

# INTERNATIONAL PRESS CORRESPONDENCE

Vol. 14 No. 13

1st March 1934

## International Women's Day, 1934

### Women Workers, Toilers and Peasants of the Whole World!

Appeal of the International Women's Secretariat of the E.C.C.I.

March 8th is approaching. On March 8th, International Women's Day, the day of review of the forces of the most oppressed part of the world proletariat, we call on you to rally together, unite your forces in all the countries of the world for the organisation of the struggle against capitalism, against fascism, against imperialist war, for the liberation of the working class, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for socialism, for the brotherhood of all peoples.

The crisis has been raging for five years in all capitalist countries.

Poverty reigns in the workers' quarters and in the villages. The crisis has thrown tens of millions of men and women workers on to the streets without food, without shelter, without work, without social support. Unemployment has doomed millions of women and girls to inconceivable sufferings, hunger, neglect, prostitution. Thousands of office workers, doctors, engineers, teachers are unemployed. No one is confident of the morrow. The spectre of hunger and poverty stands at the door of every man and woman worker.

But the rulers of the world—the bankers, factory owners, directors of companies, and trusts, landlords—are trying to save their profits by mercilessly sweating the men and women workers by plundering their wages, by replacing the labour of adult men by the cheaper labour of women, youths, and children.

To save their domination, capitalism seizes on the bloody weapon of fascist dictatorship, mobilises the darkest forces of reaction, drenches the world in the blood of revolutionary fighters, not sparing women or children.

**Women workers! Peasant women! All toiling women!**

You know now what fascism is. Your brothers and sisters, your fathers have been subjected to frightful tortures in the fascist dungeons of Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, China, Japan and other countries. The executioners cut off their heads. The proletarian organisations which defend your interests are being suppressed. You know now what is the "Third Empire" of Hitler, who are Mussolini, Zankov, Horthy, Chiang Kei-shek, the Japanese Mikado, etc. You know that this is the kingdom of the whip, bloody executioners, dungeons, concentration camps, political murderers, unemployment, homelessness, poverty, prostitution, the kingdom of absolute hopelessness. In this kingdom the executioner with his axe, the priest with the cross and the bible, the capitalist with his inhuman exploitation, the landlord, with all the weapons of suppression and deceit in their hands—the court, the police, the army, the church, the school, the press

and radio—have united against the working class to continue their kingdom, their right to torture and harass the working class.

By fascist pogroms, capitalism tries to crush the Communist Parties and the revolutionary struggle of the workers in its countries, so as to set its hands free for a new imperialist war for the redivision of the world, for new milliards in profits for a handful of capitalists, in order to get out of the crisis in this way.

The crushing of the revolutionary movement is needed by the imperialists in order to attack the fatherland of all toilers—the proletarian socialist state—the U.S.S.R.

**Look at the U.S.S.R., working women, peasant women, toiling women!**

In the midst of the raging ocean of crisis rises the impregnable rock of the first socialist fatherland of the toilers of the whole world—the U.S.S.R.

The women of the Soviet Union, the women workers and peasants, with arms in their hands, shoulder to shoulder with their brothers, fathers and husbands, fought for their liberation from the power of the bourgeoisie, for socialism. And they are rewarded for their struggle.

The toiling women of the Soviet Union do not know unemployment. They receive equal pay with men for equal work. They participate in the administration of the country and in the direction of national economy. Public kitchens and dining rooms, factory kitchens, nurseries, children's homes, public laundries and other social institutions liberate them and make their work lighter, make this labour not into a heavy, compulsory obligation, but into a matter of honour, glory, valour and heroism. They are building a new society of equal people—a socialist, classless society.

The proletarian state protects the health of the mothers and children.

Every year milliards of roubles of government money are spent on social insurance, sanatoriums, rest homes, dispensaries. All their children go to school. The whole country is marching towards a rich, prosperous life. The country of the Soviets is building a second stupendous Five-Year Plan for the construction of classless socialist society.

The October Revolution, opening a new age for mankind, the age of socialism, leads to the complete victory of socialism, the complete satisfaction of all needs, the complete destruction of all the causes of inequality.

What can the capitalist system show against this? What way out of the grip of the crisis can it indicate? What path

does it open up before the masses? Where is the end of the sufferings of the working class in imperialist and colonial countries?

You have not yet been able to pay the cost of the last world war by the starvation of your children and yourselves. You still see around you hundreds of thousands of cripples—without legs, arms, sight or hearing—from the time of the last war. But the bourgeoisie are already preparing a new slaughter for your brothers, fathers and husbands, a new plundering of the toilers, terror and murder, dungeons and jails, a new bloody imperialist war. The bourgeoisie are thinking out ever new taxes for you workers, peasants, toilers. They take away from your children the possibility of going to school so that they can prepare more instruments of destruction.

The war factories are working at full speed while disarmament conferences are meeting to deceive the masses. War has not yet been declared by anybody, but, without declaring war, Japan has seized Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, and like an impudent bandit is seizing ever new regions, destroying Chinese workers and peasants by blood, fire, sword and poison gases, taking away their land, houses and food. Japan is trying to secure its rear in preparation for war against the Soviet Union. In a provocative manner it is seizing the Chinese Eastern Railway, arresting Soviet citizens in Manchuria, thus striving to cause war against the U.S.S.R. It is dreaming of the destruction of the Soviet Union, the first socialist fatherland of the toilers in the world. Simultaneously Japan is helping the Kuomintang in China and the imperialists of all countries to crush the Chinese Soviet movement, destroy the Chinese Red Army which is heroically defending the young Soviets of China.

The Japanese fascists and the German fascists have stretched out their hands to each other. They are helped by the die-hard colonial vultures of England. The other imperialists are also trying to profit by this war. A new world war—such is the "way out" of the grip of the crisis which the bourgeoisie find.

And all of you—working women, peasant women, toiling women—must carry on a struggle with the greatest passion and determination against the preparations for this new slaughter, against those who are responsible and who instigate it, against capitalism.

But you must know that you can only carry on this struggle successfully to the point of victory over the capitalists on one condition—if you follow the example of the Russian men and women workers and rally for the struggle around the Communist Party. Remember that only the fiercest struggle, hand in hand with your brothers, fathers and sons, under the leadership of the Communist Party, will enable you to throw from your shoulders your hangmen, your enslavers, to throw off the power of the bourgeoisie, the power of the fascists.

Struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the Soviet power throughout the world. Then you can dissolve the armies throughout the world, stop making cannon, rifles, bombs, warships, military aircraft and poison gases for the destruction of mankind. Then all the wealth of the world will be for you yourselves. You will not work for the aristocrats, not for the bourgeoisie, not for the landlords, not for the parasites, but for yourselves! Then you and your children will start for the first time to build your lives in the way necessary for the working class, the toiling peasants and all the toilers.

We know that the leaders of the labour, socialist and social-democratic parties of the Second International prevent you taking this only correct path. It was they who helped the fascists to power. It was they who always slandered the Soviet Union. It was they who hindered and still hinder the formation of the united front of the working class in all the countries of the world.

Therefore, you must drive these traitors away from you, at the same time establishing with the social-democratic men and women workers the united front with Communism.

You must realise, mothers and sisters, that only the Communist Party is able to lead to the victory over the bourgeoisie. This Party is now being persecuted everywhere by your enemies. But remember did not the Russian Tsar also persecute the Russian Communists, the disciples of Lenin, the Bolsheviks? Did they not perish under the hand of the executioner, in jails, in dungeons? Were they not murdered in the streets? But they marched fearlessly and steadily forward. They rallied together the workers and peasants. They overthrew the Tsar. They did

not stop half-way, did not listen to the Mensheviks—the social democrats, the blood brothers of Scheidmann-Vandervelde-MacDonald-Blum-Bauer. They turned their arms against the bourgeoisie and overthrew them in October, 1917.

Gather under the banner of the Communist Party, of the Communist International. Help this Party and its supporters everywhere and in every way. Surround this Party with the greatest support. Then jails and executions will be helpless, and the Communist Party will be able to organise you for the decisive struggle for the last decisive fight.

Working women, peasant women, toiling women of the whole world! There is no other path towards liberation from the yoke of capital, from the fascist terror, from the calamities of the crisis, from national oppression and colonial plunder, from the menace of new imperialist wars, except the path of the working class of the U.S.S.R.—the path of the proletarian revolution, the struggle for the power of the Soviets!

Decisive fights between capital and labour are approaching! Everywhere the wave of indignation of the workers and peasants against capitalism, the bourgeois dictatorship and the fascist terror is rising. Hatred towards the bourgeoisie is growing among the toilers of all countries. The workers of France are already coming out into the streets and taking up arms. In Austria the workers have entered into a heroic struggle against the fascist gangs in order to save themselves from bloody fascism. The forces of revolution are growing and strengthening.

Women workers and toiling women of town and village! You have repeatedly shown your revolutionary activity, firmness and militant reliability in strikes, in hunger marches, in the struggle against the police, the gendarmes and the fascist gangs. Your place is in the ranks of the united front of all the toilers against the capitalist offensive!

On March 8th the International Women's Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International calls on you to raise high the banner of Clara Zetkin, a fiery fighter for Communism and for the liberation of the toiling women of the whole world.

Under the leadership of the Communist International and the Communist Parties, fight against the preparations for a new imperialist slaughter. Stand together in defence of the fatherland of the toilers and the oppressed of the whole world—the U.S.S.R. Demand the withdrawal of the imperialist Japanese troops from China and Manchuria. Rise in defence of the Chinese Soviets. Fight against the militarisation of you and your children!

Struggle against the agents of the bourgeoisie, the traitors of the working class, the social democrats. Leave the ranks of the labour and socialist parties.

In common ranks with the men workers, act against the bloody fascist terror. Down with fascism, the bloody weapon of imperialism! Down with the fascist murderers! Struggle in a united front against the increase of exploitation, against capitalist rationalisation, against mass dismissals!

Do not allow working women and youth to be sent into the forced labour camps, to forced labour for the landlords and manufacturers!

Fight against the use of cheap women's labour as a weapon for reducing the wages of the workers, against the dismissal of married women and the refusal of relief to them!

Demand equal pay for equal work for women and youth!  
Demand social insurance for all men and women workers and youth!

Demand immediate aid for the unemployed at the expense of the government and the employers!

Demand increased wages and a full working week!  
Demand the protection of mothers and infants after the example of the U.S.S.R.—eight weeks' vacation before and after childbirth with full wages, free nurseries in connection with the factories, and the repeal of the laws prohibiting abortion!

Demand the liberation of all revolutionary fighters from jails and concentration camps!

Women farm labourers, poor women, in alliance with the workers and under the leadership of the Communist Parties, act for the abolition of taxes and impositions, for the annulment of debts and rent, for the confiscation of the land from the landlords and big landowners and its transfer without payment to the toiling men and women farmers.

Long live the men and women workers, men and women collective farmers, all the builders of socialism in the land of the Soviets—the foremost detachment of the world proletarian army which is laying the path to liberty, to the happiness of all mankind, under the leadership of the great leader of the world proletariat, Comrade Stalin!

Long live the organiser of the struggle for socialism, for the Soviet power—the Communist International and its leader, Comrade Stalin!

Long live March 8th—International Women's Day!

International Women's Secretariat E.C.C.I.

## The Struggle Against Fascism and Imperialist War in the Forefront of International Women's Day

International Women's Day on March 8 is the day of review of the revolutionary forces, a day of mobilisation of the broad masses of toiling women in town and countryside for the struggle against fascism and imperialist war. This year it will take place in a period of "extraordinary tension both of the class contradictions within the capitalist countries and of the international contradictions between them, which bear witness to such a maturity of the objective prerequisites for a revolutionary crisis, that at present the world stands closely before a new round of revolutions and wars," as it is expressed in the theses of the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

In the capitalist, semi-colonial and colonial countries, women workers were and still are in the front ranks of the heroic battles of the working class and proudly raise high the banner of Leninism. The strikes in Poland, Czechoslovakia, the struggle of the Belgian miners, the strikes of the English textile workers, the struggles in Rumania and Italy and by no means last, the heroic struggle of the German working class against fascism, prove that working women the world over are following the glorious example of the Russian women workers and are prepared to participate in the decisive struggles for the defeat of capitalism, and the establishment of the proletarian rule.

