

Four Years  
of Struggle  
*by C. M. Roebuck*

THE

# COMMUNIST REVIEW

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AUGUST 1924

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IMPORTANT FEATURES of THIS ISSUE

Draft Programme of the  
C.P.G.B. Criticised

By J. LECKIE

'The Workers' Press

By ERIC VERNEY

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# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

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# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

*Editor: THOS. BELL*

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## THE EDITORIAL VIEW

**I**T is four years ago this month (August, 1920) since the historic Unity Conference was held in London that was to bring together the best fighting elements in the Labour and Socialist movement of this country into a definite Communist Party. As in the case with every new movement, the formation of the C.P. was met with misunderstanding, prejudice and misrepresentation. From the bourgeois press that was to be expected, but not a few good proletarian fighters also failed to realise the historic significance of the step then taken. With some there was a hesitancy and timidity to break with the past. This was really a heritage of tradition rather than sound judgment. *For there never was, nor has been any argument in principle against a Communist Party except from those whose interests were bound up in the old organisations.*

Looking back on these four years we can truly say that the formation of the C.P.G.B., crystallising as it did the new spirit of the times born from the experiences of the great slaughter, has preserved for the working class movement of this country all that was best in the lessons of the period, 1914-18. And we have no hesitation in saying that it would have been a tragedy indeed if it had been decided to continue in the same old way with the same old methods of organisation and action.

We think it will not be out of place to recall to-day by way of retrospect the nature of some of the opposition the C.P. had to encounter at its inception. We had, for example, the "pure" revolutionary comrade who argued that the C.P. was only a new name for an old policy, and a reformist one at that, further, it was predicted on "scientific" grounds that the party would have a short life on account of the opportunism of some of its component elements. On the other hand, we had the anti-parliamentary comrade who thought he saw in the idea of the Soviet institution the complete negation of all parliamentary action and of a parlia-

mentary Party. Both these arguments *appeared* to be reinforced by the decision of our first Congress to seek affiliation with the Labour Party. For wasn't the Labour Party a social reformist and opportunist party *par excellence*, above all wasn't it a purely parliamentary party believing in the so-called democratic machine as the sole means for bringing about the economic and political emancipation of the slave class? Nothing, therefore, appeared more natural than the belief that the C.P. would get swamped or follow the trail of the older Socialist Parties, and get lost in the quagmire of parliamentary crétinism by the very fact of its associations with the Labour Party. The experience of the last four years has shown how absurd were those fears; moreover, the one thing overlooked in all this criticism was the international character of our Party, the fact that the C.P. was an international party with its policy and practice continuously under the scrutiny of an international general staff.

We are disposed to take this retrospect, for there are yet sceptics in our ranks and hovering around the fringes of our party who, despite our four years' experience, keep floundering about not knowing where they are, or whither they are going, though they may know where they would like to go. Only one thing seems certain and that is the "hunch" that there is something wrong with the party. Curiously enough, these modern sceptics criticise the party from the completely opposite angle to that of four years ago. To-day, the party is too revolutionary in its policy (it matters not that there is a distinction between verbiage and action. Those who object to the *word* will never fulfil the *deed*). We should be more practical. Begin with practical things, get the ear of the reactionaries who still believe in J. H. Thomas or Ramsay MacDonald, and don't speak too much or too loud about Communism and the Communist Party in case you lose influence—and votes. In other words, the C.P. is not parliamentary enough. Indeed, it has been said we will never be a parliamentary power until we acquire the experience and strategy of the I.L.P. politicians!

There is yet another form of scepticism which has not to be confused with the parliamentary opportunism as outlined, as it has nothing in common with the latter. This is the complaint about the lack of clarity in the practical operation of Communist policy, particularly in the struggle for immediate demands, and in the form our activity should take in non-party organisations, *i.e.*, in operating the United Front. Both these forms of party scepticism, the one a kind of academic sectarianism, and the other, parliamentary opportunism, arise from the same cause. They arise

from an inability to grasp the true nature and practice of revolutionary politics, which is the basis of our Party.

Take for example the question of a programme of immediate demands. It often happens that the C.P. is putting forward demands similar to other parties. Here then appears a paradox. What is to distinguish the Communist from the Labourist or the I.L.P'er, when they are advocating even the same demands? It may be the eight hour day or a minimum rate of wages. As measures of relief for the working class, we certainly will zealously fight for them. But there is this difference. The Communists organise the workers around such demands as part of the class struggle. It is only the reformist humanitarians of the I.L.P. who look upon the achievement of such demands as foundation stones in the "ideal" social edifice.

The Communist organises and encourages the workers to struggle for their daily demands as a defence of working class conditions, to weaken the capitalists and to strengthen the workers' grip on the power of capitalism. The experience of the working class in this country, but more especially in Germany, during the last four years proves the absurdity of the "stone by stone" theory of reformism towards the "ideal social edifice." The Communist regards the fight for immediate demands as skirmishes in the class struggle of the workers against the social tyranny of capitalism. It is not a negation of our revolutionary aims. The complete conquest of political power from the hands of the capitalists remains a pre-requisite to the peaceful building up of a workers' republic. That is why the bourgeoisie and their Labour lieutenants hate and fight the Communist Party.

And just as the United Front has not been an excuse for introducing reformism à la immediate demands into our Party policy, so also the slogan of a workers' government was never intended to be a substitute for the dictatorship of the proletariat, or an excuse for sinking the identity of the Communist Party.

Perhaps there is no other country where it was so easy to confuse a workers' government with our Labour Government. Historically the Labour Party is of working class origin. A Labour Government is, therefore, not to be distinguished from a workers' government. Yet experience shows, as we have seen during the last six months, how completely subservient a working class party may become to a middle class ideology and leadership.

We owe it to the genius of Lenin who, in 1920, foresaw and warned the British Communists of this danger, yet on that very account urged the C.P.G.B. to affiliate to the Labour Party. Lenin was under no delusions as to the part MacDonald, Snowden,

Henderson, Thomas, etc., would play once in office. That was why he urged us never to yield up our right to criticise them, or to sink the identity of our Party inside or outside the Labour Party. Ingratiation upon the working class movement at the expense of the Communist Party is not Leninism, it is sheer Labour opportunism, and this kind of opportunism has no place in the Communist International.

The Communist International or Leninism has never hesitated to revise policy in the light of experience and objective conditions. The yielding of ground as an army in the field may have to retreat is part of the strategy of a real militant party. The United Front and the slogan of a Workers' Government but conform to the exigencies of the moment. It is not defeatism. It is a mobilising of the masses to fight the forces of capitalism, with the Labour leaders if they will, against them if they wont.

The Fifth World Congress of the Communist International just closed has rightly re-affirmed the correctness of the tactics of the United Front, and the slogan of a Workers' and Peasants' Government. It has done more.

It urges the speediest establishment of workshop nuclei in the mines, railways, factories and workshops, where the broadest masses of the working class are to be found and where they can be roused to action. The C.P.G.B. will respond to the call.

\* \* \* \* \*

The incidents of the diplomatic comedy over the Experts' Plan recall to our mind some of the opinions expressed by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald before he became custodian for the good government of His Majesty, King George's dominions. Here is a gem we have culled from his "Parliament and Revolution":

"Revolutionary movements do not spring from agitation however amply that may have added to their volume. They begin with the stupidities and the tyrannies of the powers and interests which they have ultimately to overthrow. When Labour looks to Parliament as the instrument by which its conflicts with capitalism are to be ended, it discovers that parliament has *neither the knowledge nor the will* to perform a task which Labour thinks to be the only one of any importance . . . . Parliament is removed from the urgent social pressure by which Labour is surrounded. . . . The problems and concerns of the House of Commons are quite different from those which are the daily thoughts of ninety per cent. of the people of the country."

We wish such a statement could be framed and hung on the wall at the opposite end of the horseshoe table in St. James', presided over by MacDonald, as a reminder of the farcical nature of the proceedings and the caricature he represents.



With all the earnestness in the world, MacDonald in his diplomatic innocence exaggerates the means at his disposal for the bringing about of peace. The pipe he smoked with M. Herriot is not by any means the culmination of peace, nor for that matter is the regulation of Reparation payments, even if secured, the solution to the problem of European instability. Reparations and indemnities as we have repeatedly insisted in these columns are secondary things. The primary problem before capitalism is how to reconstruct the economic system and, therefore, Europe upon a new basis, and to disentangle the rivalries of the respective interests and policies. Since 1919, that problem has troubled Europe. An incessant struggle has been waged between the Wilsonian idea of a League to represent international capitalism as against the Comité des Forges in France, and the heavy industrialists of the "victorious" allies. The result of the conflict has been complete failure either to get reparations or peace. The policy of Poincaré, sanctioned by the Versailles Treaty, brought no reparations. It only succeeded in bringing misery and untold suffering to the masses in Central Europe, and social revolution. And, but for the timely assistance of Morgan and Wall Street, would also have succeeded in plunging France into chaos. As matters stand, France is held in leading strings by American finance. The policy of Wilsonian pacifism is now on *its* trial.

The Experts Committee in the circumstances we have just mentioned was designed to save Europe from revolution, and to devise a formula for capitalist reconstruction. In substance the plan proposed by the experts will do neither. For capitalism is in a cleft stick. Mr. MacDonald and the Experts may talk of reversing the policy of strangling Germany and setting her on her feet again as a "going concern." But everyone knows the meaning of a resurrected industrial Germany. It means the resurrection of an imperialist Germany, and can only lead to the intensification of competition in a world market already surfeited with surplus products, and deepen the present international struggles of capitalism. What this means for the workers of Great Britain, Belgium, France and the other Allies immediately can best be gathered from a survey of the policy of the German industrialists. If, say the industrialists, reparations are to be paid means must be provided for raising them. To get the means, they declare, the eight hour day must be abolished, the workers' councils and arbitration courts abolished, wages must be reduced, and trade unions prevented from exercising any influence on the Government.

Should this programme be carried out, and supported by the Allies as part of the Experts' Plan, its repercussion upon Labour conditions throughout the capitalist world will be immediate. It will mean the opening of another offensive against the working class with disastrous results for the masses. Ultimately it spells war. The Allies, i.e., not MacDonald or Herriot, but the City and Wall Street, know that in the last analysis reparations can only come out of the exploitation of the German working class. They know that one of the best means of exercising power over the workers is to use the workers' organisations. They know also that the record of capitalism and its politicians internationally stinks in the nostrils of the working class, and so they turn to the leaders of the Second International. That is why under the cloak of pacifism and democracy they are to-day seeking to extend their rule over the working masses. **To save itself from the proletarian revolution capitalism will not hesitate to use all its resources, from the corruption of Labour leaders to the destruction of the Labour organisations, from singing the praises of democracy to the exercise of fascist violence.**

The Communist Party alone stands for the complete rejection of the Experts Plan. The demand for Reparations and indemnities can never bring peace to the masses of Europe. MacDonald and his democratic confrères deceive the masses when they urge patience and tolerance to parliamentarians "removed from the urgent social pressure by which Labour is surrounded." The Communist Party knows that the daily thoughts of the masses in this country are turning from "giving Labour a chance," to a demand that "something has to be done."

