,000, in the Ukraine 60,000, etc. The greatest number of shock brigades has been organised in our large works. The spontaneous rise of shock brigades is the best proof of the fact that the working men and women have changed their outlook upon production. The creation of shock brigades is everywhere accompanied by stronger labour discipline, by a sharp drop in absenteeism, by an increase in the productivity of labour and a maximum diminution of spoiled products.

Working women have everywhere taken part on a par with the men and the youth in the shock brigade movement. Here are some examples: in the "Krasnyi Treugolnik" the number of women joining the shock brigades by December 1929 was 2,168. They increased output by 16% and voluntarily reduced their piece rates. In the *Electrozavod* of Moscow the women brigaders began to produce 11—12,000 spirals per day instead of the usual 3,000. In Kiev 67% of the working men and women organised 48 shock brigades in a clothing factory; the women carried out the production programme with an excess of 9% and the productivity of labour in the factory rose 48%. Shock brigades in a textile mill of *Shuh* (Ivanovo-Voznesensk Gubernia) raised the output to 132%; in *Vitebsk* women brigaders in a hosiery works raised their productivity by 15% and in some departments by 24%. Such examples could be cited by the hundreds.

A number of district and sub-district shock brigade conferences took place at the end of November and a national congress, the first of its kind, met on December 5—10, in Moscow.

The Congress played a great organisational part in the unification of experience and counting up of achievements and shortcomings in the shock brigade movement. There were 820 delegates present, 11% of whom were women. This small proportion of women at the congress was however by no means a true expression of their part in the movement.

Problems of successful socialist construction, of the reali-

sation of the Five-Year Plan, of the further raising of the productivity of labour, of lowering the cost of production, of combating absenteeism, stood in the centre of the congress' attention. The congress dealt with problems of development of the whole of national economy including the reconstruction of agriculture.

Summing up the tremendous experience of socialist competition in the country the Congress revealed many shortcomings of which the movement suffers — secrecy, isolation from the masses, failure to sum up the achievements, untimely reporting about control figures and plans in the factories, record-breaking schemes, etc. The congress tackled the question of a decisive alteration of the system of trade union work in connection with socialist competition stating that in many cases the unions dragged in the tail end of the progressive shock brigaders, regarded them bureaucratically and with indifference. Many reproaches were made at the congress addressed to the directors who are criminally indifferent in relation to the spontaneous movement of the advanced shock brigaders.

There were at the congress many valuable suggestions made not only by the men but also by the women brigaders. Here are some of them:

„Shock brigaders must be the first to take the initiative in the rationalisation of production. We stand for collective work of the brigades, for the organisation of productive communes, for collective wages." (Declaration made by women textile workers of Ivanovo Voznesensk).

„We must organise conferences of brigaders with non-brigaders in order to draw the largest possible number of working men and women into socialist rivalry. We must include in the agreements of socialist competition clauses on the study of technical methods and the organisation of lectures on technical problems." (A woman brigader, Rozovskaya.)

The congress passed a number of highly valuable propositions all of which tend to the further improvement and unfolding of socialist competition and the work of shock brigades. The principal decisions speak of the necessity of rendering the movement a truly mass movement, of organising shock brigades in each mill and factory, in each workshop, of proceeding from the organisation of shock brigades to the formation of shock departments and factories. The congress found it necessary to organise technical and rationalisation brigades, of raising the technical knowledge of the brigaders, of raising their skill, of improving the quality of their products. The congress devoted much attention to the question of carrying the movement into the villages, of bringing it into the government and collective farms.

The congress has shown that the whole working class of the Soviet Union is in the grip of a general desire to realise the Five-Year Plan in the shortest possible time.

The appeal of the All-Union Council of Trade Unions and of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League about the Lenin enrolment of at least 500,000 new brigaders has aroused a loud echo among the broad masses of workers.

With the accentuation of the class struggle, the struggle for the liquidation of kulakdom as a class, the struggle against the NEPmen and saboteurs, the men and women brigaders stand in the front ranks of the working class.