This year, International Women's Day will take place for the first time without Clara Zetkin. Her spirit, however, and her fighting will, which for years had been an inspiration to millions of women, will inspire this International Women's Day also. The working class of all countries is faced with decisive struggles. In the countries of open fascist dictatorship, a relentless and brutal struggle is being waged against all toiling women and women workers. In so far as it does not interfere with the capitalist race for profits, women workers are to be pushed out of the production process; all social benefit is taken away from them, and they are forced into the worst slavery.

The danger of a new, imperialist world war becomes more and more acute. To an ever greater extent the period of pacifist speeches is making way for a period of "war psychosis" and instead of the diplomats and pacifist apostles, the guns begin to speak. From airplanes thousands of bombs will be dropped on towns and villages in the war districts, as in China, where Japanese imperialism has started a wholesale murder in order to add China to its possession after already having occupied Manchuria. The war-minded military clique led by the former War Minister Araki, makes one provocation after another against the country of workers and peasants, the Soviet Union. In South America war has been raging for a long time now, for the predominance of either America or England, and the fascist government in Germany provokes warlike disturbances and tries to create a bloc for a new bloody partitioning of Europe in the interests of Germany, under the pretext of struggling against the Versailles Treaty. Europe, at the present time, is a powder barrel and may explode at any time. If it has not yet exploded, this is due to the steadfast socialist peace policy pursued by the Soviet Union, which time and again exposes the war-mongering of the imperialist powers. The Soviet Union, which has become one of the greatest and strongest powers in the world, and which not only all toilers of the Soviet Union, but the whole world proletariat is ready to defend, will answer with the necessary proletarian blows any endeavour on the part of the imperialists "to poke their swinish snouts into our Soviet garden," as Comrade Stalin said at the Seventeenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party. The sharpening internal class contradictions in the capitalist countries find their expression, on the one hand, in the inability of the bourgeoisie to maintain their rule by means of the old bourgeois democracy, so that it establishes fascist dictatorships, and, on the other hand, in the

rapid ripening of the revolutionary crisis and the growing indignation of the broad masses against capitalism. The establishment of fascism as an open terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary and imperialistic elements of finance capital, bears witness to the weakness of capitalism and crassly shows that the capitalist system is tottering. Social democracy as the main social support of the bourgeoisie—even in the period of open fascist dictatorship—supports the interests of its national bourgeoisie, linking its support up with lackey services for international capitalism against the Soviet Union.

The development in Germany shows that fascism, in its endeavours to create for itself a mass basis among the toilers, addresses itself especially to the women. Every means of deception and unscrupulous demagoguery is utilised by fascism. Thus, in an article entitled "For the Soul of the German Woman Worker," in "Der Deutsche," organ of the fascist "German Labour Front" of January 14, 1934, one could read:

"The proletarian woman, who cursing, sold her labour power, must be transformed into a proud German woman worker, the woman soul in her must be awakened, the mother in her must be brought to life. . . . All this, the woman worker in Marxist-Liberalistic Germany (read the Germany of Ebert-Bruening-Severing.—The author) missed. Like a step-child, she stood in the way of everyone, imprisoned in political class struggle organisations . . . she was laying by the wayside, empty and exhausted, in a tiresome life of misery."

What a disgraceful lie, what repugnant demagoguery. By tens of thousands the women are thrown out of the factories by the national socialists, deprived of benefit and subjected to starvation, forced to prostitution. Tens of thousands of women in the fascist countries are chased from one locality to another, in search of work, tens of thousands are wandering aimlessly around without a roof over their heads, tens of thousands of women every year put an end to their lives from sheer despair, because they are unable to see their children starve any longer. In the chemical and war factories, the women workers are being exploited to the bone, and if they dare to protest against this boundless exploitation by the "leader" of the factory—which is the "name of honour" given to-day in Germany to the employer—they are sent to concentration camps, where they are tortured, violated and murdered by the bloodthirsty fascist gangs. The only liberty which is left to the woman worker, and the woman in general, under fascism, is the right to give birth to as many children as possible, so that sufficient cannon-fodder may be available for imperialism. In a meeting held on March 18, 1933, in Berlin, Goebbels, the "Minister of Propaganda Lies" of the fascist Hitler government, declared this quite openly:

"We are convinced that women should show their forces and their abilities in other spheres, than the men. The foremost, best and most suitable place for women is in the family and the most wonderful task she can fulfil is to give children to her country and her people (i.e., to capitalism.—The author), children who will continue the achievements of the race and thus safeguard the immortality of the nation."

In all capitalist States attacks are being made in the last period on the toiling women. Women were thrown out of the factories and forced to do compulsory labour. In the war and chemical factories and the textile hells, women and children are forced to give their labour power to the capitalists in exchange for scandalous starvation wages under utterly degrading working conditions. Taking advantage of the wholesale unemployment caused by the crisis, the capitalists are reverting to boundless exploitation of women and child labour. In Japan, where the whole of the clothing industry has been adapted to the supply of uniforms for

the army, conditions are so scandalous that even bourgeois papers are forced to report on them. Thus, we read in an article in the "Tokio Asachi" of December 4, 1933:

"In the militarised factories of Osaka, the working day is supplemented by regular overtime of five to six hours daily." And the "Sangio Rodo Daicho," No. 48, 1933, is forced to admit:

"In Javaita (Fukuoka Province) the Tanaka factory has received an order, for 4,500 sets of clothes for the army. This means a great effort for the 90 women workers employed by the factory. Eighty of those employed are youngsters of 12 to 13 years and women up to 20 years. Under the pretext that they have to get familiar with factory work, they do not receive any wages during the first six months. The working day is ten hours and the highest qualified worker receives, after various reductions have been made, an average monthly wage of 20 yen (a yen being roughly 1s. at the present rate of exchange)."

The women workers are not only exploited in the most cruel manner, but on top of it are robbed of their liberty. The same bourgeois paper "Sangio Rodo Daicho" writes on the subject:

"The communal dwellings constitute, in fact, prisons. The women workers cannot go in and out freely, and even the right to see their nearest relatives has been taken away from them. To ensure that they cannot flee from these communal dwellings, they are surrounded by barbed wire and deep ditches."

