The International CLASS STRUGGLE

Volume I SUMMER, 1936 Number 1

WHAT WE WANT
A Statement of Policy

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT by Ypsylon
Experiences in France and Spain

ROLE OF ILLEGAL CADRES IN UNDERGROUND GERMANY by Leo

SANCTIONS AND THE PROLETARIAT
A Statement of the C.P.O.

LENIN OR LUXEMBURG? by Bern Brandon

THE NEED FOR COMMUNIST UNITY
An Unanswered Letter to the Comintern

PROBLEMS OF THE INDIAN REVOLUTION

THE I. L. P. SWINGS RIGHT

Price 25 cents

ISSUED QUARTERLY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST OPPOSITION BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY (OPPOSITION) 51 WEST 14 STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y. MAIL ADDRESS: POST OFFICE BOX 68, STATION O, NEW YORK CITY.

The International CLASS STRUGGLE

organ of the

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST OPPOSITION

Published quarterly by the Communist Party (Opposition), Box 68, Sta. O, N. Y. C.
Subscription price: One year $1.00. Single copies, 25 cents.

VOL. I. SUMMER 1936 NO. 1.

What We Want

A Statement of Policy

"THE INTERNATIONAL CLASS STRUGGLE" is the international organ of the International Communist Opposition (ICO). It is being published in a German bimonthly and in an English quarterly. It will deal with the problems of the international labor movement from the point of view of the principles of communism as laid down in the resolutions of the first three Congresses of the Communist International and from the point of view of the tactics worked out and practiced by the Communist Opposition in the course of the past seven years and embodied in the platform of the I.C.O. These tactics form the basis of the I.C.O. as an international organized communist tendency.

The rich experience of the international class struggle has given us certain tactical and strategical fundamentals for the period preceding the seizure of power. These fundamentals must be translated into life on the basis of a concrete, Marxist analysis of the class relationships in each individual country. The Communist Opposition, in the course of the past seven years, has fulfilled those demands which the decisions of the 7th Congress call for but which have gone unheeded by the Communist International (C.I.) sections and the C.I. leadership itself. The I.C.O. will continue to work along this line and fight for a healthy International in order to make it possible for the Communist parties of the various capitalist countries to fulfill their tasks. Once this is accomplished the I.C.O. will have accomplished its task as a communist tendency and will have lost its *raison d'etre*.

But such is not the situation at present.

The conclusions drawn by the 7th World Congress of the C.I. from the bankruptcy of the ultra-left course, which became evident with the defeat of the German and Austrian working class, have by no means done away with tactical errors. On the contrary, the C.I. is now erring in the opposite direction; it is now pursuing an ultra-right course. Ultra-left "sec-

tarianism" has been replaced by a policy which seems to "permit everything."

We are now witnessing a swing to the right, the dangers of which are far greater than those of the ultra-left course. The reasons are twofold: First of all, with the exception of Spain there were not, during the ultra-left course (1928-1935), any important organizations to the "left" of communism, i.e., of an anarcho-syndicalist character, which might have attracted those followers of communism who were even more "left" than the C.I. On the other hand, despite the collapse of the German and Austrian Social-Democracy we find, today, that outright reformism and centrism are well represented by such powerful organizations as the S.F. I.O., (Socialist Party of France) the British Labor Party, and strong reformist trade unions in a number of countries. This reformist camp is ready to welcome any deviators to the right of the C.I.

Secondly, while the ultra-leftism of the C.I. and the reformism of the Social-Democracy were responsible for the victory of fascism in Germany and Austria and for the heavy defeat and temporary destruction of the German and Austrian labor movement, the ultra-rightism of the C.I. seriously places before us the danger of a victory of fascism and the defeat of the working class in France and a number of smaller countries. A second defeat of the working class by fascism in such an important country as France, which is today the international model of communist as well as reformist tactics, just as Germany was up to the victory of the Nazis in 1933, would be a worse blow to the international working class than was the victory of fascism in Germany and Austria. It would increase the confusion, chaos and lack of orientation in the ranks of the working class. It would encourage fascist forces in those countries in which fascism is still fighting for power and would demoralize those anti-fascist fighters in lands of fascist dictatorships.

Moreover, the international working class will very soon face a most severe test—in life, the most difficult test conceivable. It will soon face a wave of new imperialist wars and a revolutionary war. Both require a maximum of clarity and firmness in principle as well as a capacity for independent, quick, tactical and strategical orientation and initiative.

For the above reasons the struggle against the new ultra-right course of the C.I. must be carried on with even greater energy and perseverance than was the struggle against the ultra-left. In all probability this struggle will be much shorter. However, it will take place under conditions that are more difficult; namely, the greater pressure from the class enemy as a result of the war and the greater fundamental and tactical confusion which is the inevitable result of an opportunist course.

We therefore assume that this will be the *last stage* in the struggle for power and in the formation of *mature* Communist parties which will be able to solve the revolutionary tasks of their countries on their own initiative.

As a result of the defeats in Germany and in Austria the C.I. leadership began to realize that the inner regime of the International was bankrupt. The characteristics of this regime were the monopoly role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the leadership of the Communist International and the dependence and immaturity of the other Communist parties. The 7th Congress therefore passed a resolution demanding *collective* leadership in the C.I. and independent orientation on the part of the Communist parties in individual countries. This demand however has remained on paper. It has not been realized. The best proof of this is the refusal of the C.I. to grant the demands of the I.C.O. for the realization of inner-Party democracy in the C.I. as well as in its various sections.

It is clear that the only way in which mature Communist parties can be developed is by permitting the participation of the entire membership in the working out, execution and control of Communist strategy and tactics—is thru the realization of inner-Party democracy, of discussion and criticism within the framework of Communist principles and Communist discipline. Such a period of natural development which gave rise to a firm Bolshevist policy in Russia cannot be replaced by hot-house methods, nor can it be skipped. The more opposition there is to such a natural development, the heavier the sacrifices and the more time lost. The victory of the working class is possible only when the ripe *objective* conditions of the class struggle coincide with the *subjective* ripeness of the revolutionary parties.