The powerful wave of industrial enthusiasm is the best evidence of the stormy growth of the USSR., evidence of the triumphant march of socialism.

# The Part Played by Women in the Peasant Revolutionary Movement.

By Yasinskaja.

A characteristic feature in the development of the revolutionary struggle recently is that the general upward drive of the world labour movement is accompanied by a rise in the peasant movement, the growth of the revolutionary class struggle in the village.

In this movement of millions of peasants, the women of the village take a particularly active and businesslike part; that is, that section of the village which up to now has been the most backward in the political sense.

It is nothing to be wondered at that the growth of the revolutionary mood among the men and particularly among the women farm labourers, and the poor and middle peasants, is manifested more sharply particularly at the present period, in the period of sharpening crisis of world capitalist economy. For one of the inevitable forms of this crisis is the agrarian crisis, which develops parallel with the industrial crisis and is closely dependent on it — the agrarian crisis which brings about inconceivable impoverishment, hunger and destruction among the poor and middle toiling peasantry.

Bourgeois governments cannot cope with the growing difficulties. They strive to save the disintegration of the capitalist system by the most exasperating, furious methods of White Fascist terror, feverishly preparing for an armed attack on the stronghold of revolutionary struggle, on the Workers' and Peasant's State, on the U. S. S. R.

The military budgets of the capitalist States grow higher and higher, the yoke of taxes is heavier, the cost of living rises, unemployment increases. The whole weight of this merciless exploitation falls upon the broad masses of workers and poor peasants.

The agrarian surplus population and the land hunger in the village has increased so much that in certain capitalist countries with predominating peasant populations (Italy, Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Yugoslavia etc.) half or the majority of the population of the village, can find no work for their hands, and starve. It is sufficient to introduce a few examples, to convince oneself of the desperate position of the poorer section of the villages in capitalist countries.

In Rumania as far back as in 1926 one third of the peasant farms had hardly any agricultural implements. At the present moment the proletarianisation of the Rumanian peasantry has moved rapidly forward. The extremely bad harvests which affected 39 out of 72 districts of Rumania played the role of a natural factor in this respect, but the taxation policy of the National Tsarunist Government affected the position of the peasantry more strongly and mercilessly.

In Poland the poor peasants, who were forced to find labour outside of their farms, amounted to 54% of the total number of landworkers. Farm labourers and landless peasants constitute 43% of the total village population of Poland, whereas 3% of kulaks and landowners possess 55% of the total land. Three-fourths of the poor and very small (with an area of less than 5 hectares of land) peasant farms in Poland are landless, one-fourth have no cows, and more than half are not in a position to maintain even small animals.

The complaints of the peasants, which are published from time to time even in the bourgeois press, are witness to the weight of the burden of taxation in Poland. For example: a peasant owning 4½ hectares of land sent to the editorial office an account of the taxes and fines extracted from his farm during the previous year to the sum of 330 zloty for taxes and 248 zloty for fines — a total of 578 zloty. This (not counting all kinds of indirect taxes) amounts to about 40—50% of the total annual income of a peasant farm of that size. These fines are a Fascist method of surplus exploitation of the poorer sections of the village. Here is a list of the reasons used for extracting fines in the case indicated above:

For temporarily leaving straw for sitting purposes in the yard.

For a pool of rain water in the yard.

For a load, not corresponding to the standard form.

For a table attached to the load, written with incorrect lettering.

For not paying taxes at the right time.

It is characteristic that for 1928 alone, over 2 million peasant farms were fined for such offences, i. e. fines were paid by almost every small peasant farm.