Not only in Japan, however, but more or less in all capitalist countries, such conditions prevail. That this is possible is due to social democracy and to the reformist trade union bureaucracy, whose Ministers and municipal officials have forced women to do compulsory labour in the labour service camps and who have supported all anti-working-class measures of the employers. Everywhere where working women have resisted the boundless exploitation, the reformist trade union leaders attack them from the rear and by means of their policy of the "lesser evil" and of splitting

the working class, they prepared the ascent to power of fascism in Germany.

International Women's Day on March 8 coincides with the tremendous victory of the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union. In this construction the women workers in the factories, the peasant women on the collective farms, the women engineers and the women working on the cultural front, play as important a role as in the tremendous strike struggles of the Russian proletariat in the period before the victorious October Revolution. The victorious October Revolution gave full equality to women in the Soviet Union and opened to them the road to commanding posts in all spheres of the economic, political and cultural life of the country. Lenin considered one of the most important tasks to draw the women into social production. In this connection he said:

"To liberate the women from domestic drudgery, to free them from their subjection to the dumb and degrading, endlessly monotonous atmosphere of kitchen and nursery, this is the main task; it is a difficult struggle aiming at a basic transformation both of social technique and habits. But this struggle will end with the full victory of Communism." ("Lenin," Vol. XXV, Second Edition, p. 64.)

Millions of women in the Soviet Union have already been torn away from the monotonous atmosphere of kitchen and nursery and been placed into the service of social production. Millions of women are already standing on the front of socialist construction, as well as on the front of defence of the only fatherland of the proletariat, the Soviet Union. To the same extent as Lenin's teachings have been realised in the political, economic and social sphere, during the 16½ years after the victorious October Revolution, this has also been done in the sphere of full equality for women.

In their future struggles, the women workers in the capitalist, semi-colonial and colonial countries and the toiling women in town and countryside will show themselves worthy of the heroic women of the Paris Commune, and will proudly raise high the banner of Leninism in the struggle against fascism and imperialist war for full equality, in the struggle for a victorious world revolution.

## The Struggle of the Women Workers of Germany

In line with its swindle for creating work, Hitler's fascist government carries on a wide agitation for the dismissal of working women, especially the married ones, from the factory. Families of which more than one member is earning, and unemployed who earn something extra occasionally to supplement the miserable dole, are combated by agitation and practical measures as "double earners." In connection with its promises to create more work, fascism announces that it will bring women back from the work benches to the home and the family, so as to create "work" for unemployed fathers of families. However, all these demagogic promises and announcements of fascism to the effect that it will create more work and bring back the women to home and kitchen, reveal themselves, after a few months of open fascist dictatorship, to ever greater masses as a large-scale attack on the living standards, on wages, and social insurance of the working class.

In a number of factories women have been dismissed and men been taken on in their place. The misery of the women is greater than ever. The married women who are dismissed receive no benefit whatsoever and the "bringing back" of these women to the home is done at the expense of still greater misery for their families. The real double-earners, ministers, high State officials, directors and members of the boards of stock companies, shareholders, highly pensioned generals, etc., who receive income from three to four different sources, are not only left untouched by fascism, but on the contrary, the fascists give them greater opportunity to rob the toilers and to increase their parasitic income.

This is one side of fascist reality. The other side is that in those cases where men have been taken on instead of women, they are paid the same wages. Working women were dismissed by the Rhine Fum in Gronau and men placed in their positions at the wage of the dismissed women.

For the Muenster textile district it has even been fixed in the wage agreements that in the case of dismissals of women and engagement of men, the basic wage for women will be applicable. In order to force the workers to an increased speed-up, it is laid down at the same time that the men will get an extra percentage according to the additional amount of work they perform.

Apart from the direct wage cuts effected through the taking on of men at women's wages, speed-up is increased more and more.

In the textile factory "Huppertsberg," in Wuppertal, 400 women were dismissed in order to give their jobs to men. After various reductions, which under fascism amount often to more than one-third of the wage, the workers receive an average weekly earning of 19 marks. The women workers receive even less. For such a wage one worker must attend 17 looms.

The "Berliner Tageblatt" of November 13, 1933, reports on the replacement of women by men in the underwear and work-clothing industry, remarking that it has been possible to make up for the difference in wages laid down in the collective agreement, which amounted to 25 to 35 per cent., almost completely by a greater labour productivity on the part of the male workers.

A fascist terror without precedent, linked up with a most unscrupulous system of swindle and cheating, is to enable capitalism to throw the burden of the economic crisis on to the shoulders of the toiling masses, and in particular, of the masses of toiling women.

Not everywhere, however, does fascism dismiss women from the factories. Only there where the dismissals do not interfere with production, but on the contrary, tend to popularise the swindle of creating work among the masses. Apart from the dismissals of women from certain factories, we see at the same time endeavours to use cheaper female labour to an even greater extent than formerly, in the decisive positions in the export trade and in industries which are working for the preparation of war or are essential for the safeguarding of food supplies (agriculture).

The already low starvation wages of women workers are cut even more. The women workers of the AEG factory, Berlin, report that formerly their wages amounted to 64-68 pfennigs an hour, and were then reduced to 50-55 pfennigs. Recently, the fascist management endeavoured to cut down their wages to 40-45 pfennigs. Thanks to their determined opposition, the women workers have succeeded, up till now, in preventing the intended wage cuts.

In the button factory of Hirschfeld, piece rates were introduced instead of the time rates enforced up till now. These unfavourable piece rates, however, constitute a wage cut. The women workers put up passive resistance and then entered into a strike and by their determined attitude, succeeded in forcing through the withdrawal of the cuts.

The unemployed women workers live in incredible misery. About 200,000 unemployed young women workers are pressed into the compulsory labour service in order to be educated for "obedience and submission," and at the same time to be used as reserves of cheap labour in war and other important industries. The fascist commissar of East Prussia declared to the women workers:

"Those who refuse compulsory labour will never receive benefit again. The labour exchange will never have anything to do with them in the future."

During the last few days a new decree has been issued, according to which the so-called "voluntary" labour service is subordinated both financially and administratively to the Labour Exchange, which gives out the jobs. This measure means that even to a larger extent than hitherto, fascism utilises the misery of the women workers in order to get cheap labour power.

This inhuman exploitation, terror and misery which weighs upon the women workers, strengthens their resistance.