The disillusionment of the working class in the hopes raised regarding the pacifist and democratic promises of the social reformers is coming. The Communists insist that only a revolutionary policy of complete suppression of capitalism and capitalist power can bring peace and security to the working masses.

# Four Years of Struggle

(August, 1920—August, 1924.)

**T**O-DAY every Communist Party in the world is beginning to study Leninism—the theory and practice of revolutionary Marxism in the epoch of imperialism. It is not only in Lenin's words that Communists seek inspiration, but still more in his deeds, and particularly in the history of the Communist Party he created. The history of the 25 years' struggle of the Russian Party is a textbook of the proletarian revolution.

One of the first lessons of that text-book is that the working class learns in the main from its own experience, not from that of others, and from self-examination and self-criticism, not from examination and criticism or appreciation of others. And even in our own short four years of Party history in Britain, there is much that all of us can study with advantage, particularly those comrades who have been flocking into the Party in increased numbers during recent months.

Without pretending to give a full picture of the Party's development, it is possible at all events to trace out its principal stages and to draw a few important lessons.

\* \* \* \* \*

1. **From the First Unity Congress to the Raid on Party Headquarters** (August, 1920 to May, 1921). *International situation*: a period of transition from the culmination of the attack of Labour (occupation of the Italian factories by the workers in September, the general strike in Czecho-Slovakia in December, the miners' rising in Germany in March) to the beginning of the world-wide attack of capital on wages and working conditions, in the spring of 1921. *In Soviet Russia*, the transition from military Communist (Wrangel liquidated, October, 1920) to the new economic policy (March, 1921). *Internal situation*: transition from the highest level of the cost-of-living index and unemployment figures and the lowest level of production and trade (August-October, 1920) to the beginning of a slight improvement in the spring of 1921. In class relations, a transition from the attack of Labour (the first miners' strike, October, 1920) to the attack of capital (the lock-out of April, 1921). Labour still thrilled by the country-wide formation of Councils of Action in defence of Soviet Russia—the first *mass* abandonment of "constitutional" methods since 1832.

The Party was forced to squeeze into these few months of transition the maximum amount of political propaganda, without having time or opportunity to strike root in the masses, before the general retreat of Labour began. At the first Unity Congress the B.S.P., S.L.P. (majority) and similar groups came together, on the platform of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the replacement of bourgeois democracy by the Soviets, and affiliation to the Communist International. The tactics of Parliamentary action were accepted by 186-19, and those of affiliation to the Labour Party by 100-85. It was the latter question which provoked most discussion, at the Congress and after: and necessitated a new Unity Congress in January, 1921, at Leeds, with the Communist Labour Party, and the Shop Stewards' Organisation, both of which had split away on the question of affiliation. At Easter, the Left-wing of the I.L.P. came in. Organisationally, the bulk of this period was taken up with the amalgamation of the different groups, and the constitution of branches and divisional councils in the districts.

Politically, the Party achieved its greatest success during the first few weeks of its existence, by launching the call for Councils of Action when war on Soviet Russia was threatened by Lloyd George. In its application for affiliation to the Labour Party, it had such wide support that, at the Labour Party Conference, the yellow leaders had the previous question moved in order to avoid a vote on affiliation. In both of these questions it was a case of general sympathy with the Party ideas, rather than of skilful political tactics of the Party, still less of any organised influence. This was shown in particular in the New Year, when the attack on the trade unions began, and the Party failed to put forward any concrete fighting platform for the workers, concentrating the main force of its agitation on attacking the leaders.

Nevertheless, such was the danger of the Party's propaganda at this time that Government persecution had already begun. At the Leeds Congress it was reported that half a dozen prominent Party members were in goal, while many more were arrested even before the raid on Party Headquarters. This persecution became still more pronounced when the Party, in January, 1921, attempted to impart a sharper and livelier tone to its organ *The Communist*, by a change in management.

This, the first period of the Party's life, was essentially a period of *self-determination and self-realisation*.

2. **From the raid to the Battersea Congress** (April, 1921-October, 1922). *Internationally*, the period of the attack of capital—strikes and lock-outs throughout the world, and the birth of

Fascism. Everywhere a frightful fall in wages and desertion of the unions. Treachery and cowardice the order of the day for the yellow leaders. *In Soviet Russia*, the struggle for Communist direction of the new economic policy, immensely complicated by the disaster of the famine. *In Britain*, the successive defeat of one union after another during the space of 12 months, beginning with the miners and ending with the engineers. Blackest treachery of the leaders (Black Friday), or at best cowardly compromise. Abandonment of the unions by the masses in consequence. Only towards the very end of this period—the summer of 1922—a slight improvement in the general economic situation, owing to a temporary improvement in foreign trade: and correspondingly a slackening in the attack on wages.

The Party entered this period, as we have seen, with only the most youthful organisational machinery, which was hampered still more by a series of causes: (1) the arrest and imprisonment of the general secretary (Inkpin) and the national organiser (Stewart): (2) continuous absence of several members of the Party E.C., in Moscow or in the provinces, owing to the federal method of electing the E.C. adopted at the Third Party Congress (the "Rules Conference") in April, 1921: (3) unequal distribution of work amongst members of the E.C. in consequence: (4) absence of a systematic utilisation of Party opportunities in the trade unions: (5) absence of any attempt to form factory groups, and reliance on the "old-style branch": (6) political inexperience.

Political inexperience told in several ways, and all the more because the Party was extremely active, particularly in the localities. It manifested itself in several inevitable internal contradictions in Party policy. While the Party continued its policy of demanding affiliation to the Labour Party, at the same time it opposed Labour Party candidates at bye-elections—by putting up a Party candidate (Caerphilly), or only by agitation (E. Woolwich). During a period when capital was attacking, this did not help to create an understanding between the Party and the masses. While the Party again recognised in theory the importance of associating itself with and leading the partial struggles of the workers, in actual practice no concrete watchwords for the union fights were put forward until the end of the period. The Party agitation in the main consisted of long semi-propagandist articles in the *Communist*, which called upon the workers to fight, and at the same time conducted a campaign against the yellow leaders.

These political and organisational defects meant that the Party marked time during the greater part of this period—until



the spring of 1922—as far as leadership of the working class was concerned. At the same time, they winnowed out of the Party a number of hesitant and wavering elements, whose opportunism, severely tested by the Party's tactics, was too strong for their sense of Party loyalty. The numerical strength of the Party decreased to a minimum of its most loyal and "hard-bitten" members.

By March, 1922, when the Fourth Party Congress (St. Pancras) was held, the dead stop to which the Party had arrived expressed itself in a serious organisational and financial crisis, which led to a complete overhauling of Party organisation. A special commission was appointed at the Congress, which, after working actively for six months and bringing about several important interim reductions in expenditure, reported to a new (the Fifth) Party Congress at Battersea in October. The essence of its recommendations was (a) a simplification and redistribution of work at the centre (b) the elimination of federalism (c) the establishment of district councils settled in the principal industrial centres, instead of federal divisional councils drawn from vast areas (d) the breaking-up of the old branches into smaller groups, and concentration of their attention on non-propagandist work, particularly house-to-house sales of the Party organ.

This rationalisation of organisation accompanied a definite change in political tactics, due primarily to the experiences of the first eighteen months up to the end of 1921, and partly also to the policy of "Back to the Masses" initiated by the Third World Congress of the Communist International (November, 1921).

The change showed itself in the winter of 1921-2 and the spring of 1922, first of all in the Party's trade union work. The Party's statement of industrial policy ("Communist Industrial Policy") laid down much more definitely than before the importance of selecting concrete issues in which to rally the retreating workers. On the occasion of the engineering lock-out (April, 1922), the Party organ for the first time, although still too vaguely and in a not entirely satisfactory form, laid down practical watch-words for the fight—no sectional agreements, resistance to wage-cuts, peace with Soviet Russia, etc. The development of Party activity in this direction, however, was hampered by insufficient organisation for a long time.

In the general political field the change was equally marked. The St. Pancras Congress reaffirmed the policy of affiliation to the Labour Party much more decisively than before (1112-31): and in April, 1922, the Party began applying the tactics of the united front, with the object of showing the workers that it was anxious

to lead them into the fight for their immediate needs as well as for the revolution. Following the Berlin conference of the three Internationals, it suggested to the Labour Party organisation of a one-day strike for immediate demands on May Day, as had been agreed in Berlin: and although the Labour Party Executive evaded the issue, the proposal had its effect. In June, just before the Hague Conference between the Entente and Soviet Russia, the Party again proposed joint organisation of mass action.

In this month there took place the Edinburgh Conference of the Labour Party, at which the notorious amendment to the Constitution was adopted, excluding the Communists from Labour Party conferences or Parliamentary candidatures. As a counterblast to this step, and to show its sincere desire to eliminate all minor obstacles to a united front, the Party Executive next month (July 31) decided to withdraw all Party Parliamentary candidates who had been adopted in opposition to Labour Party nominees, while at the same time branding the Labour Party leaders as agents of the capitalist class. This was a severe test for the political good sense of the Party as a whole, but here the elimination of all but the most loyal Party members during the difficult period of 1921, and the experience of the Party's previous policy, made themselves felt. Very little opposition was shown, and what there was declared its unswerving loyalty to the decisions of the Party centre.

For the Party this period was one of unaccustomed political activity of *hard knocks and bitter experiences*—and of slow but sure profiting by them.

3. **From the Fifth to the Sixth Party Congress** (October 1922, to May, 1924). *Internationally*, a period of slight economic revival, with a corresponding revival of the Labour movement in the West, and a continuance of economic decay in Eastern Europe. After January, 1923, the situation was complicated by the French occupation of the Ruhr, which dislocated German economic life completely. The internal crisis in Germany culminating in a complete breakdown, and development of a revolutionary situation, in the autumn of 1923. Failure of the German Communist Party to utilise the situation thus created. A similar failure in June of the Bulgarian Party to take advantage of the armed struggle between the Bulgarian bourgeoisie and the peasantry. In Italy, the consolidation of the military power of Fascism, followed by the gradual bankruptcy and exposure of its social and economic policy. In France, the gradual bankruptcy of the aggressive policy of the great industrialists, carried on by Poincaré, and the transference of the support of the hard pressed peasants and middle classes to

a pacifist bloc, representing the interests of commerce and light industry.

*In Soviet Russia*, the final "mastering" of the new economic policy, the progress of agriculture and industry towards pre-war standards, the uninterrupted improvement in wages and conditions, the unexampled increase in prestige of the Communist Party (Lenin's death followed by an influx of 250,000 factory workers into the Party), the liquidation of the Menshevik Party by its own members, the establishment first of trading and then of diplomatic relations, with nearly the whole of Europe.