Italian Fascism conducts a no less plunderous policy towards its poor peasants. The toiling population of the Italian village are reduced to poverty and hunger by Fascism. The uncultivated land of the landlords, seized by the peasants during the period of revolutionary action after the war — after several years of hard toil on it — has been torn from them by Fascism and returned to the landowners, in spite of the fact that the peasants converted them from neglected, barren lands into fertile land. Land rent during the period of Fascist Dictatorship in Italy has increased on an average 5 times. The position of the land-tenant has considerably worsened, particularly in Southern Italy, where this form is the chief form of agricultural economy. The direct taxes alone, extorted from the toiling peasants by the Fascist Government, is no less than 30% of their income. Millions of toiling peasants are completely ruined, expropriated and become proletarians.

The crisis in agriculture brings about the ruin not only of the poor peasant farms, but also of the middle-sized farms. The rapid process of mechanisation of agriculture, the use of electricity and new agricultural machinery in the large landowning and kulak estates, etc. create competition in prices on agricultural products, in which the small and technically backwards peasant farms cannot even take part. The indebtedness of this strata of the village attains enormous dimensions. The Polish peasant newspapers note that in every Polish village as many as three-fourths of the farms have debts in connection with mortgages. But the most devastating thing for the peasantry is their indebtedness to the rich kulak of the village, which is considerably higher and heavier than mortgages. Here we have financial, usurer's interest combined primarily with the payment by labour or in kind, which accelerates the differentiation of the village and increases their class contradictions.

Mass expropriation and plundering of the Bessarabian Government, the seizure of the land of the poor peasantry and their forced emigration abroad — this is the main axis of the policy of the Rumanian imperialists. Already in 1928, the landless peasantry of Bessarabia comprised 60% of the total number of farms. The amount of live and dead agricultural inventory decreased by 85% in comparison with 1926 and the area under crops in the south decreased by 40%. The flight and emigration of the peasants from Bessarabia goes on on a large scale. It is enough to say that during the Rumanian occupation about half a million persons took flight or emigrated.

The policy pursued by Polish Fascism towards the poorer peasantry of Western White Russia and Western Ukraine, together with the policy of all other imperialist governments in conquered territories, differs in no way actually from Rumanian practice.

Still worse, in connection with the growing agrarian crisis, is the position of the agricultural workers and farm labourers in all capitalist countries. Side by side with the sharp fall in wages, unemployment continues to increase. The landlords begin to change their regular labour power in agriculture for cheaper, seasonal and daily labour power; and the „free hands“ in the surrounding peasant farms are a rich reserve for this sort of labour. These are the sort of conditions for example in the Polish estates in Western Ukraine.

The average daily wage for 12—16 hours work fluctuates between 1 and 2 zloty. In certain parts the wage is considerably lower and amounts to 70 groszy daily. The labour of women is valued at 20—30% lower.

Side by side with monetary payments, payment in kind is used widely among the workers. Generally, the freely hired village labourer works cutting hay for a fifth or seventh haycock, and during the grain harvest for the 12th, 18th or even 20th sheaf.

Thus, it is not astonishing that in reply to the increasing

capitalist terror and oppression, the toiling masses of the village are rising in revolutionary struggle. We recall only the more important events for the last few weeks: armed uprising of peasants in Haiti, similar uprisings on the island of Crete (Greece), in Nigeria (English colony in West Africa), in the Sudan, in the Congo (French colony), anti-Fascist peasant disturbances and struggles in South Italy, bloody repression against the peasant demonstrations in Rumania, peasant uprisings in Western Ukraine and West Russia, the strike of the agricultural workers in Sweden, strike of 8 thousand farm labourers in California, the shooting in the peasant demonstrations during the Lenin days in Poland, introduction of a state of siege in Bessarabia, in connection with the growing activities of the peasant partisan detachments, etc.

The class war in the village is increasing against the kulaks, usurers and large landowners; this struggle is ever more ready to flow into the channels of revolutionary activities against the political power of the bourgeoisie.

What part do the peasant women play in this struggle?