In the Berlin Works of Osram, the women workers are sitting in long rows in front of apparatus filled with gas, over which they fit gas masks. These gas masks are being tested for gas tightness. For this heavy work which is injurious to health, these women workers receive a wage hardly enabling them to eat their fill at least a few times a week. All men and women workers known as "Marxists," as members of the Red trade union opposition, are being dismissed by Osram. However, the revolutionary workers cannot be weeded out. Before the elections four lavatories had been painted fresh over night. When next morning the women workers entered the lavatories, the freshly painted walls bore the inscription: "Red Front, the German Communist Party lives in spite of everything." Great joy reigned in the factory over this. All investigations were in vain. The lavatories were painted again. Next day, however, another slogan was painted on the wall: "Remain True to the Red Trade Union Opposition." The firm tried to establish the originators by comparing the handwriting. Three days later, however, hundreds of leaflets were distributed in the factory. They came from the conveyor, could be found on all tables, in the lavatories, etc. A number of women workers were arrested. All were silent, however, and nobody betrayed.

In the Sarotti Factory, the women workers refused to give anything for the so-called "Winter Aid." They protested against the many compulsory reductions from their wages. While in the beginning of November they paid from 50-60 pfennigs per week for the "Winter Aid," these contributions fell to 10 pfennigs within four weeks and there is now a strong current in favour of not paying anything at all.

In the A.E.G. Factory, Berlin, and in a number of other factories the women workers organised passive resistance and strikes against wage cuts.

In the Card Box Factory, Rungestrass, 100 women workers were dismissed out of a total of 300. These 100 women workers were ordered, however, to register not at a labour exchange, but at the factory. During November the firm announced, thereupon, that the dismissed women workers in exchange for the bother they cause the firm with this registration, would have to work one hour a week free of charge in the factory. From mouth to mouth went the slogan: "Refuse to work." Through the solid opposition of all women workers this announcement was withdrawn after two days.

At the labour exchanges among the unemployed, resistance also is on the increase. At the labour exchange in Boxhagen Street in Berlin, the women workers supported an unemployed national-socialist woman who was thrown out by her own "party comrades," who were in charge of the complaint department. They acted in such a way that the fascist was compelled to take to flight. Very often this labour exchange is being closed by the police and searched in order to try to find the constantly appearing distributors of revolutionary leaflets. Thus, the women were kept standing on the same spot one day for an hour and a half till they lost patience. They formed speaking choruses, louder and louder, till at last a big row broke out. The women cried: "We are hungry, we want to be let out, our children are alone at home. Away with the police." The result of this was that the police were compelled to withdraw even before their investigation had been finished.

A great number of similar examples could be quoted, which all bear witness to the growing activity of the women workers, even under the conditions of sharpest terror. The Communist Party, the Red trade union opposition, and the independent class trade unions are the only forces, which organise and lead the counter-offensive against fascism. The German women workers are fighting for their liberty with ever greater heroism. More and more the Russian workers become their example in the struggle against fascism, against the dictatorship of capitalism and for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## The Working Women in the Forefront of the Class Struggle in Great Britain

By G. Bark

The experience of the class struggle in Great Britain bears witness to the fact that the working women are advancing to the forefront in the strike struggles and unemployed movements. The working women and, in the first place, the textile workers, who constitute the bulk of the female proletariat, have inscribed glorious pages in the history of the revolutionary movement of the country. It will suffice to remember the numerous strikes conducted with the participation of working women during the past years of the world crisis, the strike of the 150,000 weavers in 1931, when the women in their struggle against the more-loom system resisted the employers' offensive, the numerous strikes of the cotton workers in 1932, which led to the general strike of the weavers and afterwards to the spinners' general strike. And in 1933 the working women were also in the front ranks of the strikers in a number of partial strikes, in the strike at Hope's Metal Frame Factory in Birmingham, at the Briggs Automobile Factory in London, at the Silvers Factory, at Fairdale's Clothing Factory, etc. They are actively participating in strike pickets, and indignant at a new worsening of the working conditions, are frequently the first to leave the factory. They are actively participating in the work of the strike committees and often give in less to the manoeuvres of the reformists than do the men.

The militancy of the working women in the class struggle is to be accounted for first of all by the continuous worsening of the

conditions of the proletariat as a whole and of the women workers in particular. The low wages of women workers are usually 30 per cent. less than men's wages. All kinds of arbitration organs fix the wages for working women at 23s. to 26s. per week—i.e., lower than the living minimum. Unemployed women are subjected even to a greater extent than are the men to the reactionary policy of the national government, to the Means Test and to the arbitrariness of the local insurance organs, taken off the benefit list unless the unemployed can prove that "he is genuinely looking for work," that "he is fit for work," etc. A special law passed by the "Labour" government in 1931 has deprived hundreds of thousands of unemployed married women from benefit. The conditions for receiving sick benefit have been worsened, unemployed women are deprived of the right to sick benefit, etc. At the present time parliament "discusses" a new Unemployment Insurance Bill which promises to the unemployed the introduction of forced labour and a still more drastic application of the Means Test.

A powerful movement of the employed and unemployed workers is developing around this Bill. Unemployed demonstrations are being held in the industrial centres, the first columns of the Hunger Marchers have already left Scotland and the Tyneside for London. The Hunger March is mobilising many thousands of workers for the struggle against the Bill. Thousands of workers come out on to the streets to greet the Hunger Marchers and to

express their sympathy with them. In the industrial districts and towns Congresses of the United Front with the Communist Party are held, with the participation of the representatives of the trade union lower organisations, Labour party, co-operatives, etc.

The working women are actively participating in this powerful movement. Not a single conference or demonstration is held without the participation of the working women and workers' wives. A women's column will take part in the Hunger March. The appeal to the working women and to the organisations uniting the toiling women was signed not only by the well-known women leaders of the revolutionary movement, but also by a number of members of the reformist organisations. This appeal calls upon the working women and workers' wives actively to participate in the unemployed March as well as in the Congress of Action. A special conference was held in London which was attended by the women-representatives of workers' mass organisations, trade unions, co-operative guilds, etc. This conference adopted a decision to join the campaign for the organisation of the March and Congress of Action. Every day brings information on the ever new movements of the toiling women in connection with the Unemployment Insurance Bill.

