

POLEMICS AND DISCUSSIONS

Election-Policy of the British Communist Party.

By M. N. Roy.

In view of the finding of the Fifth Congress that the activities of the Communist International should be concentrated on the necessity of building a mass party in Great Britain, the present election campaign in that country assumes extraordinary importance. The election campaign provides our Party with a splendid opportunity for agitation. In proportion as the British comrades will be able to avail themselves of this opportunity, the task of building the much-needed mass party will be accomplished.

There cannot be much controversy as to what should be the election-policy of the British Party. The general lines have been laid down already by several Congresses. But the resolution of the Labour Party Conference not to endorse any Communist candidate has slightly changed the situation. The change is slight, because by no means does it warrant any essential modification of the general lines of our policy. What will be required is tactical elasticity. Nevertheless, one or two suggestions have been made which practically mean the repudiation of the lines laid down by Lenin in "Left Communism", and subsequently ratified on several occasions. It is true that the tactical lines determined in the light of the situation in 1920 may not be applicable with equal correctness after the lapse of four years. The British Party is expected to have passed its "infantile" period in the meantime. But before recommending any far-reaching alternation of the old line of tactics, it is necessary to examine whether a corresponding change of situation has taken place. No doubt Britain of today is not the same as the Britain of 1920. It cannot, however, be asserted that the political outlook of the proletariat as a class has undergone any appreciable change. In general the working class still has faith in and follows the Labour Party. The short experience of Labour Government has not altered this state of affairs, although it has given a few jolts here and there. Today we have a Communist Party, while there was none in 1920. The influence of our Party is steadily growing; but the fact remains that not even an appreciable minority of the working class can be called to follow the Communist lead. This being the case, in broad outlines the situation continues to be the same as calls for the application of the policy formulated by Lenin in 1920.

Some German comrades put forth a new election-policy for the British Party. They suggest that where Communist candidates get the endorsement of local organisations in spite of the resolution of the Labour Party, the old policy will be followed: that is, the proletariat will be asked to vote for the Communist candidate of the Labour Party. But where there will be no Communist candidate, the Communists should abstain from voting and exhort the proletariat to the same. This is nothing but the revival of the policy which Lenin combated. It is obvious that at best only a few Communists will get the necessary endorsement. In the large majority of the constituencies, our Party will have three alternatives: namely, to support the Labour Party (non-Communist) candidate, to put up its own candidate in opposition to the Labour Party candidate, or to follow the advice of the German comrades, that is to abstain and to preach abstention. If it be held that the

Balfour Declaration. But he would thereby have lost all support in the only country which he still possessed, in Palestine itself. Hussein sought a way out. He came forward with counter proposals and endeavoured to find a compromise. In vain. In August last his English ambassador, Dr. Naji el Asil, came to Hedjaz with a draft treaty which was regarded on the part of England as final.

Hussein, who had to choose either to become completely discredited as a Mohammedan ruler and enslaved by England on the one hand, and the loss of British friendship on the other, hesitated what to do. But this hesitation led to his complete downfall. The English, even under the rule of the Christian peace-loving MacDonald, are not sentimental. And the policy of His British Majesty in Arabia could not wait until His Excellency, the Caliph by the grace of His Majesty, decided to sign the Treaty. He hesitated, it was decided therefore to employ the whip to help him to arrive at a decision. The scourge of the Islamic despots in Arabia are the Wahabits. Without themselves being bound to any government, these desert Bedouins, owing to their lack of weapons could only engage in war against those tribes who receive no help from any European power. For many years King Hussein was defended from the fanatical hate of the Wahabits against the "old robber" by the friendship of England. It was now intimated to the Wahabits that England would remain neutral in the event of a war against Hedjaz.

This sealed the fate of Hussein. In their first attack the Wahabits captured El Taif, a few days later they repulsed a relief army of Hussein and opened the way to Mecca.

The fight against the Wahabits, who were bringing 25,000 men into the field against the army of Hedjaz which numbers only 1500 soldiers, was hopeless. The only hope for Hussein was England. Naji el Asil journeyed to London and submitted the Treaty duly signed to His Majesty's Government. He begged for immediate help - at least a few aeroplanes. In vain. The English press which only a few months previously had lauded Hussein to the skies, now ridiculed the "helpless old man". The "Morning Post" admitted quite openly: that Hussein had estranged English public opinion. He ought to have signed the Treaty at once.

There was nothing left for Hussein but to abdicate. His son Ali declared beforehand that he made no claim to the Caliphate. In spite of this the Wahabits continued their advance on Mecca so that Ali was compelled to flee and Mecca was easily taken. They will perhaps, after having succeeded in overthrowing their hereditary enemy, conclude a peace with Ali. With the collapse of the Hussein dynasty a new chapter opens in the history of Arabia.