The reports we receive of peasant activities almost always mention the particularly active role played by the women peasants. Frequently the poor peasant women and farm labouring women play a decisive role in the struggles, heading the active peasant demonstrations, issuing fighting slogans, defending the revolutionary banners, acting as defenders of agricultural strikes, organising strike pickets, flogging the strike-breakers, accompanying the prisoners to gaol; and in consequence they often suffer the greatest sacrifices in the bloody conflicts with the armed forces of the bourgeoisie. Such active participation of the women is to be seen even in the most backward colonial countries. For instance, in English Nigeria, during the recent uprising of peasants, during which the insurgents raided the government buildings and European shops, the most active role fell to the women. "When the English troops opened fire, women were almost exclusively the victims". (Pravda.)

Of course, the revolutionary struggle of the farm labourers and poorer peasants in the villages will reach a higher stage only if it is connected with the common revolutionary struggle of the working class, if the Communist Party stands at its head.

In the majority of cases the revolutionary activities of the peasant masses develop spontaneously, in an unorganised manner. They are called forth by the desperate, unbearable economic condition in which the growing crisis of capitalist economy plunges the toiling masses of peasantry.

What is it that urges the politically backward women in the villages forward to active participation in the front positions of the revolutionary conflicts which are taking place?

Intolerable economic slavery urges her forward to this position. In the peasant farms, despoiled and mercilessly exploited by present-day capitalism, the woman can not even keep up an "appearance" of "mistress of the farm"; she is simply the cheapest labour power, on whom all the horrors of hunger, cold and devastation are heaped first of all.

Capitalist rationalisation of the landlord and kulak estates makes the agricultural working woman first of all the object of its rationalisation policy. For the labour of women in agriculture is valued at 40—50 % lower than male labour, and consequently the process of exchanging male labour for women's labour in the landlord's estates, side by side with the use of day labourers, instead of regular farm-hands, is universal. Women farm labourers as a rule, are outside all juridical and social defence; they are hardly organised in trade union organisations at all, and are the most convenient object of exploitation for the landlord.

The women ever more frequently become the decisive factor in the revolutionary struggles in the village. At the same time the fact that she is unorganised and comparatively politically undeveloped makes her more susceptible to the influence of bourgeois ideology. This is recognised fully and made use of by the bourgeoisie and particularly the clergy and all kinds of Fascist organisations who are earnestly carrying on political work and endeavouring to get the toiling women of the village into their organisations.

International Women's Day on March 8, which is now approaching, should become the turning point and the beginning of more active work in the villages by our parties.

## The Social Emancipation of Working Women and the Five Year Plan.

The success of socialist construction in the USSR. has made it possible for the workers' government to carry out further measures emancipating working women. The development of institutions of social importance on the basis of the Five Year Plan is gradually abolishing one of the greatest contradictions of capitalist society — the contradiction between the drawing of women workers into industry and the preservation of individual homes. This contradiction is one of the chief things which hinder their political and cultural development.

This state of affairs has existed for thousands of years. It is one of the most reliable supports of bourgeois society. The capitalists strive by every means in their power to perpetuate this virtual serfdom of working women, they defend the "sacredness of the home". While drawing women more and more into industry, they at the same time use all their forces so as to keep them near to the children and the kitchen.

Only the Soviet Union, which thirteen years ago proclaimed the full equality of men and women, is really carrying this equality into practice. The Soviet Government is straining every nerve to free working women from all that turns her into a household slave.

The number of institutions which set women free from her double work — in industry and in the home — grows from year to year.

The unswerving will of the Soviet government to continue with the work of freeing working women from the burdens of backwardness becomes clear when we see some of the figures of the Five Year Plan of Industrial and Agricultural Economy in the USSR. In this matter we must take into consideration that since the Five Year Plan will without the slightest doubt be carried out in four years, these figures will be considerably changed.

### Building of Crèches.

In 1927—29 34,000 crèches; In 1932—33 65,000.

Naturally, this number cannot be considered as sufficient. According to the plans of the Soviet Government, there must be 180 places in crèches for every thousand women. This tremendous task has been fulfilled at present by more than 20 %. At the present time in the USSR, there are 40 places in crèches for every thousand women workers. Children's crèches are alleviating women not only during the time she is working in a factory, but during the time she is studying or engaged in social work.