The tremendous significance of the continually growing class militancy of the toiling women will become clearer if we remember that the number of insured working women alone surpasses three and a half million. The number of working women and women employees together with the uninsured is close on six million. In a number of industries tens and even hundreds of thousands of working women are employed (the textile, food, metal industries, etc.). The majority of the working women are unorganised. Only about half a million women are organised; the number of women in the Labour party is not great either, although the Labour party has a widely ramified network of women's sections (1,600 sections). There are special committees for work among women at the General Trade Union Councils as well as in the separate unions.

The social reformists full well realise the importance of the extension and consolidation of their influence over the women toiling masses. But does this mean that we have no possibilities for strengthening the revolutionary influence on the toiling women? Of course not. We see every day how both the women's sections of the Labour party and the women's groups from other reformist organisations join the class struggle, intensifying their resistance to the policy and manoeuvres of the reformists.

It is worth noting, for instance, that the conference of the women's sections of the Labour party, held in 1933, adopted a number of more far-reaching decisions than the usual resolutions of the reformist organisations, although it was directed by the official representatives of the Labour party. The conference con-

demned the policy of the British government, directed to supporting the Japanese government, it demanded that trade relations be resumed with the U.S.S.R., it demanded the abolition of the Means Test, etc. True, all these resolutions had a reformist flavour, being seasoned with talks about the pacificatory mission of the League of Nations, on the realisation of socialism with the aid of the Labour government in a "peaceful and constitutional way," etc. But the fact that the reformists were forced to put up at this conference the question of the imperialist policy of the British government, of the full abolition of the Means Test, i.e., the questions usually hushed up at the official conferences of the Labour party and trade unions, testifies best of all to the growing revolutionary moods among the toiling women masses. The rise of the revolutionary sentiment among the toiling women explains why the reformists resort to more "left" manoeuvres when they have to deal with working women.

Without minimising the ideological and organisational influence of the reformists over the toiling women masses, it must at the same time be admitted that there are tremendous possibilities of revolutionary work among these strata of working women and workers' wives. The women's sections of the Labour party, women's co-operative guilds, women's guilds of the Railwaymen's Union, women's trade unions, as, for instance, the trade union of teachers and, finally, the masses of the women workers lined up in the general reformist organisations—such is the broadest base for the mass work of the revolutionary workers' organisations among the toiling women. The centre of this work must be in the mass reformist organisations. This does not at all mean that work directed chiefly to the organisation of the unorganised women in the factories and also to the setting up of guilds of miners' wives and of other categories of workers, of women's commissions at the N.U.W.M., is superfluous. We shall not be able to put the question of the winning over of the majority of the working class, as a whole in earnest, without applying various forms and methods of work for penetration into the midst of the organised and unorganised toiling women masses, without drawing the women masses into the general struggle of the proletariat.

The struggle against starvation rates paid to women, the struggle against a new offensive on the unemployed, and particularly on the unemployed working women, the struggle against an imperialist war, for solidarity and the active defence of the U.S.S.R.—such are the channels through which we shall be able to secure most successfully a growth of the revolutionary influence on millions of proletarian women. The most rapid transformation of the movement of millions of working women into a most important factor nearing the decisive battles against the bourgeoisie and for Soviet England—depends on our systematic day-to-day work among the women toiling masses.

## The Life and Struggles of the Toiling Women of Italy

By Estella

Even before Hitler, Italian fascism put forward the slogan that "the woman must go back to the home" and that "jobs should be given to the men who have to support their families." In reality, however, the fascist campaign against the employment of women in the factories coincides with the sharpening of the economic crisis and the growth of unemployment, which developed simultaneously with the crisis.

At the present time, there are in Italy 1,132,000 registered unemployed, which constitutes an increase, in comparison with last year. Among them are 241,000 women. These, however, are only the figures of the "official" fascist statistics. In fact, the number of unemployed is much larger, in particular of unemployed women.

In waging its campaign against the employment of women in the factories, fascism pursues the aim of (1) decreasing the value of female labour and cutting down wages to the extreme minimum; and (2) throwing the burden of unemployment mainly on the shoulders of the women, because, as a rule, unemployed women do not receive any benefit. On the other hand, the low wages for women make it easier to attack wages in general, and thus the employers are able to pay lower wages to those workers who are being taken on instead of the dismissed women, according to the principle "Back to the home," giving those workers the same or even lower wages than the dismissed women.

In those cases, however, where it is more advantageous for the fascist industry to use female labour instead of male labour, the men are dismissed—in spite of all the demagogy about the necessity of giving the jobs, in the first place, to the supporters of families—and are replaced by women or even children.

The conditions of starvation and misery into which fascism has forced the Italian toiling masses, weigh particularly on the proletarian women. From official, i.e., fascist statistics, it may be gathered that wage-cuts on the basis of collective agreements in the time from 1927 to 1932, amounted to 30-40 per cent. in the main branches of industry, employing mostly men. In those industries where mainly women are employed, the wage-cuts amount to 50-60 per cent. and even more.

Thus, for instance, the wages of the women cleaning rice (more than 180,000 agricultural women workers who work only during the season) fell from 25 liras in 1925 to 9.60 liras in 1933. As to the agricultural women workers in the South of Italy, their wages were cut down to 2.50 liras a day. (In order to judge the real value of wages in Italy, one must take into consideration that a kilo of bread costs 1.50 up to 1.90 liras, according to quality.)

This concerns only the "official" wage cuts laid down in the fascist wage agreements. In reality, however, as has been admitted

by the fascist trade union officials themselves. wages have fallen much more.

Besides all this, the wages of women workers are reduced still further because the wage agreements contain a number of points which enable the employers to exploit them to the utmost. Thus, the fascist wage agreement for the cotton industry (the textile industry employs the largest amount of workers in Italy, up to 600,000) lays down that fines may amount to 25-50 per cent. of the wages, that improvements in the cloth have to be paid for through reductions from the wages of the women workers, and finally, that the wages of young workers, which really constitute the majority of the workers in the mills, may not exceed 60 per cent. of the wages of an adult worker, although the norm of a young worker must be at least 70 per cent. of the ordinary norm.