Moreover, the opportunist course of the C.I. has a negative and retarding development within the Social-Democratic labor movement. Under the pressure of events in Germany and Austria considerable sections of Social-Democracy in these countries have begun to renounce such fundamental policies of Social-Democracy as the bourgeois-democratic road to power and the coalition policy with bourgeois parties and have been moving towards communism. The new opportunist course of the C.I. is but a reproduction of the reformist policy of coalition, of the reformist attitude to the road to power, under new forms—under a communist banner. Thus the ultra-right course is sowing confusion in the ranks of the left-wing of Social-Democracy, preventing their development into Communists, and ideologically strengthening the right wing of Social-Democracy.

One of the most important tasks of the *"International Class Struggle"* will be to counter-act this confusion and to promote the development of the international left wing in the Social-Democratic movement, towards communism. The publication is ready to serve as a forum for the spokesmen of this movement.

Furthermore, the magazine will publish the most important international and national documents of the I.C.O. and its affiliated national organizations.

The main subject with which the *"International Class Struggle"* will deal are the following:

1. The tactics, strategy, methods of work by the anti-fascist forces in countries where fascism has seized power, and

2. In republican countries where fascism is playing an important role and fighting for power (for example, France);

3. Problems of the labor movement in countries where bourgeois democracy has not yet been undermined (England, U. S.);

4. Problems of revolutionary struggles in those countries in which wars for national emancipation and the struggle for the democratic revolutions are on the order of the day (India, China, etc.);

5. Problems of socialist construction and foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

We have selected the following as the most important problems which confront the international working class today:

1. *The fundamental orientation, tactics, strategy and organization of the struggle against fascism.*
2. *Bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship; their distinct relationship in the struggle against fascism.*
3. *Methods and content of the united front in countries under bourgeois democracy and in countries run by a fascist dictatorship.*
4. *The relation of the working class to the petty bourgeois classes in the struggle against fascism and war and the "People's Front."*
5. *The tasks of the working class in an imperialist and in a revolutionary war.*
6. *The problems of the international trade union movement.*
7. *The problem of the "organic unity" of the international labor movement.*

The *"International Class Struggle"* will bring regular reports from the various I.C.O. sections.

As an organ of the I.C.O. and adhering firmly to its viewpoint, the *"International Class Struggle"* will serve the basic interests of the international working class. We hope not only to arouse the interest but to secure the cooperation of all those in the international labor movement who are not satisfied with attempts to solve the burning questions of the international revolutionary class struggle thru ready-made formulae but want to study these problems themselves and to learn thru discussion and criticism.

Editors of the

INTERNATIONAL CLASS STRUGGLE

The People's Front

Experiences in France and Spain

By YPSYLON

SPAIN

THE ILLUSORY successes scored by the Communist Party of Germany in the immediate pre-Hitler days, when it was the model Party of international ultra-leftism, were most instrumental in prolonging the ultra-left course. It is these surface successes which blinded the leaders of the Communist International and a considerable section of the membership and thus prevented them from realizing the actual situation. Prior to Hitler's seizure of power, the C.P.G. grew organizationally and received huge votes at the polls. The Party, however, failed to realize that, as a result of its ultra-left tactics, it had lost almost all influence,

practically all bases of organized support in the proletarian mass organizations, particularly, in the trade unions. Therefore, it was unable to play a role of any consequence when the crises broke; first, in July 1932 when the Social-Democratic government of Prussia was dissolved and, later on, in January 1933 when Hitler became Chancellor.

The recent election victory based on the People's Front in Spain brings with it a similar danger. The People's Front of Spain has triumphed; it has won a parliamentary majority in the Cortes and has prevented a victory of the Right. Hence—so the C.P. reasons—the People's Front policy has been brilliantly confirmed not only in Spain but internationally. Spain has thus become the most outstanding testing ground for the People's Front tactics. In view of this attitude of the C.I., it becomes all the more necessary to subject the events in Spain to a thoro analysis and not to be content with the superficial appearance of things.

* * *

The working class of Spain has resumed activity and has regained its self-confidence in an amazingly short time after the October 1934 struggles in Catalonia, in Asturias and other parts of the country. The Left Republican bourgeoisie was very much discredited after the October uprising, particularly in Catalonia. This was due to its cowardly and treacherous role in these struggles. As a result of the People's Front bloc (which includes the Left Republicans) they were enabled to regain some of their lost prestige and influence among the masses, and to secure artificially a too big representation in parliament at the expense of the workers' parties. This they could never have secured by themselves.

Moreover, they forced on the People's Front their election program which expressly rejects all basic and realistic revolutionary slogans as well as the most elementary reform demands of the working class. The program specifically rejects the revolutionary solution of the land question; the expropriation of the large estates and their transfer to farm laborers and peasants; the slogan of workers' control of production; nationalization of the Bank of Spain, as well as national unemployment insurance at the expense of the employers.

Let us consider for a moment what would have happened had there been no alliance with the Left Republicans? Undoubtedly, there would have been a victory of the lefts—a victory which would have brought a parliamentary majority to the *workers' parties*. This would have put the left bourgeoisie in the minority as it deserved, and would not have tied the working class parties to a People's Front program which spurns the most fundamental and urgent demands of the working class for fear of offending the "left" bourgeoisie. We need only pose the question: would the workers' parties have gotten less votes if, instead of propagandizing the miserable agrarian reforms of the bourgeois lefts they would have demanded a full agrarian revolution? Incidentally, this propaganda was responsible for the fact that the reactionaries again gained a foothold among the peasants. Would they have received less votes if they had agitated for state unemployment insurance at the expense of the employers, or workers' control of production?