*Internally*, the revival of the Labour movement, following hard on the heels of a general but slight economic revival (increase in production, decrease of unemployment), and soon bringing it to a halt. The end of the retreat, in the autumn of 1922: a wave of local strikes, in the spring of 1923: larger regional and then national strikes in the summer and autumn, resumed both officially and unofficially in the spring of 1924. The overthrow of Lloyd-George in November, 1922 by the industrialist-landowning bloc represented by the Conservative Party, after he had done his work. The success of the bloc in securing the support of the middle classes for a policy of "peace, retrenchment and reform," at the election of 1922. The failure of the Conservative Government to improve conditions materially in 1923, and the gradual development of a rift between the industrialists and landowners in the summer. The desperate attempt of Baldwin to close the rift, by fighting an election on the old issue of Protection. The failure of the Labour Party either to lead the workers in a determined attack on capitalism, or to rally the disillusioned middle classes: and the consequent support of the Liberal Party by the latter at the elections. The Parliamentary deadlock produced by the elections, reflecting the social "unstable equilibrium": and the brilliant stratagem of the capitalist class, which found a way to prevent further social disintegration by putting a reliable "Labour Government" in office.

The Party made good use in this period of the lessons learnt in its first two years of work. Members of the Party can read the detailed report of the Central Committee to the Manchester Congress in the official report shortly to be published. Here it is sufficient to indicate the main achievements, which, probably owing to the slower development of political events, we may claim compares not unfavourably with the work of the other sections of the Comintern. The special British Conference held at Moscow in July, 1923, during and after the Extended Executive of the Comintern, played a great part in bringing this about: and the work

was continued by the Comintern Executive in January, 1924, after the formation of the Labour Government (resolutions printed in the Party pamphlet "The Communist Party and the Labour Government.")

During this period the Party began for the first time to apply a definite organisational policy. The absence and over-burdening of E.C. members, and the financial difficulty, hampered work at the centre throughout: but the division of labour between the political and organisational bureaux nevertheless was a permanent acquisition. While in every field of work the presence of more effective Control made itself felt—party training, the unemployed, recruiting—the development of an efficient Industrial Committee, rendering possible extension of the policy of active Party intervention in the daily struggle of the working masses, was perhaps the greatest step forward. The decisions of the Battersea Congress in regard to local organisation were applied by the persistent work, lasting many months, of a special organisation committee, which overhauled the whole Party structure, district by district. The intensification of the work of the Party members locally was assisted by the transformation of the Party organ, *The Communist*, in February, 1923, from a predominantly propagandist journal, built up for the most part of articles, into a mainly agitational paper, the *Workers' Weekly*, devoted first and foremost to news of the working class struggle, not only national and international, but also local.

The political activity and importance of the Party also made a big step forward in this period. Based necessarily as it was upon the united front tactics, this step forward was accompanied by certain errors and deviations. In the winter of 1922 an opportunist tendency to exaggerated "politeness" in political relations with the Labour Party leaders made itself felt, and brought about serious mistakes by individual Party members who were put forward as Labour Party candidates at the 1922 General Election. Although these mistakes were pointed out at the Fourth World Congress in December, 1922, and at the Party Council meeting in January, 1923, they had not been completely eradicated when the General Election of 1923 found Party members in a similar situation, and serious mistakes occurred once more. These had to be corrected in consultation with the Comintern in January, and were further discussed at the Sixth Party Congress in May.

The fact remains, however, that in this period the Party achieved serious political successes. In the Labour Party, apart from winning local support, the growing activity of the working masses was mobilised to bring about the withdrawal of the Edin-

burgh amendment. In the trade unions, after months of preliminary work, minority movements were launched in the principal industries, which gave definite organisational shape to the mass discontent with the old leadership which was characteristic of the working class during the whole of this period. And, if these results were achieved even partly by utilising the dangerous tactics of the "united front from above," this cannot be said of the Party campaigns in May and October, 1923, in support of the Russian workers (the Curzon ultimatum) and the German revolution respectively.

Each of these campaigns had a special interest. The first showed that, after three years of defeat, the British workers still could be stirred to action by class sympathy for the Soviet Republic, now no longer an outcast, but a great working class Power. The second showed, for the first time since the war, that that class sympathy was stronger than the jingo sentiment stirred up during the war, and assiduously fostered by the capitalist press ever since. In this respect the campaign of solidarity with the fighting German proletariat was as important as the "Councils of Action" campaign in August, 1920. And in the German campaign the Party was absolutely unaided, yet succeeded in organising a series of important trade union conferences in the principal industrial centres, and mobilising the working masses under the watchword of "Hands Off Workers' Germany."

Finally, in spite of a certain hesitancy at first, the Party showed after the formation of the "Labour" Government that the united front tactics had emphatically not obscured the revolutionary principles on which it was founded in 1920. Week after week the Party organ has exposed the treachery and the true class nature of the present "Labour" Government—on every conceivable question, from armaments to housing, from India to use of the Emergency Powers Act in strikes. Although the forms have not always been satisfactory, the essence has been unchanging, and the decision of the Sixth Party Congress (May, 1924) in this respect have only summed up and driven home the lessons of the Party's preceding work.

From the Fifth to the Sixth Congress (October, 1922 to May, 1924), the Party may be said to have passed through a period of serious political and organisational efforts to come closer to the masses, while striving its utmost to retain a clear-cut, distinctive, revolutionary identity. These two sides of its work represent a real attempt to learn and co-ordinate the lessons of the first two periods of its history. From May to August that attempt has continued.



Looking back after these four years, what can we say, without vain optimism or boasting, that our experience has taught us? What are the lessons that we must draw as guidance for the future?

*First*, the necessity for an ever closer binding and welding together of all Communists into an iron body of fighters, acting together in unity and discipline, confident in spite of every obstacle and mistake, with a mutual loyalty founded upon the secure knowledge of the Party's inevitable future as "the battering-ram of history." *Second*, the necessity of retaining revolutionary principle, revolutionary aim, unimpaired, while adopting the most diversified and changing tactics, dictated by the unstable and dissolving condition of capitalist society to-day. *Third*, the supreme importance of getting still closer to the masses, not only of the British workers, but of all the exploited millions of colonial slaves on whom the might of British capitalism depends: of adopting each and every means which ensures that, at each and every turn, we can accurately register the beating of their vast pulse, through factory groups, by our colonial work, by work amongst the soldiers, by work amongst women, as well as by work in all our previous fields of endeavour.

These three lessons, rightly understood, give us the key to all our policy for the future. Let us hope that the first four years' of our Party's struggle will help us to get that right understanding. For then all the violence and cunning of the capitalist exploiter, all the subterfuges and treachery of his yellow lieutenants of Amsterdam and the Second International, all the apathy and conservatism still clogging the feet of the British proletariat, will be unavailing, against our unfaltering determination to lead the workers out on to the broad high road to the proletarian revolution.

C. M. ROEBUCK.

# The Coming War

## *LENIN ON THE COMING WAR.*

**T**HE danger of war is always imminent in capitalist society. But never was this danger so apparent as in the present period, when even bourgeois journalists and statesmen, as for instance, Nitti, Caillaux, Lloyd George, Keynes, etc., who until recently attempted to persuade the public that the world-war of 1914-18 was the last war, which would usher in eternal peace, are now compelled to recognise the truth, that at present, through the economic development and the international position of the imperialistic Great Powers, a situation has arisen in the whole world which is making for war. At present there are incomparably more reasons for a world war than on the eve of 1914.

Comrade Lenin was much occupied with the question of the approaching world war. In a remarkable document which he wrote on the 4th of December, 1922, as instruction for the delegation of the Comintern to the Hague Conference of the Second international held to consider the question of combating the danger of war, he said among other things :

“ In the second place every present day conflict, even the most trifling, must be adduced as an example of how a war may break out any day with no further cause than a quarrel between England and France with regard to some detail of their agreement with Turkey, or between America and Japan over some unimportant difference referring to a question of the Pacific Ocean, or between any of the other great powers with regard to disagreements about colonies, tariffs or general commercial politics.”

In this Lenin gave a short but profound analysis of the facts which are driving to a new world war. It is a great mistake when scientists explain the whole meaning of the war of 1914-18 as a rivalry between Germany and England. Doubtless the competition between Germany and England for the hegemony of the world was one of the most important facts of the world war and played a prominent part in causing the outbreak of the world conflagration. But apart from the Anglo-German conflict, the out-

break of the war was also caused by the rivalry between Tsarist Russia and Germany and Austria for the hegemony in Turkey and in the Balkans, as well as by the Franco-German competition for the possession of Africa and the mineral ores on the European frontier of both countries. And precisely because, on the eve of the world war, not only the imperialistic interests of England and Germany clashed together, but also those of Germany and Russia, of Germany and France, of Russia and Austria, of Italy and Austria, of Serbia and Bulgaria, etc., the result was not an Anglo-German but a world war, whose immediate cause was a trifling incident in Serajevo.

At present, not only the imperialistic interests of America and Japan, but also those of England and France, of France and Italy, of France and Spain, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Hungary, Poland and Lettland, etc., are colliding with each other and, therefore, a "trifling" difference can cause an explosion to the accumulated combustibles at the different points of junction of international policy, as in Tangier, Singapore, in the Ruhr, the Banat, in the Philippines, and set the whole world in flames.

#### **THE ARMAMENTS RACE. — THE CHEMICAL WAR.**

The first symptom of the extreme tension that has arisen in the relations between the capitalist powers consists in the extraordinary war preparations of all states, which by far surpass those preceding the world war. According to the statistics of the English General, F. Maurice, in the year 1922 there were in Europe 4,354,975 men under arms, whilst in 1913 the total European armies amounted to 3,747,179 men. Considering the fact that the combined standing armies of Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria have been reduced to 696,135 men, General Maurice comes to the conclusion, that the remaining European powers have increased their armies by 1,303,921 men. In Europe, France has got the largest army. On the 1st of January, 1923 it numbered 831,828 men, including the colonial garrisons and the officers.

These armaments consist not so much in the numerical increase of the armies, although this increase is quite remarkable compared with pre-war time, but in the unexampled improvement in war technique, as well as in the expenditure thereon. Thus, for instance, the "pacifist" England of MacDonalld intends, according to the Budget for 1924-25, to reduce the home forces by 12,000 men (to 152,000 as against 164,000 in 1923-24), but at the same time the Budget provides for an increase in the air fleet of two million pound sterling, while eight new air squadrons are pro-

vided for.\* England is increasing her navy by the construction of five new cruisers and two destroyers, she is devoting enormous sums for the "chemisation" of the army, for the invention of new explosives, for the construction of hundreds of light and heavy tanks for the home forces, etc. From the end of the world war up to 1923, England had already spent 290 millions pounds on armaments.

France also attaches the greatest importance to the development of her air forces, which already far surpass those of England. The creation of 132 fighting squadrons is provided for. The air fleet will comprise 30,000 men in peace and 300,000 men in war time. The expenditure of France on the air forces surpasses that of all other great powers. The French government devotes the greatest attention to the development of war chemistry. In France a military corps has been formed of engineers and chemists whose task is the invention of new means for the chemical war. The French imperialists are dreaming of bombs which could, if necessary, destroy Berlin or London in a few hours. And as the French chemical industry is far behind that of England, not to speak of that of Germany, the French government intend to keep in their hands the occupied area of Germany, if not for good, at any rate for a very long time.