### Kindergartens.

1927—28 107,000 1932—33 217,000

### Children's Playgrounds.

1927—28 203,000 1932—33 506,000

### Children's Consultations.

1927—28 1469 1932—33 2692

Of course these figures are still very low in comparison with the needs of women workers for children's institutions, especially if we take into consideration the increase of the birth rate in the USSR. However the systematic growth of these institutions shows the firm intention of the Soviet Government to abolish the inequality of women in life. Besides the crèches which are organised by the government, a large number of them are organised directly by factories, business institutions, co-operative societies, housing societies, groups of peasant women, etc. We have already 797 factory crèches for the children of the workers, there are many crèches connected with large offices, large dwelling houses. In the villages of the USSR, the children's institutions cater for 107,000 children; in 1932—33 they will cater for 217,000 children. Kindergartens and children's homes in the villages catered for 270,000 children in 1927—28, but in 1932—33 these institutions will take in 676,000 children.

According to the Five Year Plan, 94,830,000 roubles will be spent in the USSR, on cultural construction.

If we look into another important sphere of the liberation of women workers — social feeding, — we see that there are the same tremendous achievements. On October 1st, 1928 the number of dinners served everyday was 720,000. For the organisation of public dining rooms it was proposed to spend 250 mill. rouble during the five years, and at the end of the five

years to serve 5,600,000 people. However the tremendous achievements obtained in socialist construction made it possible, during the current 1929—30 fiscal year, to issue 50,000,000 roubles for the development of social feeding. At the beginning of 1930 the number of dinners served was increased to 1,400,000 a day. We have thus been able during the second year of the Five Year Plan, to revise the first figures of the plan and to extend them to a colossal degree. According to the changed plan for organising public dining rooms, 1,500,000,000 roubles will be spent during the five years, and at the end of the Five Year Plan 20,000,000 people will be served.

By the end of the five years, 4,800 big factory kitchens will have been built. The socialist towns which are being built in the USSR, will have public dining rooms for the whole 100% of the inhabitants. Children and scholars right through the USSR, will also be served to 100%. The workers in various big industrial regions will be served to the extent of 90%, and their families by 50%. The workers in the towns will be served to the extent of 70% and their families — 40%.

During the past year, all Soviets have set up commissions for investigating conditions of life. The task of these commissions is to seek further measures for lightening the lot of working women.

All these measures are creating a new life for the women worker of the USSR. They lighten her labour at home, assisting her cultural and political growth and making her in reality the equal of men.

**These colossal successes demonstrate to the whole world what can be achieved by men and women workers who have taken the government into their own hands.**

They are a guarantee that the greatest burden for the women of Russia under the Tsarist regime — inequality in living conditions — is rapidly passing into the realms of history.

## Working Women in the Co-operatives of the U.S.S.R.

By M. Miroshnikova.

During the past year, distributive cooperation has moved forward greatly in the matter of carrying out the behests of Lenin, that every working woman should be made an active constructor of our new socialist country. To a considerable degree, distributive cooperation has carried out its task of attracting working women into its ranks and shareholders. At the present moment 8 million shareholders are united in the ranks of the distributive cooperative system, while last year there were only 4½ million of them.

Working women who receive small wages, peasants of small means are given the right to pay their dues in instalments during the course of two years. Working women whose husbands are already members of the cooperative society have to pay only one-quarter of the usual share in order to obtain all the rights of a full shareholder.

Distributive cooperatives intend in the near future to intensify their work for the inclusion of women in the cooperative societies. At the end of the Five Year Plan, there must be at least 15 million working women in the ranks of the Shareholders of the distributive cooperative system.