The events following the elections have shown (1) that the vigorous extra-parliamentary activity of the masses was *the* driving force; (2) that

the Left Republicans agreed to support the amnesty, the restoration of "left" municipal councils, the re-opening of People's Houses, the re-instatement of workers discharged because of their participation in the October uprising, new regulations in reference to agrarian reform, the dissolution of fascist leagues only under the pressure of the independent actions of the masses; (3) that the left bourgeoisie has only one end in view, namely, to paralyze the activities of the masses, to lure them away from "the streets" by using the workers' parties of the People's Front as a brake on the mass movement; (4) that the People's Front program and the People's Front itself has already become a brake on mass action and that there can be no progress as long as the People's Front continues in its present form. The problem boils down to this: either the workers' parties and organizations permit the Left Republicans to paralyze the actions of the masses (as happened when the peasants' demonstrations of March 15th were called off at the insistence of Azana) or they break with the People's Front.

The future development of the revolutionary situation must center around the following demands:

1. The realization of the agrarian revolution. The peasants have already begun to seize large estates altho Azana sent armed troops against them.

2. Breaking of the sabotage of the employers thru reinstating workers and reviving production in idle plants by having the workers take control of the factories thru their own organs. (Workers' control of production).

3. The dissolution of the Civil Guard; the winning over of the army, the troops and the lower officers thru the agrarian revolution (the army consists mainly of peasants) by means of propaganda for and the formation of soldiers' councils at the suitable moment, the replacement of officers by rank-and-file soldiers and the organized arming of workers (workers' militia).

4. The transformation of the workers' and peasants' alliances into genuine, all-inclusive class organs of workers and peasants which will direct the revolutionary struggle toward a general uprising, and are to aim at gathering as much political power to themselves as possible—both locally and nationally, thus establishing a government dual to that of the Left Republicans. After a victorious struggle along these lines, these organs will develop into organs of proletarian state power.

5. A break with the Left Republicans; establishment of an alliance with the mass of farm laborers and toiling peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie by means of workers' and peasants' alliances and later on by workers,' peasants' and soldiers' councils.

The "Partido Obrera de Unificacion Marxista" of Catalonia, of which Maurin is the leader, was the first to realize that the alliance with the Left Republicans had to be broken. They have already broken with it. The C.P., having learned from the masses, has begun to realize that the People's Front program has outlived its "usefulness." In its letter to the S.P. it calls for a joint struggle more or less along the lines indicated above. But it continues to adhere firmly to the bloc with the Left Republicans. The dangers of continuing such a bloc have been illustrated by the events of March 15th when Azana succeeded in having the S.P. and C.P. call off the mass demonstrations of the peasants.

If the Spanish revolution is to be continued beyond the bounds of the bourgeois revolution, it is imperative that the Communist Party break with the Left Republicans *immediately* so that it can direct, unify and lead the revolutionary mass movement. Only this would mean the *guarantee* of an actual and complete bourgeois revolution and the defense of the achievements won for the working class. The continuation of this bloc would mean disruption, division, paralysis, disillusionment and demoralization of the revolutionary mass movement. It would provide a breathing spell for all the counter-revolutionary forces of the big bourgeoisie, the big landowners, the clergy, the military. Such a breathing spell can only serve to organize and unify the counter-revolution and enable it achieve victory.

Merely to point out these phases will suffice to reveal the tremendous international significance of the Spanish events in general and the question of the continuation or abandonment of the People's Front policy in Spain in particular.

FRANCE

The admirable initiative and energy of the working class of Spain has had little effect on near-by France. This is primarily due to the People's Front which has been paralyzing the extra-parliamentary activities of the masses for some time. Likewise, the throttling of the strikes of Brest and Toulon against the emergency decrees has had very dangerous consequences.

The following events which have already transpired are indicative of the further development of the People's Front in France:

1. Toleration of the Sarraut cabinet by the C.P. of France (abstention at formation of the government) altho several notorious enemies of labor belong to the cabinet—the assistant secretary of state, who is a member of the "Jeunesses Patriotes," and minister of war, Maurin, a sympathizer of the Croix de Feu.

2. At the Party conference in Villeurbanne the C.P. approved the toleration of the Sarraut government and declared at the same time (a sort of a little turn to the left) that it was not ready to participate in a parliamentary People's Front government. To counterpose an extra-parliamentary People's Front government with the Radical Socialists as this convention did is, of course, sheer nonsense! The manifesto of the Party convention bristles with phrases like "national unity of France," against the "200 families," phrases which play into the hands of the reactionaries and chauvinists.

3. Immediately after the attack of the Royalists on Leon Blum, the People's Front arranged a mass demonstration in which a great number of people participated. This meeting, however, had no concrete, political aim. It was a demonstration to the liking of Sarraut; that is, it provided a safety-valve for the wrath which was mounting in the ranks of the Parisian workers.

The "Action Francaise" has been declared illegal. But the Royalists continue undisturbed their activities in their organizations in different forms. Nothing has been done to dissolve the "Croix de Feu," the strongest fascist organization. The result is that the dissolution of the "Action Francaise" has led only to a concentration of fascist forces.

The law for the dissolution of fascist leagues thus remains a dead letter. Nobody thinks of organizing broad political self-defense organizations which alone could really disarm and dissolve the fascist leagues. Such organizations would have been the correct answer to the attack on Blum.

4. The government, in conjunction with the representatives of the workers, avoided a strike in Marseilles. The most important demand of the longshoremen, insisted upon by their councils and presented to the employers, the right to strike, was dropped. The C.P. proclaimed this result a "victory" of the workers.

5. At the unity convention of the C.G.T. and the C.G.T.U. in Toulouse the Communist delegates failed to take the initiative either politically or as trade union leaders, they failed to urge a genuine struggle against the emergency decrees and other manifestations of the capitalist offensive. Even after the strengthening of the trade unions thru unification the C.P. members who were delegates failed to urge that the trade unions should participate in the direct struggle for the improvement of the standard of living of the working class. This failure is obviously a result of the People's Front policy of avoiding conflict with the Radical Socialists who are bitterly opposed to any mass action on the part of the working class.