This unprecedented increase in armaments which characterises the period after the war is the result of two facts. On the one hand, the acuteness of the industrial crisis and of unemployment in the capitalist countries, as well as the restriction of the foreign markets, induce the bourgeoisie to see in the intensification of militarism and navalism, in the increase of the military air forces, a means of promoting capitalist accumulation and of avoiding an enormous surplus of goods. On the other hand, as international relations are becoming more and more strained and as war is approaching with elemental force, there is a natural tendency to arm to the teeth in order to be capable of crushing the enemy and getting hold of the coveted booty. But the increase of armaments in the various countries has its limits and its consequences. If the United States of America owing to their financial and economic position are capable of preparing for war with the same or

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\* In this connection the following advertisement, which has repeatedly appeared in the advertisement columns of the *Daily Herald*, the organ of the English Labour movement, is not without interest:

"The Royal Air Force requires Armourers, Carpenters (for training as Carpenter Riggers), Electricians, Electrical Fitters, Instrument Repairers, Power Station Tradesmen, Tinsmiths and Sheet Metal Workers, and Wireless Operators. Age limits: Ex-Service or skilled and semi-skilled tradesmen, 18 to 30: all others, 18 to 26. Pay from 21s. to 38s. 6d. per week, on enlistment, and all found. Allowance for wife and children to men 26 and over.—Write, stating age, or call: Inspector of Recruiting, Royal Air Force."

even with greater intensity than hitherto for a further ten years, then a relatively poor country like Japan cannot do the same. Many European states as Poland, Yugoslavia, Czecho-Slovakia, and to some extent even France, in consequence of the falling franc and the alarming expansion of state debts, will likewise find themselves incapable of keeping up the pace in the race for armaments any longer. And perhaps the moment will soon arrive when the nationalist press of all these states will proceed, as did the German Chauvinist press on the eve of the world war, by pointing to the terrible burden of armaments necessitated through the threats from the foreign enemies, to incite the population to enter the war under the slogan: "Better a finish with horror, than a horror without end!"

### **THE ANGLO-FRENCH ANTAGONISM AS THE BASIC FACTOR OF THE COMING WAR.**

The main guilt for these feverish preparations in Europe and for the approaching European war, which threatens to become a world war, lies upon France and England.

France of the notorious Comité des Forges is striving for domination on the European Continent and the displacement of England from Europe. For this purpose France adopts two methods: first by increasing the army, the air and submarine fleet, by concluding military conventions with Czecho-Slovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Rumania, both of which latter are military semi-colonies of France, which in case of need will put at the disposal of France their whole military forces: secondly by means of strangling Germany, by destroying all her possibilities of life and before all by seizing the Rhineland.

It is a matter of course that England cannot assent to the plan of a French hegemony on the Continent. The refusal of England to withdraw from Europe, the concentration of the world policy of Great Britain upon the European Continent, was bound to be followed by an aggravation of Anglo-French relations. Hence the new preparations of these two countries, hence the increase of the air forces of England, the creation of new airship bases, the establishment of a new permanent arsenal in the north of Great Britain and the extension of the military depots in London, hence the demonstrations in the Mediterranean (the manœuvres of a great English fleet from the Balearic Isles over the route from France to her North African colonies), hence the approaching of England to Italy and Spain. Hence, on the other hand, the new French preparations, the testing at the artillery range in Le Havre of new long-range guns which can



shoot nearly 100 kilometres (97km) and which are intended to be placed along the coast in order to bombard London and the English coast; further, the construction of new strategic railways by the French in Belgium, the fortification of the Belgian port of Zeebrugge, etc.

If a war were to break out between England and France it would, of course, be the signal for an armed collision throughout the whole European continent. The mobilisation of the English and French forces will at once be followed by the mobilisation of the forces of Belgium, Poland, Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria, Turkey, Austria, Hungary and countless millions of men will be called to arms. And if we agree with that which Comrade Lenin wrote concerning the national wars resulting from the Versailles Treaty, we shall doubtless see that at this moment the millions of Germans of Germany and Austria will not stand by with folded arms and quietly wait the issue of the war between England and France. Nor will the suppressed nationalities in Yugoslavia, Poland, Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia, remain indifferent, and the flames of national revolts, rebellions and wars can spring up in Galicia, Bessarabia, Transylvania, Carpatho-Russia, Macedonia, etc.

### **THE JAPANESE-AMERICAN ANTAGONISM AND THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN.**

The spectre of an imperialist war is not only arising in Europe. The aggravation of the Japanese-American relations in consequence of the interdiction of Japanese immigration into the United States, an interdiction which aroused the greatest indignation among the broad masses, brings the question of Japanese-American relations again to the forefront. In the period preceding the Conference of Washington, the relations between Japan and America were already so strained that a war between these two countries seemed to be inevitable. Since the conference many pacifists have declared that the danger of a Japanese-American war is now removed. Harsh reality has, however, soon dispersed these pacifist illusions. When the United States started the construction of the Panama Canal, it became apparent that America was attempting to realise the program formulated by Theodore Roosevelt in the following words: "The command of the Pacific Ocean belongs to the United States."

In this way the United States collide with Japan, for whom China is the chief market, which not only absorbs the products of Japanese industry, but also represents the chief field of investment for Japanese surplus capital.

If the assertion of several military specialists be right, that a duel between America and Japan presents insurmountable technical difficulties which under certain circumstances, although not preventing the outbreak of war, nevertheless will render impossible a definite issue in favour of either the one or the other party, then the character of the problem of the Pacific Ocean is even more tragic. Because it follows from this that America will not be alone in attacking Japan but will be in alliance with Australia, New Zealand and perhaps also with England, China, etc. If England in her preparations for war against Germany could obtain such allies as Russia and France, not to speak of such smaller states as Portugal, then America will be able to find the necessary assistance when the occasion arises.

The war in the Pacific Ocean will also be accompanied, like any European war, with big national upheavals in the shape of revolts, rebellions, perhaps even of great national revolutions in a whole series of Asiatic countries. The war will arouse the masses suppressed by Japan in Korea, in the Isle of Formosa, in Sachalin and will also not be without effect in the American Philippines, French Indo-China and British India, etc.

### **LENIN ON THE WAR AGAINST WAR.**

Can the working class of Europe, America and Japan at the present moment prevent the approaching war? To this question Comrade Lenin replies in the document already quoted as follows:

“ It must be definitely explained how great is the secrecy surrounding the birth of a war and how helpless is an ordinary labour organisation in face of a really impending war. It must be explained over and over again in a thoroughly concrete manner, how the situation was during the last war, and as to the reasons why the situation could not be otherwise. Special attention must be called to the fact that the question of ‘ defence of native country, ’ will inevitably be put and that the overwhelming majority of the workers will inevitably solve this question in favour of their own bourgeoisie.”

Wherein lies the only real means of fight against war?

In the maintenance and extension of an illegal organisation for the permanent work against war of all revolutionaries participating in the war. The Communists cannot prevent the outbreak of a war, but they must strive to change this war into a civil war, the world revolution.

M. PAVLOVITCH.

# Draft Programme of the C.P.G.B. to the Comintern Criticised

**T**HE chief weaknesses of the British Programme, so far as internal affairs are concerned, may be summarised as follows :—

(a) Failure to produce a short, clear statement of the economic and political evolution of British conditions such that the essentials of the present condition and disposition of powers within the various camps and parties, may be thoroughly understood.

(b) Failure to state the present-day position of the British proletariat as reflected in the programmes of our political opponents and also in the programmes of the Labour Party, Co-operative movement, Socialist organisations, Organised Unemployed and Minority movements, etc.

(c) Failure to state, after having regard to (1) the evolution of the British worker and present conditions; (2) the variety of programmes before him, and (3) the programme suggestions and needs of the International, how best to extract from each that which would most assist towards revolutionary development and consciousness.

(d) Failure not merely to explain the evolution and contents of present-day British conditions in relation to the proposed programme, but also to anticipate objectively the likelihood of any new conditions or forces arising in the immediate future which might influence that programme.

For instance, in the Draft programme submitted by Comrade Bucharin, in the section dealing with the last stage of capitalism, clause "f," commenting upon hindering tendencies, he says: "The bourgeoisie of the most powerful imperialist states, which have reaped enormous profits by plundering colonies and semi-colonies, have raised the wages of continental workers out of the booty of their plunder, thereby interesting these workers in allegiance to the imperialist Fatherland, and in its plunderings. This systematic bribery has taken special effect among the Labour aristocracy, and among the leading bureaucratic elements of the working class, Social-Democrats and trade

unions, which have been perfect tools in the hands of the bourgeoisie." To-day in Britain, the one-time aristocrats of Labour (skilled) are in many instances worse off than some branches of semi-skilled Labour. The probability is that the position will remain so, or even become worse. The increasing use of oil has nullified the special importance of Welsh steam coal and considerably assisted in the lowering of the miner's status. The sheltered position of transport, arising from the inability of capitalism to import transport service, coupled with the weakness in the event of a successful strike to hold out for more than several days at one period, has been responsible for securing for the grades of workers involved better wages than are paid to most skilled men. How does the British Communist Party propose on the one hand to exploit the discontent of the former aristocrats of Labour, and on the other hand, while assisting the so-called sheltered industries to obtain more, to prevent their acquiring the imperialist ideology referred to by Comrade Bucharin?

(e) The failure objectively to anticipate changes has already had serious consequences for the C.P.G.B. *The inability to realise that the minority Labour Government was historically destined to operate a positive capitalist policy prevented the party from reaping any advantage whatever from the point of view of increased membership.* Already the Fourth Congress in its Resolutions on the Tactics of the Comintern had discussed the various possible forms of workers' governments. It anticipated "a Liberal Workers' Government such as existed in Australia, and likely to be formed in Britain in the near future," and said: "The Communists cannot take part in such governments; on the contrary they must ruthlessly expose their true character to the masses." Just as in the past the programme of the British Party failed to anticipate the advent of a Labour Government and to maintain an actual up-to-date tactical contact with the changing conditions, so also in the present contribution. *The problems of the relationship of the Party to the minority Labour Government, of the application and practice of the United Front to a short or long-lived Labour Government have not been even touched upon.* Further, in this connection it must be pointed out that the British Party has failed to show how far and in what manner the Labour Government acts as a stabilising medium within the general movement of collapsing British and world capitalism. The degree to which the Labour Government represents a temporary recovery is the extent of its influence upon C.P. policy and especially upon

the form under which the United Front should continue to be applied. British production is approximately 90 per cent. of the 1914 level. Probably the present production of coal and iron is above that level. The capitalist seeks to stabilise the position at the expense of wages and hours, and by intensified production. Is this recovery—no matter at whose expense—assisted or retarded by the advent of the Labour Government? Will it be continued through further increased exploitation of British and coloured labour? The treatment of such questions should have constituted the actual British Party contribution to the problem of capitalist crisis, which in turn constitutes the background against which is determined Communist strategy.