The inhuman exploitation to which the women workers are subjected is admitted by the fascist trade union officials themselves (obviously for demagogic reasons) who express themselves on the subject as follows:—

"The necessity to maintain cut-throat and often ruinous competition compels the employer to resort to various means in order to cut down production costs. Besides wage-cuts and demands for increased labour productivity on the part of the workers, etc., the employers resort to a great extent to the replacement of men by women, youth and children. The same production norm is demanded from these categories as had been given before by adult men, the result being that about 50 per cent. is saved on wages." ("Lavora Mascista" of July 2, 1933.)

Against these conditions of starvation, exploitation and terror into which the Italian working masses are being forced by fascism, the women workers react by marching in the front ranks of the struggle against fascism and against the exploitation by the employers, shoulder to shoulder with the men.

In the numerous unemployed demonstrations, protest meetings, demonstrations against taxes and fascism, in the strikes and during stoppages of work in the factories and mills, in the course of the actions and struggles against the employers inside the fascist trade unions, the Italian women workers are in the front ranks, which can be proved by a number of examples:—

In Sassano and Monte-San-Giacomo, the whole of the population took part in a demonstration aiming at occupying the Town Hall. In the fight with the gendarmes, the demonstrators answered with stones and gun-fire. Eight demonstrators, men and women, were killed, and two gendarmes wounded.

In Asiago women with their children organised a demonstration against compulsory joining of the fascist party for the workers. The demonstration was held under the slogan: "Down with taxes!"

In San-Osvaldo (Udine) a large group of women who had been deprived of winter relief, went to the "Podesta" to protest. Before the demonstration leaflets had been distributed. In spite of the tremendous police apparatus, the workers succeeded in carrying through the demonstration and in winning their demands.

In the textile mill of Albina Botto (Trona Biellese) the workers were agitating against the compulsory operation of two machines. The fascist trade unions try to induce the workers to operate two machines instead of one, while accepting a wage-cut of 0.50 liras per 1,000 revolutions, when working on one machine, and of 1.33 liras per 1,000 revolutions when operating two machines. The Italian Federation of Trade Unions issued an illegal appeal. The workers refused, in an organised way, to operate two machines. Two workers were dismissed and taken home, guarded by gendarmes. The others were threatened with dismissal. The factory was occupied by a troop of gendarmes, who threatened to arrest the women workers unless they started work. Thereupon, the women workers in the spinning department stopped all machines and carried out a stay-in strike.

Many more examples could be given.

In the course of the difficult, stubborn and heroic struggle against fascism and the employers, a great number of workers have been killed on the front of the class struggle. Many of them have been exiled to one of the Italian islands or condemned to long prison sentences. From the ranks of the Italian proletarian women, new fighters come forward to take their place.

The Italian women workers are determined to follow the example of their Russian comrades, and to fight for liberation as they have done. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of Italy and the revolutionary Trade Union Federation, the Italian women workers will continue their struggle against fascism and capitalism.

## The Life and Struggles of the Toiling Women in Kuomintang China

The situation of the toiling woman in Kuomintang China is pictured by a woman worker of a silk factory in Shanghai. When she came to work early in the morning, she saw at the closed factory gate a group of women workers. They suspected that the factory had been closed down.

"It is rumoured that our factory and all other silk mills have been closed down—what are we to do now? My family consists of five persons, all women. I have two sisters, the younger being eight, the older being 15, a seven-year-old daughter and an old mother. I am the only one who is working. All our possessions which were worth anything at all we sold or took to the pawnbroker last year. At the present time we keep alive only on thin soup, and even this we have not always got. Winter is already here, but our worn-out warm clothes are still at the pawnbroker's."

"Where is there a ray of hope in our life? The Kuomintang and the various Kuomintang associations shout about the salvation of the country, about the salvation of the people, but we have found out long since that this is all a swindle."

This short story not only throws a sharp light on the living conditions of the woman worker concerned, but proves, at the same time, that most of the toiling women in Kuomintang China are living in more or less similar conditions.

Apart from all this, there exists in Kuomintang China an exploitation of a feudal slave character. The children especially are ruthlessly exploited. Even the Kuomintang press is sometimes forced to make public some of the particularly scandalous cases of this outrageous exploitation.

The imperialist robbers and the tyrants of the Kuomintang bureaucracy, the rich people and large landowners, plunged hundreds of millions of toiling women into an ocean of suffering, of starvation and of oppression. But this ocean is already getting stormy, the masses of revolutionary toilers, and among them the

women, are voicing their protest. They struggle for their human rights, and in these relentless struggles hundreds of thousands of new fighters in the vanguard of the revolution are being formed, and groups of revolutionary women organised. They possess an iron determination and are strongly devoted to the cause of the revolution. They fight imperialism and the Kuomintang, they fight for their existence and for the existence of their children.

They organise strikes, occupy factories, arrest the factory managements and desperately resist the police.

The Kuomintang and the yellow unions are gradually beginning to lose their influence among the women workers. In the course of a struggle in a silk mill, the Executive Committee of the union, together with the police and the Kuomintang officials, decided to put an end to the strike. All union officials were sent to the workers' quarters to agitate in favour of going back to work. To maintain "peace and order," a police troop of the Fourth ever, did not pay any attention to the "advice" of the trade union officials. But when they were attacked by the gang of armed police, they did not take to flight, but began to beat up the policemen with sticks and stones. The chief of the troop was wounded and two women workers were arrested. Thereupon the other women workers went to the police station and demanded the release of the arrested women. The demand was complied with.

Apart from these isolated actions, several mass strikes occurred last year, in which hundreds of thousands of women workers participated, directed against the closing down of factories, wage cuts, etc. Frequently they were closely linked up with political struggles against the Kuomintang rule and imperialism. In fact, the toiling women take an active part in the anti-imperialist movement, especially in the movement directed against Japan.

Special mention must be made of the tremendous role which the peasant women play in the support of the Soviet power and the Red Army. Thus, the women workers of Shanghai took an

active part in the purchase of loans issued by the Chinese Soviet government, and which were used for the construction of aeroplanes for the struggle against the attacks of the Kuomintang. Frequently the women in the Kuomintang districts made shoes and socks for the Red Army men.