6. The Locarno Crisis: general helplessness, no mobilization of the masses whatsoever; instead of a clear working class position, the acceptance of Sarraut's foreign policy, slogans such as, "National Unity"; instead of "Unity of Action" we find unity of non-action.

The net result of the People's Front in France within the last few months is a big minus: independent mass action of the working class has been paralyzed for months. Moreover, everyone is becoming progressively accustomed to this state of affairs.

Role of Illegal Cadre Organization in Germany

By LEO

THE PROBLEM WHICH faces the German working class today is how to *organize* mass actions under the existing conditions of illegality.

The German Social Democracy—and on this all Socialist emigres, the right wing as well as the left wing agree—denies the possibility of *organizing* and leading mass actions by means of illegal organizations. Right wing as well as left wing leaders of the Social Democracy would have the illegal organizations confine themselves to pure agitation and propaganda until legal possibilities for proletarian mass organizations reappear. This implies that fascism will disintegrate as a result of its own contradictions (or thru some bourgeois force, such as the Reichswehr) to such an extent that it will grant the working class certain legal rights, or that the masses

of workers will spontaneously, without being led by illegal organizations, arise and strike at the fascist regime.

This position of Social Democracy on the most decisive and practical question immediately facing the German working class demonstrates that the Socialist Party even as an underground party does not pursue revolutionary tactics, that it is continuing its reformist policies under the dictatorship of fascism. The attitude of the Social Democracy towards the illegal organization of mass actions nourishes the illusion of the possibility of a gradual democratization of the fascist dictatorship and keeps the working masses from waging a real fight against the fascist dictatorships. The Trotskyites and the Socialist Workers Party agree with the Social Democrats. According to them, every attempt to organize mass struggles today can result only in an unnecessary sacrifice of illegal cadres; therefore, these cadres must isolate themselves from the great masses as much as possible until better conditions arise.

Against these reformist views, Communists, if they are to be worthy of the name, must react and carry out the task of reaching and influencing the great mass of workers, of organizing them, and leading them in their struggles thru illegal cadre organizations which adhere to all rules of underground work and are thus protected as much as possible against Nazi terror. To lead the great mass of workers, the illegal cadres of the Communist Party must have a system of connections for the purpose of bringing the great masses under the leadership of the illegal Party cadres and of safeguarding the illegal character of these cadres, that is, of concealing them as much as possible from the Gestapo.

One of the most important ways thru which the Communist Party cadres can influence greater masses and lead them in their struggles is the illegal trade union. But the illegal unions (which include not only Communists but all those who are capable of doing illegal trade union work) themselves can be nothing but cadre organizations, requiring a system of contact men in order to reach the masses and at the same time remain underground.

II.

The Communist view of this problem as described above and as advocated by the Communist Opposition is simply the application of the experiences gained by the Bolshevik Party of Russia under the leadership of Lenin in its long, illegal struggle against Czarism to the present conditions of the revolutionary struggle in Germany.

The conditions of illegality in Hitler Germany are not exactly the same as those of Czarist Russia. *Fundamentally,* however, the teachings of Lenin hold true for present day Germany; namely, that Communists must not rely on the spontaneous movement of the masses or lag behind it, but that they must advance it, imbue it with revolutionary consciousness, organize it, lead it and see to it that this spontaneous element is controlled by a consciously revolutionary element and not vice versa. Further, Lenin vigorously emphasized the necessity of *underground* cadre organizations assuming the leadership of mass struggles as against the fantastic ideas of the possibility of broad mass organizations under the Czar. Lenin, furthermore stood for the utilization of possibilities for legal work under the Czar

The law for the dissolution of fascist leagues thus remains a dead letter. Nobody thinks of organizing broad political self-defense organizations which alone could really disarm and dissolve the fascist leagues. Such organizations would have been the correct answer to the attack on Blum.

4. The government, in conjunction with the representatives of the workers, avoided a strike in Marseilles. The most important demand of the longshoremen, insisted upon by their councils and presented to the employers, the right to strike, was dropped. The C.P. proclaimed this result a "victory" of the workers.

5. At the unity convention of the C.G.T. and the C.G.T.U. in Toulouse the Communist delegates failed to take the initiative either politically or as trade union leaders, they failed to urge a genuine struggle against the emergency decrees and other manifestations of the capitalist offensive. Even after the strengthening of the trade unions thru unification the C.P. members who were delegates failed to urge that the trade unions should participate in the direct struggle for the improvement of the standard of living of the working class. This failure is obviously a result of the People's Front policy of avoiding conflict with the Radical Socialists who are bitterly opposed to any mass action on the part of the working class.

6. The Locarno Crisis: general helplessness, no mobilization of the masses whatsoever; instead of a clear working class position, the acceptance of Sarraut's foreign policy, slogans such as, "National Unity"; instead of "Unity of Action" we find unity of non-action.

The net result of the People's Front in France within the last few months is a big minus: independent mass action of the working class has been paralyzed for months. Moreover, everyone is becoming progressively accustomed to this state of affairs.

Role of Illegal Cadre Organization in Germany

By LEO

THE PROBLEM WHICH faces the German working class today is how to *organize* mass actions under the existing conditions of illegality.

The German Social Democracy—and on this all Socialist emigres, the right wing as well as the left wing agree—denies the possibility of *organizing* and leading mass actions by means of illegal organizations. Right wing as well as left wing leaders of the Social Democracy would have the illegal organizations confine themselves to pure agitation and propaganda until legal possibilities for proletarian mass organizations reappear. This implies that fascism will disintegrate as a result of its own contradictions (or thru some bourgeois force, such as the Reichswehr) to such an extent that it will grant the working class certain legal rights, or that the masses

of workers will spontaneously, without being led by illegal organizations, arise and strike at the fascist regime.