### **THE PROGRAMME AND THE EMPIRE POLITIC.**

In so far as imperial matters are concerned, references to the colonies and protectorates are of the most obscure nature. The exception is paragraph 16 (third section) which is here reproduced in full. "The Communist Party regards the maintenance of the British Empire as an act of deadly enmity to the workers of this country, and the whole world. So long as British imperialism reigns there can be no peace in the world, nor can the world's economy be organised to bring relief to the masses. Our party, therefore, declares its solidarity with the oppressed nations under the British flag and contrary to the bourgeois Labour Government demands the full political and industrial freedom of India, Egypt, and the protectorates within the confines of the Empire."

1. This clause is more in the nature of a resolution than of a programme contribution. It is silent as to the special nature of the problems and the programme obligations, which their solution imposes both upon the colonies themselves and upon the C.P.G.B. A continuance of such inability is highly dangerous, in view of the Labour Empire Conference to be held this autumn, to which have been invited delegates from all the Empire Labour Governments and Second International organisations.

In the beginning the British Colonies were chiefly useful as markets and trade centres. Within the past thirty years they have increasingly become the productive sources of foodstuffs and raw materials. Consequently, as a result of modern development, an economic interdependence has been established between Great Britain and the Dominions and dependencies. This, however, is adversely affected by the growing industrial power of the colonies, which are in active competition with England. This problem and associated questions are being approached by both capitalists and



Socialists from the angle of obtaining a solution through still closer Empire unity. As the fate of millions of workers throughout the world is involved, and as Empire politics are likely to enter more and more into everyday discussions and decisions, it is necessary that the International should indicate clear lines of direction and policy.

2. The Empire Programme ought to take notice of the conflict of policies between the British Labour Government and the British Labour Party on the one hand, and the colonial Labour Governments and parties on the other. In England, Free Trade is favoured, while in Ireland and the Dominions high Protection or preferential tariffs are advocated and practised. British capitalism favours a Japanese Alliance; Canada, Australia and New Zealand oppose it. South Africa and Canada object to, and refuse to pay for, the bigger Navy which is so ardently desired by both Australia and New Zealand. British Labour favours freedom of movement for every person under the Union Jack; South African Labour, however, at the present moment is conducting vigorous propaganda for the segregation of all Indians within, or their expulsion from, Natal and South Africa generally. These are all big political issues awaiting a more thorough Communist exploitation.

3. The British Party in effect urges the destruction of the British Empire "the maintenance of which is an act of deadly enmity to the workers of this country and the entire world." The course advocated presumably refers to *Capitalist control* and not to the Empire as understood in terms of essential economic bonds and unity. *If the former is meant, then the lines of attack ought to be clearly described.* If the latter is meant, it is open to the charge of failure to appreciate the actual economic realities.

4. The demand that the Colonies should enjoy "full economic and political freedom" is not enough. Ireland, which has just succeeded in winning this kind of freedom, is at present protecting the rights of English aristocratic landholders in the South, is helping them to collect rents which have not been paid for three years, and is policing and restoring farms and properties which were taken over, possessed, and operated during the rebellious period by the landless tenantry. The customs of the Irish Free State are practically mortgaged to Great Britain. In Egypt, which recently received its own parliament, only a few thousand troops remain and these are soon to be returned. Within the next four years the British military are to vacate Iraq. Already Ireland, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand enjoy almost equal democratic rights with England inside the Empire. But they are

held more closely than ever within the invisible chains of English and American high finance.

5. With the exception of India, which is held for trade purposes, the coloured protectorates are occupied chiefly because (1) they are sources of cheap raw material necessary for British industries, or (2) because they represent strategical points along important trade routes. The development of the technique of finance capital and the machinery of war make it possible—without great danger to imperialism—to move away from open displays of military force and apparently to yield greater degrees of democratic liberty. To-day finance capital makes friends with its old competitor, native capital. The latter, held securely in the invisible net of imperial capital, becomes the servant and watchdog of the financial dictators, and consequently sets about the liquidation of the respective nationalisms, the exploitation of which brought them into *administrative* power. Studded throughout the Empire are the requisite bases from which can proceed, if it is at all necessary, the most modern high-powered death dealers with which to remind both native capitalists and proletariat of their duties and obligations.

6. These developments raise the question of the attitude of this section of the programme to the slogan "The nationalist struggle is liquidated, on with the social struggle." Will the nationalist struggle break out afresh when native capital or the native proletariat or both at last realise how they are duped and exploited? Or, alternatively, is it really possible for native capital in the process of time to become free and independent? Will native capital consolidate its interests along with imperial capital, in opposition to revolution which may express itself in nationalistic forms? Now that imperial capitalism succeeds in concealing itself behind native capital, is it best or advisable to continue the revolutionary social struggle within the frame of nationalism? *In other words—when native administrative control passes out of the hands of imperial capital into the hands of native capital, when merely the form and not the content is altered, to what extent, if any, is the nationalistic tactic within the social struggle to be liquidated or suspended in favour of the open class struggle itself?* These questions by no means exhaust a problem which is of extreme importance to the world proletariat.

7. The value of the Empire section of the Programme especially depends upon the quality of the objective view. The new political orientations and combinations, which must arise soon out of the present half-formed, uncompleted, economic developments,

must be carefully calculated and appraised. Some of these developments may be expressed as follows :—

(a) The attempt to produce within the Empire itself cheaper than can be produced elsewhere all the raw material necessary for British industries.

(b) The successful production of enough cheap raw cotton enabling the textile manufacturers to regain the world-markets, which would practically remove the economic justification for two separate capitalist parties in English politics.

(c) The liquidation of the economic necessity for a Liberal Party would result in the consolidation of capitalist forces and the establishment of a political united front. Already many large cotton magnates are in the Conservative camp. Such an amalgamation would remove from the Labour Party the vote-snatching necessity of masquerading under the cloak of Free Trade. This in turn would later permit the Labour Party more readily to come to preferential tariff terms with the Labour Tariff Governments of the Dominions.

Therefore, the question which must be decided is whether or not the Communist solution lies along the lines of neglecting, interrupting, dispensing with or accepting the present features of accelerating Empire development.

### **ESSENTIAL ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN DRAFTING THE ENGLISH PROGRAMME.**

1. There must first be produced a short, clear analysis of British conditions in particular.
2. There must be given a clear description of the composition and present alignment of forces, as expressed by the various parties and programmes before the British worker.
3. There must be formulated a “*National*” programme of immediate demands—based on the previous two points and calculated to lead to the formation of a mass party, eventually culminating in the struggle for dictatorship. The *tactical aspects* of such a programme would objectively anticipate and continuously adjust itself to the changing psychological, economical, political and revolutionary needs of the period.
4. It is imperative that a section, tracing the origin, nature and development of Empire problems, be included. It should describe their present appearance and possible objective evolution in relationship with the particular problems

of the respective countries within the Empire, together with the tasks of the British and Colonial proletariat.

5. Every consideration and decision within the entire programme must stand in close relationship to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Finally, the programme should be clear, definite and easily understood. It should reflect consciousness of purpose, provide a view of world Communism which, guiding the feet, would strengthen the heart and hands of the proletariat in its struggle for power.

JACK V. LECKIE.



# The Unemployed Charter Leaflets

*\* This article of Comrade Stanley's was unavoidably held over from last month though intended for a timely reply to the views of Comrade Hannington in his criticism of Comrade Stanley's first article. Its exclusion from last month's issue of the "Review" was for purely technical reasons.—Editor.*

**E**XAMINED from a revolutionary standpoint, the six explanatory leaflets strengthen my criticism of the Unemployed Workers' Charter, as published in the April *Communist Review*. The evasiveness, the bourgeois phraseology, all are typical of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, and go to prove that the "Charter" has been forced from this body by the organised militant unemployed workers.

Having made this step forward, the immediate duty of the advance guard of the workers is to operate the "Charter" as a means to an end. To do this effectively, it is necessary to examine the explanatory leaflets, see their strong and weak points, and remove the faults as soon as possible. Such an examination will also constitute a reply to all who are prepared to support the "Charter" without showing up its faults to the workers at the same time.

It is claimed that the "Charter" represents the "minimum demands" of the workers "for immediate attainment." It is apparent from a perusal of these leaflets that the demands of the workers have not been correctly interpreted; the demands put forward are not "the simple desires that are given birth to by the daily struggles of the workers for existence."

Many pseudo-demands to-day are capable of immediate attainment, but the benefits to the workers are practically nil. Witness the continual attainment of Labour Party demands in Parliament; demands which the Liberals conscientiously support, and the Communists correctly criticise. Apart from the little progress made by these petty reforms, the real danger lies, not in the operating of such reforms, but in the workers being allowed to remain unconscious of their petty significance and *positive danger*. Labour M.P.'s constantly reiterate the virtues of such reforms (e.g., abolition of gap)—omitting to mention the abject failure of such petty changes.

From this viewpoint, it is readily seen that the "Charter" is not a real workers' "Charter." A revolutionary "Charter" would seek to line up the workers on their immediate struggles

(even on petty reforms) toward the ultimate objective, the overthrow of capitalism. That is why the Bolsheviks' slogan of "Bread and Peace" was a revolutionary slogan: it dealt with the immediate situation; it correctly interpreted the simple desires of the workers, and around these the Bolsheviks rallied the workers to their demand of "All power to the Soviets."

Readers should examine the leaflets as printed in the May issue of the *Communist Review*. They do not embody "the immediate desires of the masses"; nothing in them seeks "to rally the workers"; and it would not be revolutionary to rally the workers around such demands without explaining their many faults and limitations. The demands contained in the "Charter" do not "arise out of the sufferings of the workers," and it will not prepare them for the ultimate struggle in its present form, neither will it "ripen their class consciousness."

Leaflet No. 2 enumerates a grand scheme of—

"A National Spring Cleaning."

The clearance, cleaning and planting of open spaces, the pulling down of old and obsolete buildings to beautify and modernise towns and cities.

### **CAPITALIST WORK SCHEMES.**

Given time and a little pressure the employing class will do this, and the Workers' Educational Association will support any scheme tending to beautify the workers' surroundings. I fail to visualise the workers being rallied to this national spring cleaning, yet I am told that "the 'Charter' deals with the problems that most sorely affect the working class, especially the unemployed at the present time," and, "one of the chief values of the 'Charter' is the way in which it knits up the employed and unemployed interests." In my opinion this leaflet seeks to knit up the workers' and employers' interests like a Whitley Council.

The leaflet adds:—

"These schemes are necessary, would be remunerative, add to the resources and prosperity of the nation, and, above all, keep unemployed workers in a state of mental and physical efficiency. The health and efficiency of the workers is a *National asset*."

"Prosperity of the nation," "mental and physical efficiency," "national asset,"—these are bourgeois terms, and worthy of the support of the most reactionary Tory. It states the schemes would be remunerative; but to whom?