The number of working women to be found on the management boards and the organs of control of workers' cooperatives and village cooperatives, has greatly increased. This year the number of women workers on the management boards of Central Workers' Cooperatives forms almost 30%, and in the auditing commissions, more than 20%. Farm hands, poor and middle farmers are not lagging behind the women workers. During the present year there are more than 15½% of working women on the management boards and auditing commissions of village cooperative societies, which is an increase of 12%.

Distributive cooperative societies have taken up the policy of promoting women workers, women farm hands, and poor women farmers onto responsible positions in cooperative work. Thus, for example, out of 300 cooperative organisations in villages, 79 women have been appointed presidents. According to information given by 21 cooperative unions, 10 women have been elected members of the management boards of district

and regional cooperative unions, where they manage suitable departments, and 3 have been elected as presidents of workers' cooperative societies in towns. This year we have the first case where a woman has become the president of a district union. During the past year, the working women of the small nationalities of Russia have gone ahead. We have the first woman president of the management board of a workers' cooperative society in **Uzbekistan**; a woman **Chuvash**, formerly a farm hand, has studied in cooperative courses and is at present working as a member of the management board of the republican cooperative union, and is the manager of the department dealing with the living conditions of the members. In the same way in **Zurian**, a woman Zurianian has been promoted to be a member of the management board of the regional union. In the national cooperative unions of **Turkmenistan** and **Kazakstan** there are women at the head of large responsible departments of the work.

During all these years the active nucleus of women co-operators has grown and increased its knowledge. In the shop commissions, in organisational and educational commissions, and among the representatives there are tens of thousands of women functionaries.

This year tens of thousands of **Red Convoys** for collecting surplus grain have been organised by the women cooperative functionaries. Thousands of cooperative functionaries have taken part in the work of control over cooperative shops, of cooperative undertakings, in criticising their work, in exposing various abuses, in estimating the quality of the work done to satisfy consumers, in exposing and removing bureaucratic elements, in making various propositions showing practical measures to be taken for improving cooperative work. The prime movers and organisers in carrying on the most important section of cooperative work — and this is the socialist reconstruction of life — are the women cooperative functionaries.

The women's cooperative nucleus is a reserve from which to promote women to the leadership of cooperative work. Cooperative organisations organise courses for women cooperative functionaries, frequently arrange meetings for the preparation of cooperative functionaries. Thus, for example, in 44 cooperative organisations, 1,049 cooperative functionaries went through the courses. The decision of the management of the **Centrosoyuz** (27th September 1929), as to decisive measures to be taken for promoting working women to the leadership of cooperative work is a guarantee that this matter will be systematically carried out.

Distributive cooperative societies do not limit their work to the satisfying of the material needs of their members; they are one of the fundamental organs of the socialist reconstruction of life. On October 1st, 1928, the number of creches organised by village cooperative societies was more than 1,500, there were almost a thousand children's playgrounds, about 3,000 "mother and child corners" which supply children-shareholders with children's goods. Various data for 1929 in the towns demonstrate the increased activity of workers' cooperatives in liberating their women-shareholders from their old conditions of life. Thus, for example, in 36 workers' cooperative societies, there are at the present moment 343 "mother and child corners", in 8 cooperative unions of workers' town cooperative societies, 54 kindergartens have been organised, 213 other societies have organised 400 creches and playgrounds.

The distributive cooperative societies are occupied in seeking the maximum possibilities in their own sphere for the rapid reconstruction of living conditions along socialist lines. More than 100,000 roubles has been sent by the **Centrosoyuz** as subsidies for the organisation (with the addition of local finances) of 23 institutions connected with living conditions, among them 9 travelling consultations, 12 creches and two kindergartens. Eleven million roubles are to be spent this year by the various unions of cooperative societies on capital construction of institutions for the improvement of the conditions of life of working women, on organising dining rooms, bakeries, creches, kindergartens, playgrounds, etc.

The working women, freed from the slavery of the kitchen are using their rights given them by the October Revolution, not in words, but in practice, and are becoming economically independent of men, obtaining the possibility of taking part in political and social life or of working for raising their cultural level.