This position of Social Democracy on the most decisive and practical question immediately facing the German working class demonstrates that the Socialist Party even as an underground party does not pursue revolutionary tactics, that it is continuing its reformist policies under the dictatorship of fascism. The attitude of the Social Democracy towards the illegal organization of mass actions nourishes the illusion of the possibility of a gradual democratization of the fascist dictatorship and keeps the working masses from waging a real fight against the fascist dictatorships. The Trotskyites and the Socialist Workers Party agree with the Social Democrats. According to them, every attempt to organize mass struggles today can result only in an unnecessary sacrifice of illegal cadres; therefore, these cadres must isolate themselves from the great masses as much as possible until better conditions arise.

Against these reformist views, Communists, if they are to be worthy of the name, must react and carry out the task of reaching and influencing the great mass of workers, of organizing them, and leading them in their struggles thru illegal cadre organizations which adhere to all rules of underground work and are thus protected as much as possible against Nazi terror. To lead the great mass of workers, the illegal cadres of the Communist Party must have a system of connections for the purpose of bringing the great masses under the leadership of the illegal Party cadres and of safeguarding the illegal character of these cadres, that is, of concealing them as much as possible from the Gestapo.

One of the most important ways thru which the Communist Party cadres can influence greater masses and lead them in their struggles is the illegal trade union. But the illegal unions (which include not only Communists but all those who are capable of doing illegal trade union work) themselves can be nothing but cadre organizations, requiring a system of contact men in order to reach the masses and at the same time remain underground.

II.

The Communist view of this problem as described above and as advocated by the Communist Opposition is simply the application of the experiences gained by the Bolshevik Party of Russia under the leadership of Lenin in its long, illegal struggle against Czarism to the present conditions of the revolutionary struggle in Germany.

The conditions of illegality in Hitler Germany are not exactly the same as those of Czarist Russia. *Fundamentally,* however, the teachings of Lenin hold true for present day Germany; namely, that Communists must not rely on the spontaneous movement of the masses or lag behind it, but that they must advance it, imbue it with revolutionary consciousness, organize it, lead it and see to it that this spontaneous element is controlled by a consciously revolutionary element and not vice versa. Further, Lenin vigorously emphasized the necessity of *underground* cadre organizations assuming the leadership of mass struggles as against the fantastic ideas of the possibility of broad mass organizations under the Czar. Lenin, furthermore stood for the utilization of possibilities for legal work under the Czar

whenever they appeared; provided, of course, that this legal work was controlled by the illegal organization. He vigorously fought the *Otsovists* who rejected the utilization of legal possibilities and tended to discourage the work of the illegal organizations among the broad masses, on the one hand, and on the other the *Liquidators* who denied the role of the illegal cadre organization and rejected the supervision of legal work thru these organizations. However, Lenin vigorously combated all illusions that the Russian working class could achieve complete legality of its organizations, the right to assemble and other democratic rights without first overthrowing Czarism.

"It is nonsense" writes Lenin in his polemic against Trotsky "to demand the right of assembly from the Czarist government without at the same time explaining to the masses that such rights are irreconcilable with Czarism and that they presuppose a republic—the overthrow of Czarism." (From an article on "The diplomacy of Trotsky and a Platform for Loyal Party Members" in *Social Democrat,* 21. XII, 1911).

III.

Unfortunately, however, the leaders of the Communist International (CI) and the Communist Party of Germany (CPG) do not pose the problems of the illegal struggle against fascism in a Bolshevik manner. They ignore the teachings of Lenin and the experiences of the Russian Bolsheviks in their struggle against Czarism. Despite all phrases of the CI and CPG leaders about their "Bolshevik activity," it is again the CPG-Opposition which is following in the Bolsheviks' footsteps as far as the new problems of the illegal struggle against fascism in Germany are concerned. It is the CPG-O which is applying the teachings of Lenin to the German situation, while the official leadership of the CPG proposes an amateurish, opportunist program in place of serious Bolshevik work.

The false views of the CPG leadership are particularly evident in an article by F. Stark entitled "From Individual Resistance to Mass Action: Some Problems of Semi-Legal and Legal Mass Work" which appeared in No. 63 of the *Rundschau* (German Inprecor).

Numerous dangers flow from the confusion of the CPG leadership. The practical realization of the proposals made in Stark's article would not lead to the successful organization of mass activities but would jeopardize the illegal cadres of the CP and of the existing illegal trade union cadres. It would thus justify the Social Democrats in maintaining that *any and every plan* for mass activity is nothing but adventurism.

Stark's arguments are really at one with the Social Democratic view of the present conditions in Germany. The Social Democrats maintain that the illegal cadre organizations are incapable of leading mass actions. Stark's answer to this argument is not that of a Communist who would indicate the means whereby the illegal cadre organizations can fulfill this task. Stark answers that the workers in present-day Germany can organize their struggles in *a legal and semi-legal fashion and that they can create legal and semi-legal organs to lead these struggles!* He exaggerates beyond bounds the possibilities for legal and semi-legal work in Germany today, instead of showing that these possibilities will always be extremely limited as long as the fascist dictatorship lasts. Stark confuses two phenomena:

namely, the open activities of the workers making demands and the "legal" or "semi-legal" activities, that is, those which the dictatorship more or less tolerates. What must be stressed today is that workers must come out in the open, make their demands, take actions even when they are *prohibited,* even tho they are neither legal nor semi-legal. And they can do this effectively only if they are backed by the illegal cadres of the Party and the unions who organize and lead these actions thru underground work.

