

COMMUNIST UNITY.

The following report has been issued by Comrade Inkipin, of the B.S.P.:—

"A further conference on Communist Unity was held in London on Saturday, April 24th. There were present:—J. F. Hodgson, Albert Inkipin and F. Willis (representing the B.S.P.); B. Lauritzen, Sylvia Pankhurst, and Melvina Walker (representing the W.S.F.); Ness Edwards and George Phippen (representing the South Wales S.S.); and Thos. Bell, Arthur MacManus and Wm. Paul (representing the recently-formed unofficial group of the S.L.P.).

"A. MacManus was appointed Chairman. A. Inkipin read the notice convening the Conference issued by the B.S.P. Executive after the discussion on Unity at the B.S.P. Conference and the receipt of a letter from T. Bell on behalf of the unofficial S.L.P. group, asking to be admitted to the Unity negotiations. In addition to the bodies represented, invitations had also been sent to the S.L.P. Executive and the unofficial Left Wing group that had been constituted in the I.L.P. No reply had been received from the latter, whilst the S.L.P. Executive wrote declining participation in the Conference or any association with the unofficial group from the S.L.P.

"J. F. Hodgson, on behalf of the B.S.P., stated that the matter of the Unity negotiations had been fully discussed at the Party's Annual Conference, and on the strength of the powers conferred upon it by that Conference, the B.S.P. Executive was prepared to continue on the basis of the proposals of the original Unity Conference (i.e., acceptance of the principles of Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the Soviet System, and the Third International, the question of relations with the Labour Party to be settled by a referendum of the membership of the new Party three months after its formation). Alternately the B.S.P. was prepared to drop entirely the question of national affiliation to the Labour Party on the understanding that branches of the Communist Party had autonomy in the matter of their relations with local Labour Parties.

"Sylvia Pankhurst moved: 'That we proceed to the formation of a Communist Party on the basis of non-affiliation to the Labour Party.'

"W. Paul seconded. After considerable discussion, J. F. Hodgson moved the following amendment: 'That this Conference decides to proceed with the establishment of a Communist Party on the principles of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the Soviet System, and the Third International, without pledging or binding the new Party in advance on any question of tactics.'

"After further discussion, the B.S.P. delegates stated their preparedness to forego the last clause in the amendment. This was not accepted, and Miss Pankhurst's resolution was put to the vote and carried by 8 votes to 3. (For: W.S.F., 3; S.W.S.S., 2; Unofficial S.L.P., 3. Against: B.S.P., 3.)

"Wm. Paul suggested that a Committee be now appointed from the bodies represented to proceed to carry the resolution into effect.

"Sylvia Pankhurst said that complete unity did not appear likely at present to arise out of the negotiations, and suggested the formation of a joint committee for Communist work, national demonstrations on suitable occasions, etc.

"The B.S.P. delegates stated that, in view of the rejection of the amendment, their participation in the Committee suggested by Paul, without first

reporting back to the B.S.P. Executive, would only lead to confusion.

"The Chairman suggested that the Conference, after discussing any other matters that might be raised, should adjourn until a later date, at which the decision of the B.S.P. might be intimated. This was eventually agreed to.

"The question of Parliamentaryism was raised, and a general discussion took place, in the course of which T. Bell made a lengthy statement on the use by Communists of Parliamentary agitation. W. Paul moved the following resolution: 'That it be part of the work of the Communist Party to participate in Parliamentary action in order to stimulate the revolutionary fervour of the working class, and to use it for agitational purposes.' F. Willis seconded. The resolution was carried by 5 votes to 2. (For: Unofficial S.L.P., 3; B.S.P., 1; S.W.S.S., 1. Against: W.S.F., 2.) J. F. Hodgson and A. Inkipin abstained from voting on the ground that, whilst entirely agreeing with the spirit of the resolution, they wanted complete freedom for the proposed new Party to define its attitude on this question of tactics as on that of Labour Party affiliation. F. Willis explained that, having seconded the resolution as expressing his view on the question of Parliamentaryism, he felt bound to vote for it, but entirely concurred with the statement of his B.S.P. colleagues. One representative of the W.S.F. also abstained from voting, and one representative of the S.W.S.S. had left the Conference when the vote was taken.

"W. Paul then moved: 'That this Conference appoints a provisional committee to make all the necessary arrangements to organise a convention. The committee also has power to invite bodies and groups who accept the basis of unity, and to arrange further Unity Conferences.' This resolution found no seconder.

"It was then agreed by 7 votes to 1 to adjourn the Conference until Sunday, May 9th. It was agreed to ask A. Inkipin to summon the adjourned Conference and to send invitations to all bodies that had been asked to participate in the present sitting."

On May 9th, when the Unity negotiations were continued, the South Wales Socialist Society delegates were not present, but C. H. Norman attended with a watching brief from the I.L.P.

Comrade Inkipin sends the following report:—

"After preliminary discussion, it was unanimously agreed that the outstanding difficulty in the way of Unity (the question of the relations of the proposed Communist Party to the Labour Party) should be referred for settlement by the rank and file of the movement at a specially convened National Convention to which all organisations, branches of organisations, groups and local societies accepting the three cardinal principles of unity (Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the Soviet System, and the Third International) should be invited to send delegates. If the participating bodies are in agreement with this recommendation, they are to be asked to send their delegates to the adjourned conference on Saturday, May 29th, with a mandate to carry it into effect."

This proposal must now be considered carefully by the various organisations. If such a conference were agreed to, it would be unwise to limit its discussion to the one point of the Labour Party affiliation. The entire basic programme and tactics of the new party should be brought into the deliberations.