I am told that my criticism of Point No. 2 was premature, and this leaflet will allay my fears. I certainly wrote that "government schemes may mean the building of cruisers, aeroplanes, and other means of destruction." My arguments were based upon the actions of the Labour Government, who were acting like their predecessors, and who continue to act contrary to

the interests of the working class. The Government schemes proposed are :—

“Improving roads, bridges, rivers, canals, docks and harbours.  
Setting up a national scheme of Electric Power Supply, *publicly owned and democratically managed.*  
Afforestation, land drainage, and reclamation.  
Reconditioning, extension and electrification of railways.”

Capitalists will accomplish these Lib.-Lab. ideas in the near future. But what appropriate Sunday School language—the elusive public, the democratic wand. Let me suggest a form of democratic management, one employer, one worker, and one of the public, or *pro rata*.

Each scheme should be queried by the words “For whose benefit?” Readers will then see them in their true light.

As I still consider these schemes to be mild, I am informed that the resolution agreed upon at the Metal Workers’ Minority Conference is identical with the schemes of Leaflet No. 2. There is no close relationship between the two : the leaflet and the resolution are two entirely different propositions, as is the “Charter” and the Metal Workers’ Minority Movement.

I am next told in the *Communist Review* of May, that “To have the employed and unemployed definitely engaged in a struggle with the employing class on the same immediate demands is undoubtedly of great importance.” Comrade Campbell in the same issue writes, “Effective . . . unity cannot be manufactured by formally bringing together bodies of workers previously separated. Effective unity . . . can only be created through a common struggle against the boss. *Unless the workers are welded together in the actual struggle . . .*” I agree, and applying this definition to the “Charter” I find that it will not weld the workers together : it lacks common demands, without which there is no common struggle.

### **FOR THE COMMUNITY, CITIZENS, NATION OR WORKERS?**

To turn to Leaflet No. 1. The comparison between the cost of inmates of H.M. Prisons and Poor Law Institutions, against the *suggested* scale of maintenance for the unemployed is simple and glaring, yet we read at the bottom of the leaflet :—

“The question arises : Are unemployed workers entitled to maintenance equivalent to that provided for Poor Law inmates and convicts in H.M. Prison? The answer of British *citizenship* should be clear and definite—Support the Unemployed Workers’ Charter.”

The clear and definite answer should be “Yes” and from British workers.

Leaflet No. 3 is supposed to show the failure of private enterprise. My criticism of Leaflet No. 2 is applied to this leaflet, as it expresses its intentions of providing the type of commodity re-

quired for the Government schemes in Leaflet No. 2. This leaflet talks of:—

*“Workshops owned by the Nation, and utilised for the Nation and employed during periods of national emergency, such as exceptional trade depression, for producing Government requirements in advance, as an alternative to providing unemployment benefits without a return.”*

To produce requirements in advance usually creates unemployment. Then to read in a “Workers’ Charter” of the bosses slogan of “an alternative to providing unemployment benefits without a return,” is indeed rich. To quote further from this leaflet: “Work is more satisfactory than maintenance.” Surely employers support this capitalist dope. Next, “When private enterprise fails, the *community* must act.” As I know little difference between the community and the bosses, this warrants the support of both.

The leaflet states that, as national factories were established for war purposes, they should be re-established to provide employment for the workers (not the community), and to maintain their physical and mental efficiency to *meet the dangers of a capitalist peace*. The workers are always meeting the dangers of capitalist peace, but a “Workers’ Charter” should *rally the workers to take advantage of a capitalist peace*.

### NOT A CLASS CHARTER.

One should really accept Leaflet No. 4 without criticism. It states, “Lord Leverhulme supports the unemployed workers’ demand for a six-hour day.” The bare statement that this hypocritical capitalist supports the six-hour day should be omitted from a “Workers’ Charters.” Did it state that the Labour Party, the Trade Union Congress, or prominent workers’ leaders supported the six-hour day, it would be useful, but to quote Lord Leverhulme (why not *Comrade* Lord Leverhulme?) makes it become an appeal to any but the working class. Readers should refer to the exposure of Lord Leverhulme, by Comrade Hardy, in *All Power*, May issue.

Leaflet No. 4 reads: “Unemployment has become the natural economic consequence of increased productive efficiency.” This is a misleading statement. Unemployment, accordingly, is merely the result of a vicious circle of productive efficiency. The moral appears to be: control the workers’ productive capacity and unemployment disappears, without the overthrow of capitalism.

When I stated in the April *Communist Review* that I refused to place the importance upon the six-hour day that some workers do, I had in mind the numerous articles appearing in all left-wing papers under the name of Comrade Mann. It became impossible to dissociate the six-hour day from Comrade Mann.



This demand is one of the general demands of the workers; there are, however, more important demands around which the workers can be rallied. To single out one demand for particular attention, and finally to talk of forming a six-hour day league, in my opinion is wrong. A proof that it is not the correct attitude is supplied by Comrade Mann himself, who stated in *All Power* that, despite large meetings enthusiastically passing six-hour day resolutions, *no action followed*. I reiterate, this demand is very necessary to-day to protect even the present eight-hour day.

Leaflet No. 5. The *May Young Worker* (organ of the Y.C.L.), in welcoming the "Charter" and chiefly referring to this leaflet as a step forward, said "these pronouncements as yet remain on paper." That is a great fault which is not being remedied. Very little lead or methods have been formulated to rally the workers behind this "Charter."

This leaflet makes an appeal to "Prevent the punishment of . . . men for *their war service to the community*." This really means that these men did perform war service to the employing class for which they are being punished. A "Charter" should state definitely for whom these men performed war service.

Leaflet No. 6 deals with houses. To quote a few of its phrases:—

- "Profiteering interests would suffer, but the community would gain."
- "The efficiency, happiness and welfare of the community . . ."
- "The nations' first line of defence. . . ."

This type of phraseology can be found in any reactionary programme.

To sum up: the explanatory leaflets could have saved the "Charter." Instead, the bourgeois phraseology, the mild schemes and demands put forward, with the general vagueness attached to each leaflet, damn the "Charter" from the standpoint of the advanced revolutionary. If the advanced guard cannot force by an effective lead something different from this, then the "Charter" will be seen to be what it really is at present—an appeal to the community, but of little value to the workers.

My criticism in the *April Communist Review*, and this further criticism of the explanatory leaflets, is an honest endeavour to show the danger of this "Charter" being given to the workers as a revolutionary "Charter" that embodies their demands.

If we recognise this danger, we can use this "Charter" (as the best obtainable from the present official labour movement) as a means to an end. To disregard this danger, to defend the whole "Charter" as a *real* "Workers' Charter," is suicidal.

E. STANLEY.

# The Workers' Press

**A**LL Communists now realise that the most important weapon in the hands of the working class during the coming struggles will be a powerful workers' press run by the workers themselves. The basic principles on which this press should be built up, having as its ultimate aim the establishment of a great workers daily, have already been laid down by the Third Congress of the Comintern.

The remarkably successful development of the *Workers' Weekly* during its first year of existence augurs great possibilities for the future. We have learnt from the epic history of the *Pravda*, organ of the Russian Communists, that the workers' paper must above all have close contact with the masses and a wide circulation in the workshops. This can only be obtained by concentrating on the life and problems of the workers in factory, workshop, mine and mill. For this, the "Workers' Life" columns are of the utmost importance.

## THE NEW JOURNALISM.

I do not intend to deal here with the wider aspects of the workers' press. This has already been done in a very able article by C. M. Roebuck, "The Party Organ," appearing in the *Communist Review* for April, 1923. There, Comrade Roebuck shows how the Russian workers' press was built up. What the workers' press should *not* be, is described in another article by the same writer in the April, 1923 *Labour Monthly*, which deals with the shortcomings of the so-called "workers'" paper, the *Daily Herald*.

The workers' press must strike out in an entirely new direction, having no features in common with the middle class papers at present read by the majority of the working class. The petit-bourgeois ideology, moulded from the daily perusal of betting news, society weddings, cup finals, rape, divorce suits, "listening-in," the Prince of Wales' riding accidents, etc., will give place to a mass proletarian ideology, founded on a realistic knowledge of the existing conditions and struggles of the workers, written by the workers themselves. The ever-growing popularity of the *Workers' Weekly* shows that even in England this end can be achieved. The highbrow politics and reference-room economics of the *Nation*, *New Leader*, and similar bourgeois journals, with

their £1,000-a-dole editors, find little sympathy among the workers. But the danger of boss-class ideology penetrating the workers' press, either through tradition, journalistic habit, or political contagion, cannot be exaggerated. In 1918, Lenin complained in an article in *Pravda*, 20th September, that the Russian papers still had not sufficiently changed from the old bourgeois form. He tells us, however, that what we at least should learn from capitalist journalism is its capability in using the press as an instrument of the class war.

As the question of the workers' paper becomes daily more and more vital with the increasing intensity of the class struggle, it is essential for Party members to be thoroughly acquainted with the problems of the paper's development, and with the detail that the building up of a workers' press entails. It must be remembered that not only the Party centre, but also the entire rank and file in the localities, are equally responsible for a lead on this front. I, therefore, suggest that it will be more than worth while if comrades dig out their copies of the *Review* and *Monthly* mentioned above, and read assiduously the articles therein on the workers' paper. Pages 29-35 of the Party Commission's Report should also be read and re-read, as well as the several articles on the development of the paper appearing in the *Workers' Weekly* anniversary number, February 15th, No. 54.

### WORKER-CORRESPONDENTS.

In the present article I intend sketching some of the more technical aspects connected with the "Workers' Life" sections, and the tasks of the worker-correspondents. I have endeavoured to do this in a practical manner that may be of real use to correspondents.

It is necessary to distinguish between the letters of individual, more or less isolated, correspondents who write complaining of their personal grievances or of conditions among disconnected groups, and the other type of letter coming from a large factory, or voicing the opinion of a widely extended industrial unit. Although the former have great agitational value, and help to bring nearer to us the great quantities of semi-organised and unattached elements of the working class, the second type of workers' letter, that emanating from the heart of the industrial battleground, constitutes the basis upon which the "Workers' Life" columns must be built up. It is the writers of these letters who will become the *permanent* worker-correspondents on their particular section of the anti-capitalist line. It is they who will be the out-

posts on the lines of communication. These regular worker-correspondents, by the very continuity of their work, and consequently their accruing experience, will develop into the worker-journalists.

The difficulties confronting these pioneers in working class journalism are manifold. As the organisation resolution of the Third Comintern Congress tells us, the various subjects that should be dealt with include the activities and decisions of the Party factory nuclei and of the local trades unions, reports of meetings, life in the streets, etc., and the different social and economic aspects of the workers' life, as viewed "on-the-spot." This is all right in theory, but when it actually comes to the worker-correspondent sitting down to the table, taking up his pen and beginning to write his report or letter, then the trouble begins. There is so much to write about that it is often difficult for him to know where to start. To sort out the vital from the unimportant, to be able to judge whether copy will lose its value in the interval between writing and publication, perhaps ten days, to be able to decide whether a local event is of sufficient significance for all readers and, therefore, warranting a long report, or whether it is only of local interest, justifying but a few lines—these are some of the problems that the worker-journalist has to face.