The main error Stark commits is that he fails to make clear that the open, non-secret activity of the workers must be preceded by careful, *preparatory* work by the illegal party organizations and the illegal trade union cadres. The latter must supervise and guide these struggles if they are to result in successful, actual mass conflicts and represent a step in the direction of a victorious proletarian revolution. Stark does speak of the necessity of "planned illegal work" which must be linked up with "legal and semi-legal work"; but his practical proposals, if realized, would make impossible any supervision of what he terms "legal or semi-legal work" thru the illegal cadres. These proposals call for the building of cadres and of assigning them such tasks as will do away with their underground character; they would cease to be illegal cadres and fall into the hands of the Gestapo. Today, mass struggles must be organized by bringing the mass of workers under the influence and leadership of the illegal cadre organizations. The proposals of Stark, if realized, would destroy the already existing pre-requisites for mass actions, rather than create new ones.

IV.

Stark considers as "legal and semi-legal" possibilities; first, the work in the Labor Front; second, the elction of delegations and commissions, "as for example, dues, wages, accident insurance or furlough commissions which delegated and supported by the workers in the factories demand the withdrawal of measures proposed by the bosses."

Let us examine Stark's proposals in detail and see how much he exaggerates the legal possibilities for work. He suggests that "class conscious workers" take over offices in the Labor Front. But in order to get into office, a class conscious worker must make a pretense at being a Nazi and must hide his true views. But who benefits from the legal possibility of gaining office in the Labor Front? The Fascist demagogues benefit by it. The fascists, not content with the brutal oppression of workers by force, seek to smash them spiritually. Once in a great while, some employer is singled out for an attack to prove that the Nazis are the "friends of labor." The fascists try above all, however, to win over whole sections of the working class thru organizations like the Labor Front in which they are given certain offices which enable them now and then to represent workers in this or that factory. But the attempt of the Nazis, to convince workers that it is possible for them to represent the interests of the workers by serving as functionaries of the Fascist organizations such as the Labor Front, must be exposed. We must make it clear that the functionaries in the Labor Front, nine times out of ten support the capitalists and the fascist state, that the winning of demands does not depend upon the negotiations carried on by the functionary but on the militancy of the workers, on their readiness to fight the employer. This militancy can be developed

only in a struggle *against the Labor Front,* thru the work of the illegal cadre organization. The Labor Front functionary is a tool of the fascist state and the employer tho he himself may not be aware of it or desire it.

Stark cites the fact that "numerous former trade unionists" are functionaries in the Labor Front today and that on the whole "these men have not become less hostile to fascism." This very fact, however, speaks against Stark and his illusions on the legal possibilities for work. These former trade unionists in fascist office today are by no means models to be followed. It may well be that they believe that they are serving the interests of the working class by getting into office and aiding the workers now and then on juridical social and labor questions. In reality, however, they are serving fascism and hurting the interests of the working class. Drawing in these former trade unionists, who have been coordinated, is the very method by which the fascists hide the corruption and spying system of the Labor Front and justify the pretense that the interests of the workers are protected by the Labor Front.

As far as these former trade unionists are concerned, it can be said that they have *practically* entered into the service of fascism, *no matter what their personal opinions may be.* They support the anti-labor policies of the fascist state and of the bosses *as a whole* for the sake of a vague possibility of aiding the workers in *isolated cases.* Workers who thus sell their birthright for a pot of porridge are not to be *praised* but to be *condemned.* The practise of placing former trade unionists who are known to be opponents of the Nazis in the Labor Front demoralizes these functionaries and confuses the working masses. Stark however, declares that the offices in the Labor Front offer a legal possibility for the representation of workers' interests and the organization of actions. He literally writes that "these offices offer great legal and semi-legal possibilities, to systematically raise the power of resistance of the workers in the Labor Front and to crystallize it into actions."

In addition, he looks upon the class trade unions which are to be rebuilt not as illegal cadre organizations which will lead independent economic struggles but as "oppositional centers in the Labor Front for the most part" in order to represent the demands *within* the Labor Front, in order to exert pressure on the functionaries of the Labor Front. The purpose of class trade unions is to lead independent economic struggles and to fight the Labor Front as an organization, to smash it, to destroy it. Of this there is no word in Stark's article!

There are in Germany today quite a few workers who are dissatisfied with fascism and wish to overthrow it. However, these workers have not yet realized the necessity of illegal warfare, of illegal organizations, of illegal mass actions. They are still dubious about the efficacy of illegal work and frightened by the sacrifices exacted by it. The reason for this attitude on the part of many workers is that they still harbor all sorts of illusions about the reform of fascism in the direction of re-establishing democratic rights for the masses, the re-establishment of the legality of workers' organizations. Social Democracy, thru its policies, supports these illusions. The leadership of the CPG which ought to fight these illusions has adopted Social Democratic, reformist views on this question. The assertions of Stark on the Labor Front, the fact that the CC of the

CPG in numerous documents has advanced the slogan of freedom of assembly, without showing, as Lenin has taught us, that the right of assembly cannot be won except thru the overthrow of fascism—all this fosters the illusions of the possibility of a "democratization" of the fascist regime and benefits the Social Democracy and its policy of passivity towards fascism.

V.

On the other hand, Stark shows a complete lack of understanding of the role of the illegal cadre organizations and their methods of work.

This is proven by his proposals for legal and semi-legal work. He demands that membership meetings take place in the Labor Front, that at these meetings problems be raised, that workers demand free discussion and that proposals be introduced. This is correct but only under one condition which Stark fails to mention. Such legal actions in the Labor Front must be prepared for and directed by the illegal cadre organizations in a careful manner in order not to result merely in exposing the anti-fascist workers who participate in such "legal actions."

Stark, furthermore, demands the election of delegations to present the demands of the workers before the fascist authorities and the masses as a legal or semi-legal weapon. Such action of the workers, tho "official," is not secret and certainly not legal under the present fascist dictatorship. Secondly, in order to organize successfully such activities, careful, underground preparatory work of illegal organizations is necessary.