Such cases occur very frequently, although all actions on the part of the women workers are always of a spontaneous and non-organised character. There can be no doubt that as a result of the sharp economic crisis and the profound political crisis of the

Kuomintang rule, on the one hand, and the victorious development of the Chinese Soviets and the Red Army on the other, the struggle of the toiling women becomes an ever more important factor in the liberation of the oppressed people from the yoke of imperialism and feudalism. And on International Women's Day, on March 8, the toiling women of Kuomintang China will rally still more strongly to the Communist Party of China and march under the slogan of developing and strengthening the Red trade unions and active struggle for victory of the Soviet Revolution in the whole of China.

## The Life and Struggles of the Japanese Workers

The most important section of the toiling women in Japan is the textile women workers, who constitute 80 per cent. of the army of Japanese textile workers, which numbers about 100,000.

It is generally known that the position of the Japanese textile women workers is even much worse than that of the textile women workers in the other capitalist countries. Their position corresponds to that of semi-colonial slaves.

If before the crisis a woman in the cotton industry working an average of 10-11 hours a day earned 1 yen 2 sens and 60 sen in the silk spinning industry, the wage index for women for the first six months of 1933 amounted to 10.9 for the silk-winders and 69.4 for the spinners.

Speeding-up has increased enormously. During the period from 1929 to 1932, the number of women workers operating 10,000 spindles, has been cut from 218 to 164, at the same time the wage fund was reduced from 362 to 174 yen. At one of the largest firms, "Dai Nichon Boseki," the number of spindles per woman worker has increased from 48 in 1928 to 60, for an average wage of 17 yen (as compared with 35 to 40 yen before the crisis).

Extension of the working day is also introduced on a large scale. Last October alone, the police of a single district, Senso (Osaka), registered 192 cases of extension of the working day in textile factories, i.e., 17 per cent. more than in 1932.

The extent to which exploitation of women workers has increased may be gathered from the official figures on the increase in profits of the textile companies. During the first six months of 1933, these profits increased by 18 per cent. (by 15.5 per cent. during the first six months of 1932).

In certain firms, as the Kanegafuzi Co., profits have risen by 28 per cent.

As a result of the war and inflation boom, there was a process of the reinstatement of women workers in the textile industry.

During the crisis the number of women workers employed in the textile industry, according to official figures, fell by 30 per cent. on an average. Recently, the index of employment in the spinning and weaving mills reached the level of the beginning of 1931. Nevertheless, these index figures are still far below the pre-war level. In the weaving mills the index figures rise mainly as a result of the employment of so-called temporary workers, who are engaged for a fixed time, in order to carry out urgent orders.

In the silk-winding mills the number of workers is reduced continually. The index figure of employment, which was 66.0 in June, 1933, has fallen by 1.39 as compared with June, 1932.

In connection with the closing down of silk-winding mills in the whole country, for a period of 3 to 4 months, which was started at the demand of the proprietors of the silk-winding mills in the Nagano district, 400,000 women workers remain unemployed. Wholesale dismissals have already started.

On the last pay-day, the women received a few yen for travelling expenses and a slip saying that no wages were due to them for the whole season.

The continual worsening of the position of the women workers in the textile industry drives them to struggle. During last year the textile women workers came immediately after the women workers of the leading industries (metal and chemical industries) in the number of labour conflicts, and in August and October they even occupied first place. The textile women workers fight for their interests. In the course of last year, the women workers of the cotton factory, Sinko Nasome, struck twice for a wage increase. The women workers of the spinning mill, Fukusima Boseki, during

the strike in which 400 women participated and which was directed against dismissals and speeding up, raised amongst other demands for the improvement of their conditions, also a political demand, i.e., the incorporation of the time of military service into uninterrupted service at the factory. In the course of the struggle, the strikers addressed themselves to the workers of the other mills of the same Company, with an offer of united front. The strike of the 600 women workers of the silk mill, Nichon Kensoku, was carried on on the basis of revolutionary strike tactics. A strike committee was elected from below, strike pickets were organised and demonstrations held repeatedly. The employers replied to this with terroristic measures against the striking girls. With the arrest of the revolutionary leadership, the police deprived the strikers of their leaders. Thereupon, the Company let loose hired gangs against the strikers, paying 3 yen for every woman captured. But the women, who were brought back to their machines by force, did not give in but sabotaged.

In spite of all objective difficulties of the work and in spite of the brutal White Terror against the Dzenkio, the revolutionary Textile Workers' Union has recently been penetrating more and more stubbornly into those unapproachable strongholds of the textile mills. The organisers of the Union, as a rule members of the Party or trade union activists, show good examples of revolutionary action and show a remarkable ability to overcome all obstacles put in their way by the employers and the police in order to prevent their penetration into the factories and amongst the masses. The police newspaper, "Siakai Undo Sombun," expresses itself as follows in connection with two women organisers, who carried on agitation among the women workers of the silk mills in the districts of Suwa and Simoin:—

"Dressing themselves up as teachers or housewives, they cleverly passed through the police cordons and penetrated into the district and into the textile factory. They took advantage of the right of married women workers to live in a private home, rented a room and lived outside the factory as women workers who need not live in the Company houses. They utilised the free day in order to participate together with the women workers in various amusements, for example, card games, and in this way they got in touch with the women workers. At their homes they organised dancing parties, with gramophones; gathered the women workers, four or five together, carrying on agitation among them and endeavouring to recruit them for the Union."

The Japanese imperialists devote a great deal of attention to special work among the toiling women. They want to prepare in time compliant female labour, so that they may be available right from the beginning of the next war for machines of industry, and can take the place of the men who have been sent to the front.

The fascist and reactionary organisations in the mills force the women workers into military organisations, such as the "Women's Association for Air Defence," they compel the women to march, gun in hand, they force them into the churches, in order to pray for the victory of the Japanese armies and set the women to making uniforms.

To liberate the women workers from the influence of the reformist leaders, to counteract the efforts of the fascists, to organise the textile women workers and to lead them into mass strike struggles for the defence of their interests and against the imperialist war—these are the difficult but glorious tasks with which the revolutionary trade union movement in Japan is confronted.

Published weekly. Single copies, 2d. Subscription rates: Great Britain and Dominions, 12s. per year; U.S.A. and Canada, five dollars per year. Remittance in STERLING per International Money Order, Postal Order or Sight Draft on London.

Published by UNTHANKS BOOKSHOP, 370, High Road, Willesden, London, N.W.10, and Printed by THE MARSTON PRINTING CO. (T.U.), 44, Worship Street, London, E.C.2.