### HOW TO WRITE.

To overcome the first difficulties of composition, the worker-correspondent should endeavour to write as much as possible in the colloquial language, as though he were talking to his mates. Let the words come naturally. "Literary style" syntax, etc., these for the time being may be left to the editorial pencil. They will develop with experience. The main thing is always to be as concise as possible, leaving out long-winded introductory remarks, and decorative sub-phrases. The sentences should be short and crisp, the wording bright and snappy. The essential must be introduced in the first lines. This adds freshness and vigour to the communication, and gives it a business-like form. Lenin tells us that the contents of working class newspapers should be written ". . . . in a few lines, in telegraphic style . . ." It is also a great mistake to write long, rambling screeds hoping that the editor will be able to cut them down as he thinks fit. Letters should be concise *in the original*. It is the train of thought that should be concise. After cutting down, the letter is often quite altered. The copy may become scrappy, disjointed, and without force. Besides, why waste the editor's time? In addition

to conciseness, clarity is also necessary. Confusion of words shows confusion of thought. There should be no digression into subordinate or irrelevant details that overbalance and obscure the essential facts. In general, the more facts and figures the better.

Worker-correspondents should write on a Marxist basis. In recording events in the life of the workers, it should be remembered that such events are determined by the surrounding material circumstances, and they should therefore, be expressed in appropriate terms. The latter should be realistic, and to the point: not based on sentimentality or emotion. The "Workers' Life" section would otherwise become similar to the "John Bull" post bag. It is quite permissible, and even advantageous occasionally, to write in a humorous vein. This, of course, must be done with discretion. The journalism of *Comic Cuts* or the *London Mail* must be kept out of the workers' press.

Worker-correspondents having a natural leaning for writing should aspire to become worker-journalists. They should never fight shy of attempting articles on wider political and economic topics for the *Communist Review*, or similar journals. Here they can be more redundant, and even indulge in "literary style," remembering, however, that it is best to employ fewer commas, and more full stops. In long articles, short and attractive sub-titles should be used.

A very responsible task lies before the worker-correspondents. They are not mere individual contributors airing their own opinions. They are the voice of hundreds of thousands of their fellow-workers. They are in this way "collective" correspondents in the full communistic sense. They must, therefore, learn to be good "listeners"—to be able to sense the feeling in the factory at any given moment, and to express the general opinion in the clearest way possible. They have not merely to repeat, but to formulate, just as it is the duty of the central editorial staff to formulate and to explain. The worker-correspondents also play a great role—perhaps, the most important—during the illegal periods of a revolutionary party's existence. They become the main link between the Party and the masses. In all stages of the paper's existence they are propagandists for the Party as well as agitators and organisers of the working class.

### **WORKER-CORRESPONDENTS IN RUSSIA.**

When the Russian workers took into their own hands the means of production, and organised their own proletarian state apparatus, the role of the worker-correspondents somewhat

changed. From being revolutionary agitators—the link between the masses and the illegal Party—they now became the link between the masses and the Workers' Government. They became advance-guards on the economic front—industrial watchdogs over the proletarian dictatorship. Since the early days of the Revolution, correspondence in the "Workers' Life" columns of *Pravda* and other papers has increased a hundredfold. It is not limited to the workers' grievances, but now covers social conditions, economic reconstruction, Soviet legislation, workers' culture and education, taxes, money matters . . . in fact all possible aspects of the workers' life. Besides worker-correspondents, there came into being Red Army correspondents, and peasant-correspondents. All these workers' letters have a large share in determining the policy of the Political Bureau of the Party. They also provide enormous material for the investigating and controlling work of the Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

With the coming of the New Economic Policy, "Nep," the worker-correspondents have become more than ever necessary. They have to watch the workers' interests in factories leased to private enterprise. They have now to report, check, and control the activities of the factory directors, both in State and private undertakings. In 1918, the "Workers' Life" columns occupied about 2 per cent. of the number of lines in *Pravda*. Now they occupy more than 8 per cent. During the last year, the number of worker-correspondents has greatly increased. There are now over 50,000 throughout Russia, and in Moscow alone more than 5,000.

A conference of the worker-correspondents of *Pravda* was recently held in Moscow. This was so successful that an All-Russian congress was subsequently convened. It was revealed that in Baku there are no less than 500 correspondents, and that even as far East as Vladivostock, worker, peasant, and Red Army correspondents were at work. It may be said that throughout the whole of Russia there is not an enterprise where this growing movement has not its ramifications. Although the majority are Party members, some of the best correspondents come from among the non-Party workers. Women also write to the papers in large numbers. These proletarian writers all over Russia are now linked up through their own journal, *The Worker Correspondent*, appearing monthly. The Central Committee of the Party considers these correspondents so important that it has decided to organise a central institute for training them, and has instructed all Party organisations to assist in their political education and

extend them every aid in their work. The correspondents have been recommended to study the 1912 editions of *Pravda*, edited by Lenin from abroad. It is significant that circulation increases with the number of correspondents. The increase of the latter in a Donetz paper during the year 1923 was from 21 to 136. During the same period the circulation rose from 10,000 to 41,000.

The conference emphasised that, although the worker-correspondents may become worker-journalists, their main value lies in the fact that they remain workers at the bench. Once they quit the workshops they are no longer worker-correspondents. Editorial work is the profession of a special technical staff. It is interesting to note that in all parts of Russia the correspondents have gathered together and formed their local clubs where they have organised courses in literature and the technical side of journalism.

### ***BUILDING UP THE WORKERS' PRESS.***

We can only get the "Workers' Daily" by doubling the circulation of the *Weekly*. A method that might help increase the circulation is to print or duplicate local news-sheets—according to the means available—and place them in the *Workers' Weekly* as a supplement. Further, to get the workers thoroughly conscious of the power of their Press, we must not stop at the Party organ, but get them interested in *all* Left-wing publications. Therefore, literature sellers should make a point of pushing on a much larger scale than hitherto their sale. At every working class meeting there should be a Communist bookstall. In every large town there should be a Communist bookshop, or the nucleus of one. Our ultimate aim is an independent workers' printing press, which will remove the threat of sabotage, constantly present while we are dependent on bourgeois printers.

ERIC VERNEY.

# INTERNATIONAL REVIEW



## THE PRESENT SITUATION IN ESTHONIA.

It is thought that a few notes may not be without interest to British workers concerning the recent developments in Esthonia which have tended to obscure somewhat the working class outlook in relation to the economic situation. Prior to 1918, our many important industries were employing a large industrial population, but trade was entirely dislocated by the German occupation in that year. When in the subsequent civil war, the bourgeoisie, with the help of foreign bourgeois governments conquered their own working class and made a peace treaty with Soviet Russia, it was universally anticipated that at least the factories would become active again. This hope was but partly realised. Only a few factories reopened, and these employed but a few hands, experiencing the greatest difficulty in carrying on, as they could find no markets for their products. In the West, their products were not wanted as the markets were already overstocked with better and cheaper goods.

There remained, therefore, only the East. Prior to the independence of Esthonia Soviet Russia had absorbed the major portion of Esthonia's production. The present bourgeois government, however, would tolerate no trade relations with Russia even to secure a market for their factories. As a result all their industries are in a chaotic condition, the working class naturally being the main sufferers. Unemployment is rampant, their numbers growing daily. The cost of living continu-

ously increases while wages are being forced down.

An average worker's wage is 100 to 180 Esthonian marks per day, while the cost of 1lb. of bread is 7 marks, 1lb. of meat 25 to 50 marks, 1lb. of butter 80 marks, etc.

The financial Budget showed a deficit of 500,000 marks, though actually the deficit is still greater because several subsidiary budgets from the smaller Ministries have not as yet been published. The exchange value of the mark continues to fall, the Government artificially maintaining its value in the country for the benefit of the financiers, paying hundreds of thousands of losses daily out of public money.

Recently, Strandmann, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, publicly stated in Parliament that the chief industries, with the exception of one or two, were doomed to die for lack of markets. The state, he said, must work out a project for winding up these industries, diverting the displaced labour on to agriculture and into small workshops.

Such a project is entirely acceptable to the bourgeoisie because they have always insisted that Esthonia was an agricultural kingdom, although a great part of the grain consumed in the country has always been imported from other lands. They realise that by destroying the industries and dispersing the workers, they lessen the danger from the Communist movement, which hangs like the sword of Damocles over the heads of the bourgeoisie.

Whilst this is in brief their policy, it is absurd to suppose that it is econo-



mically possible for workers discharged from the industries to buy or even to farm and equip their small holdings, nor can the small workshops absorb them. The workers are, therefore, faced with two alternatives, either to hire their labour power to the larger farmers or to emigrate.

Realising this, the workers' policy is not difficult to understand. Before the Russian revolution of 1917, Esthonia had been divided up into large estates which belonged to the German nobility. During the reign of the workers from October, 1917, to February, 1918, the estates were taken over from these nobility and farmed by the workers under communal ownership. After the German occupation (November, 1918), although the bourgeoisie had beaten the workers, they had not sufficient courage to defy the demands of the mass of the people that the big estates must be permanently divorced from their historic oppressors, the German nobility, and given to the landless for agricultural purposes.

Although this land reform was carried out, it failed to benefit the workers in any way, for without the necessary capital for rent, agricultural implements, buildings, stock, etc., the scheme was impractical. In vain did the class conscious workers demand that the estates should remain undivided and be communally owned and farmed. Against the interests of the workers, they were split up, all the choice plots being quickly snapped up by the officers and other bourgeoisie who know so well how to bleed the workers.

The influx of ex-industrial workers on to the land, naturally made the economic position of the agricultural workers still worse, and the failure of the struggling but impecunious petty estate owners made them the easy prey of the bourgeoisie who have been buying up their little holdings, and so re-creating the large estates. The only difference now is that the farm workers find themselves smarting under the whip of their own bourgeoisie instead of, as previously, under that of the German nobility.

Under the guise of democracy, the bourgeoisie are re-establishing a blatant autocracy. Hundreds of active workers in the labour movement are now languishing in prison, and the labour and trade union

papers are being periodically suppressed in an unscrupulous attempt to suffocate entirely the workers' movement. Despite, or perhaps because of, these abominable persecutions, the class conscious workers are uniting in greater numbers and declaring that the only way out of the present chaos is for the workers to seize again the reins of government, and to unite with the Federation of Soviet Republics. At many of the great conventions of unemployed, this policy has already been acclaimed, and the spirit of the working class is such as to encourage the view that they will not cease to fight until a brighter and better future is assured.

OTTO GOETZ.

Parnu, Esthonia.

## THE NATIONAL INDIAN MOVEMENT.

The last session of the Committee of the Indian Congress recently held at Ahmedabad gives proof that the direction of the Nationalist movement in India has definitely been taken out of the hands of M. Grandhi and the orthodox school of Non-co-operation.

In the course of the two years which have elapsed between the arrest of Ghandi and his condemnation to six years in exile, numerous modifications have been made in the programme and tactics of National Indian Congress.