The fact that German workers do not yet fight despite their dissatisfaction with fascism, despite their deep hatred of its bloody dictatorship—this passivity can be overcome only by re-establishing the consciousness of their collective power, their power as a class, by removing their feeling of mistrust, caused by Fascist terror and spying, and their feeling of impotence. This can be accomplished only if the workers know that they are backed by good, serious illegal cadre organizations with practical instructions based on a thoro knowledge of the possibilities for action and knowing how to prepare and direct the carrying out of these instructions so that maximum success is insured with the least possible number of victims.

We have already cited the words of Lenin that all legal, semi-legal and other activity must be conducted under the direction and supervision of the illegal cadre organizations. But what is Stark's stand on this question?

Let us quote:

"Class conscious workers must wage a struggle for the placing of revolutionary workers into office. A woman comrade from Central Germany tells what results can be achieved by this:

'The Nazis asked me repeatedly to take the job of cashier in the Labor Front. All the comrades were opposed to this because it was a disgrace in their opinion to take over an office in a fascist organization. After much thinking I decided to take the job and what is the result, I come into regular contact with 60 members of the Labor Front and their families, I talk to them and thus become acquainted with their sentiments and their attitude. I am thus given the chance to influence them in a revolutionary sense step by step. I have succeeded in regularly selling the *Rote Fahne* and other revolutionary literature. All this is pretty 'legal' because when I cross

the street with my big bag everybody knows, including the Nazis, that I am the cashier of the Labor Front and they don't suspect me at all.'

'Why don't all revolutionary workers take over such offices which lie practically on the street and utilize them in a revolutionary sense?' Yes, we too say: the mass of lower functionaries in the Labor Front ought to be won for the struggle of the workers. Yes, the class conscious workers must fight hard for these offices."

These statements prove that Stark has not even grasped the ABC of the role and methods of work of illegal organizations. The comrade whose letter he cites took a position in the fascist trade union *against the will* of the local comrades, of the local organization of the CPG. Yet Stark, a leader of the CPG, not only praises her for this but puts her up as a model! Such an attitude is not worthy of revolutionary *leadership;* it cannot but have a *demoralizing* effect.

Our contention is that the Labor Front, which is a fascist organization and an organ of the Fascist state, *cannot* be won over but must be *destroyed.* It is the sole task of the Communists to prove to the workers that the Labor Front must be smashed and that they, the workers, must build their *own* fighting organs. The *practice* of taking office in the Labor Front must be denounced. As a general rule, *no* class conscious worker must be permitted to hold such office. Only in *exceptional cases and only under special orders* from the illegal organizations of the Party and the unions should revolutionary workers take over office and then only for the purpose of destroying the Labor Front. They must work under the constant *supervision* of illegal organizations. It is not their task to create and strengthen illusions about the possibility of utilizing the Labor Front as a means of the class struggle, but rather to *discredit* the Labor Front in the eyes of the workers, to expose the demagogy of the fascists. For example, they should bring to light the contradiction between the promises of the Nazis and their real policies by sabotaging the measures of the Nazis and of the bosses as much as possible and by supporting the actions of the illegal organizations of the Party and the trade unions. The work of destroying the Labor Front can, by its very nature, only supplement the work of the illegal cadre organizations; it can *never* replace it and will bear fruit only *if linked up with and subordinated to this activity.*

Stark asks *"all* class-conscious workers" to seek offices in the Labor Front. Therefore, it is absolutely impossible for the leaders of the CPG who issue this general appeal to the workers, to direct and supervise them thru illegal organizations no matter how hard they may try. Stark himself underscores this by praising a worker who took office *against* the will of the local illegal organization.

The CPG virtually admits its inability to cope with the problems of the underground organization of mass actions when it appeals to the German workers in the following manner: "Become functionaries in the Labor Front, try to organize legal or semi-legal struggles there, you have our blessings." Nowhere in his discussion of the "legal and semi-legal" possibilities for work, does Stark mention that *this work must be systematically prepared and directed by the illegal cadres,* that the members of the legal organizations must be subject to supervision—not on paper but to effective supervision based on *detailed instructions* from the illegal organization.

This attitude of the CPG if carried into practice, is tantamount to a policy of refusing to lead workers but of relying on spontaneous activity and sowing dangerous illusions about the fascist Labor Front and its functionaries.

(*To be concluded in the next issue*)

Sanctions and the Proletariat

Statement of the Communist Party (Opposition)

THE FOLLOWING resolution on the attitude of the proletariat to sanctions, represents the official position of the C.P.O.

* * *

1. The bankruptcy of the League of Nations as an instrument of peace has again been revealed in the Italo-Ethiopian situation. The conflict of interest among the imperialist powers dominating the League (England, France) has not only rendered it incapable of stopping the war in Africa but has even prevented it from making any serious efforts in that direction. The true nature of the League of Nations was further disclosed with brutal clarity in the notorious and ultimately discarded Hoare-Laval proposals for the partition of Ethiopia.

2. *British imperialism* is much disturbed over the Italian challenge in Africa and the Mediterranean as well as by the Italian threat to the Red Sea route to India. It is, furthermore, greatly concerned over the effects on the colonial peoples of the world of a long-drawn out Italo-Ethiopian war, especially should the African power make a good showing in holding off its imperialist aggressor. While posing as the friend of Ethiopia in the present crisis, England is actually striving to reduce Ethiopia to a state of dependence and subjection to itself.

3. *French imperialism* has tended to favor the Italian offensive in Ethiopia on several grounds—because it diverted Italy from the Balkans where it had begun to compete with France; because it enables France virtually to strip Italy's frontier of troops, since Rome is preoccupied in Africa; because it forces Italy, in exchange for a free hand from France, to continue as guarantor of Austrian independence against Hitler. This was the basis of the Franco-Italian understanding of January 1935. This, too, is the basis of the conflict between British and French imperialist interests in the present Ethiopian situation. At the same time, for considerations of continental politics primarily, France has been forced into some sort of support of Great Britain, altho with the greatest difficulty.