### THE SWARAJI PARTY.

The Swaraji Party, with M. C. R. Das, of Bengal, at its head, has voted an amendment to the programme of Non-Co-operation, enabling those who desire it to take part in the elections to the legislative councils with the aim of "obstruction against the government."

The Swaraji Party took an active part in the elections of 1923, and won half the seats in the Indian Councils. Meanwhile, the centre of gravity in the national struggle during the last six months has shifted from the orthodox Ghandists to the Swarajists.

The release of Ghandi by the Labour Government was regarded as the opening of a new era in Indian

political life. The absent leader returning to his followers, the movement of Non-Co-operation, which, since the arrest of its leader had become stagnant revived, and became once more a powerful revolutionary force, sweeping the Swaraji Party into the background.

Private conversations between the different leaders of the National Congress representing various schools of thought took place at Juhu, the little resort where M. Ghandi sojourned during his convalescence. But absolute silence was always observed as to the nature of these discussions. The first official declaration from Mahatma was made a few weeks before the session held at Ahmedabad of the Committee of the Indian Congress, the supreme executive organ of the National Congress.

#### GHANDI'S PROGRAMME.

This official declaration was really a political report and simultaneously addressed by M. Ghandi to the orthodox Non-Co-operators, known as the "No-Changers," and by the two leaders of the Swaraji fraction, M. C. R. Das and M. N. Nehru to their partisans the "Pro-Changers." This declaration produced a great tension in India. It established for the first time an absolute difference of opinion upon tactics and the programme of the national struggle.

M. Ghandi reiterated once more in his "Constructive Programme" what he defended at Bardole, in February, 1922, regarding the social reforms, and recommended once more the importance of the absolute boycott of the government schools, the courts of justice, the legislative councils and foreign cloth, etc.

#### THE PROGRAMME OF SWARAJI.

To this programme the Swarajists opposed theirs, demanding entrance into the legislative councils for the purpose of obstructing the government until they got an assurance of Swaraji (government by Indians). They accepted the application of the Ghandi constructive programme without the councils and to strengthen the boycott of English cloth.

The die was cast! The direction of the national movement was in the balance. M. Ghandi had declared

that if his programme was rejected he would retire from politics and devote himself to social reforms.

#### THE DEFEAT OF GHANDI.

The Committee of the Congress met at Ahmedabad—the province of Ghandi, and seat of his authority—on the 27th June, and sat for three days. Ghandi submitted his famous proposal of "self-denial," in spite of the strong opposition of the Swarajists and even some of his own followers, who believed in the possibility of an agreement.

The Swarajists to the number of 50 left the hall as the vote was about to be taken. 110 persons remained for the count. There voted for the resolution 67, and against 37, and 6 absentions. The victory of the Ghandists was purely nominal, since if the Swarajists had remained in the hall the motion would have been lost.

Having considered the result of the vote, Ghandi recognised his defeat. After consultation with his friends he accepted the withdrawal from the resolution of the passages relative to obligatory spinning and to the boycott. These concessions regained to the Swarajists the substance of the debates.

The defeat of Ghandism is thus complete; the Swarajists are masters of the situation for the moment, and Ghandi, once the leader of the national struggle in India, has sung his swan-song!

E.R.

(Translated from the French.)

## POLES SUPPRESS THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY.

The industrial situation of Polish Upper Silesia is becoming more acute. The Polish industrialists have declared for the suppression of the eight-hours day and a lowering of wages. They have posted in all the mines and the forges notices that wages are to be lowered 30 per cent., and that those workers who do not accept these conditions will be dismissed as from the 11th July.

On the other hand the working day will be 10 hours after the 10th of

July. At the same time the industrialists have telegraphed to the government at Warsaw that they will close their shops in case they are obliged to pay their taxes. They are also demanding freedom from the customs duties on the importation of raw materials, a bounty on the exportation of coal and iron, and a reduction in railway freightage.

These demands have been put in the form of an ultimatum, a section of the employers threatening a lock-out of the workers.

Important meetings have been held by the workers in all the industrial regions, and big struggles are ahead in Polish Upper Silesia.

## THE PAN-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SCHOOL-TEACHERS.

The Pan-Russian Congress of School-teachers is to be held this Autumn. On the agenda are included the following subjects.

1. The School-teachers and the proletarian revolution, by G. Zinoviev.
2. The problems of Education in the Soviet Regime, by Lunatcharski.
3. The Soviet School, by Kroupskaia (Lenin's widow).
4. The School-teachers and the Union of the Young Communists.
5. The National Question in the School, etc.



# The Forum

Dear Comrade,

Having read the Draft Programme of the C.P.G.B. in the *Communist Review* for June, I have one outstanding criticism to submit, and that is—its phraseology.

We are always speaking about the ultimate development of our Party into a mass Party—we are always conscious of the necessity for attracting workers to our Party with this end in view—we are always running down the academic theoretician; yet to a great extent we, who say "Back to the masses," do not adapt our language so that the worker, returning home weary from the factory, shall be able to understand what we have to say, without having a dictionary beside him.

If we want our literature to be read by the workers we must constantly endeavour to make it as attractive as possible. When a politically indifferent worker is given an article to read, and, on glancing through it finds long words and intricate phrases, he will probably stop reading and turn to something more comprehensible. I think that our literature should also be more attractive in the way it is got up generally; in our monthly *Review* there should be illustrations, suitably coloured plates, cartoons taken from various countries; it should attract the eye more than it does at present.

Plain and simple writing—that should always be our aim when writing about anything that concerns the Communist movement; especially should it be so in presenting the Communist Programme, the purpose of which is to explain to the worker what the C.P. actually stands for.

I will take the first phrase that catches my eye (p. 87): "As the process of destruction and attrition made the protagonists (in the war) more and more dependent upon the neutral countries, for resources, they each sought to make allies of the neutrals." Surely the C.P. Programme can express the same facts much more simply.

Again, on glancing through the programme, I find such expression as (p. 80): "It (the State) conquers, colonises or controls the small states, and transforms the era of "*laissez faire*" into an age of imperial conquerors struggling for control of the whole earth." How many workers would know the meaning of "*laissez faire*"? The presence of that phrase makes an intelligible understanding of the sentence more difficult than need be.

Again, "measures of social-amelioration"—why "amelioration"? It is a waste of time and print and paper; why not "social-reform"? Every worker will immediately know what is meant by that phrase. Another example (p. 95): "The occupation of the Ruhr and Rhineland by French troops has placed the seal of a predatory purpose upon their policy, etc." Why "seal of a predatory"?

We must always remember that we are addressing ourselves to workers in the factory, mine and workshop, and not to university students.

Another striking example of the disease is to be found in Bela Kun's article in the *Communist International*, entitled "Propaganda of Leninism"; I do not know if this is the fault of the author or translator.

I raise these few points in this letter because I feel that they are of the utmost importance to the healthy development of our Party; I hope that they will stimulate discussion.

W. SOLOMON,  
N.W. Local.

## SHALL WE COMBAT RELIGION?

Dear Comrade,

Comrade Leslie Mason totally misunderstood my letter if he thinks I "wish to introduce religion into the Party." My whole point was that we, as a Party, should leave the subject

alone, letting every member be free to believe and propagate whatever religion or anti-religion seemed good to him, provided, of course, that he did not propagate anything contrary to Communism. This was the position in the old Socialist Parties, and it answered very well.

As to Bishop Brown's book, I have had it in my hand more than once, but already the outside and first pages horrified and disgusted me so much that I had no wish to read further. You may say a Communist ought to be able to read anything, and no doubt that is so if there is any object to be gained—so I will read it if Comrade Mason on his part will read "Christ and Labour," by C. F. Andrews, or "The Carpenter and the Rich Man," by B. White. These will also contain replies to some of the points raised in the other letters.

F. BALDWIN.

Will you allow me to join in and say a word or two on this problem, in reply to the three contributions appearing in the June *Review*. If Communists in general are to treat religion in the way adopted by these comrades, then it is very likely in the near future to become a dominant question—brought on, not by religious reactionaries, but by anti-religious fanatics. These fanatics invite us, in fact urge us, as a first Communist duty to *combat* religion, and no doubt these letters are intended as samples of the method of combat. Fortunately most of us are too fully occupied with economic and political matters to have time for these gymnastics.

None of the three correspondents seems quite clear what it is we have to combat; Christian Socialism is mentioned, I.L.P. pacifism, and supernaturalism, and this ambiguity should be a sufficient indication of the kind of thing the Party lets itself in for, if it seeks to put in practice the Comintern resolution in England. This is worth quoting again: "that Communism represents a complete outlook on life—which excludes religion, and logically involves atheism; propaganda against religion is essential."

To which extravagant perversion it is possible only to give the direct

negative. "Communism is not a complete outlook on life—it is an economic ideal; it excludes no part of man's intellectual or emotional strivings; propaganda against religion is not only not essential, it would be the utmost folly. To combat religion in this manner will greatly strengthen the churches and give them a new lease of life."

Let us put aside this somewhat truculent attitude and try to clear our minds.

Our task as Communists is to give to the workers a sound knowledge of the facts of history and social life, and a fighting programme. This knowledge must be broad-based on scientific methods of research, so that its conclusions will be unassailable. This will form a sound basis for correct thinking on all other aspects of human life. That is our work until under the dictatorship of the workers the foundations of the Communal form of society are laid and the worker is free to think about other things.

But the problems of life and the universe and our relation to these, which constitute religion, will remain, and the more men are freed from the struggle for existence, the more thought and time will be given to these things. Communism will free religion from the bondage of superstition, just as it will free art and science. My complaint against your contributors is that they fail to distinguish between religion—which is reverence for the unknown, and superstition—which is a belief in supernatural beings and persons; between religion and the organised corruption which masquerades under that name.

It is true that priesthood and churches have been the most powerful agencies for doping the subject masses, but their influence is visibly waning at the present time—witness the frantic efforts of church councils, etc., to rouse an interest in social affairs. This is due not to crude attacks—the methods of Ingersoll and Bradlaugh have had their day—but rather to the advance of science, which is undermining the ignorant superstitious beliefs of the churches. In this process a foremost place will be given to Marxism.

The best attitude of the Communist towards those institutions is to

leave them alone; they are dying. Let us not waste strength on the negative task of destruction, but concentrate on the positive constructive work of enlightenment.

To begin an attack on religion in England to-day would be the worst possible tactic; besides being utterly hopeless and useless, it would divert the interest of numbers of workers from economic conditions to the vague speculations that make up modern theology, just what our enemies want. Also it would alienate many active workers who do find Communism to be (as Comrade Corrie says) "a religion in which man will stand up and realise himself," and

who do not regard Communism as having any relation whatever with the worn-out middle class Liberal philosophy of atheism, so beloved of the Bradlaugh's and Balfour's and the super wealthy associates of the R.P.A.

In conclusion, I am glad to note that in its draft programme, the E.C. has not included the dogmatic assertion already quoted, but instead takes up the far saner attitude of demanding "separation of church and state, and equal status for all religious opinions."

ARTHUR RILEY,  
(Burnley Group).

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