4. *Italian imperialism* makes no pretence at all about its aims. Mussolini frankly admits that he is doing, rather late, what the other imperialist powers have done before him. The invasion of Ethiopia is a plain and undisguised attack upon that country in the interests of the Italian imperialists, an attack with the avowed objective of the economic and political enslavement of the Ethiopian people to the Italian imperialist bourgeoisie.

5. In the Ethiopian situation, the *Soviet Union* continues its peace

policy on the premise that world peace is indivisible. The objective of Soviet foreign policy has been to prevent or end the war, to insure peace, thru collective action. The U.S.S.R. explicitly and categorically rejects all of the imperialist aims of all of the imperialist powers in regard to Ethiopia. In the League council, Litvinoff's voice has been raised effectively against the whole imperialist system of mandates and colonial partition. In pursuance of this policy, the Soviet Union has sought to further collective action for peace, which is indivisible. It has therefore sought to have the League of Nations take definite steps against Italy as the aggressor, with a view towards establishing a precedent for taking similar action against aggressors in the future (Germany, Japan). It has striven consistently to force the League to invoke rigorous and collective sanctions in general and oil sanctions in particular against Italy.

6. From the very outset the *Socialist International* and the Amsterdam trade union International adopted a policy of utter faith and reliance on the League of Nations as the instrument of peace and the savior of Ethiopia. All of their efforts have been concentrated upon pleading with the League to take some sort of action. At the beginning, the *Comintern* position was essentially similar, particularly on the question of sanctions. In their anxiety to give all possible support to the Soviet policy, the various sections of the CI confused their tactics of diplomacy necessarily pursued by the Soviet government and, as a consequence, tended to ignore independent working class action altogether. Only lately has the CI begun to correct these grave errors, as is indicated in the remarks of Manuilsky in his report to a Leningrad Party meeting: "Such a measure as the closing of the Suez Canal demanded by the Second and the Amsterdam Internationals, follows the line of the interests of British imperialism, which is displaying a very suspicious love for the 'independence' of Ethiopia. But the Communists have no desire to drag at the tail of the policy of Italian Fascism, nor to be in tow to British imperialism. Will it not be better, therefore, if the Communists transfer the main weight of their activity to the independent action of the masses under the slogan of 'not a single train, not a single ship, for the support of the Italian war in Ethiopia', without, of course, refusing to exert pressure on the League of Nations as a subordinate means of struggle." (Communist International, Nos. 21-22). Kuusinen was compelled to be a little self-critical when he said: "It is difficult for workers to see any basic differences between the points of view of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties on the question of sanctions and on the role of the League of Nations. This shows how little our comrades have succeeded in distinguishing themselves from the Social Democrats on this question, and this is utilized by the followers of Kilboom who comes out with Trotskyite arguments against sanctions in general." (Communist International, January 1936.) Kuusinen didn't indicate who is responsible for this position of the various Comintern sections.

7. Following a policy essentially similar to that of the Second International, the *British Labor Party* has gotten itself in a position where, despite its aims and intentions, it is virtually supporting and taking responsibility for the Tory foreign policy of the Baldwin government. No independent working class action has ever been contemplated or initiated.

The danger of making the League of Nations into the working class instrument of peace and the pivot of proletarian policy in world politics, was clearly evidenced in the recent British elections.

8. The policy of the *Independent Labor Party* in the Ethiopian crisis has been largely one of negative radicalism, pacifist to a large degree. This attitude it has covered with a cloud of fine-sounding revolutionary abstractions which gain force only in contrast to the opportunism of the Labor Party and the official communist movement.

9. In the *various communist parties,* directly or indirectly concerned in the situation, the vast confusion created by the false position of the CI has become evident. Like the American Communist Party, the British Communist Party threw itself full force into agitation on behalf of sanctions thru the League of Nations as the instrument of world peace, but the British party added a correct demand for the surrender of all British mandates. In Italy the "People's Front" strategy has been injected by raising demand for parliamentary democracy as the road to peace and salvation.

10. That as a matter of principle, the working class movement, and the revolutionary movement in particular, may make demands upon the various bourgeois governments in the realm of foreign policy as well as domestic, can hardly be doubted. (Compare the historical slogans of "Hands off China!" and "For the recognition of the Soviet Union!") The mere raising of a demand in either case does not necessarily entail any obligation upon labor to support the government. It depends on the nature and character of the demand raised. In order to serve the purposes of labor, its demands upon the government must be such as will: (a) advance the interests of the toiling masses in the particular situation; (b) expose the predatory interests of the imperialist powers; and (c) weaken and undermine the position of imperialism. The sanctions policy of the L.S.I. and the C.I. is false and dangerous not simply because it invokes making demands upon the various governments but because the demands made are of such character and form that, instead of exposing the predatory interests of the imperialist powers, they tend to nourish popular faith in the desire or interest of these powers in effecting peace or in protecting colonial peoples against aggression.

11. The policy of the working class movement in international politics must be *active* and *independent* and must be basically conditioned by two fundamental factors: (a) the existence of a proletarian state (U.S.S.R.) and the necessity of supporting its diplomatic course, which is itself grounded in the interests of world proletariat; and (b) the necessity of utilizing every international complication, entanglement and difficulty in which the various imperialist powers may find themselves for the purpose of advancing the organization and influence of the labor movement in these countries.

12. The fundamental tasks of the working class movement in the Italo-Ethiopian situation are: (a) to compel Italian fascism to get out of Ethiopia as completely and as quickly as possible; (b) to defend the Ethiopian people against the open attacks and hidden maneuvers of all imperialist powers, of Great Britain and France as well as of Italy; (c) to make every effort to prevent the development of a world war out of the

present war in Africa; (d) to utilize the defeat of Italian imperialism in Africa for the purpose of hastening the downfall of fascism and the victory of the proletarian revolution in Italy; (e) to utilize the struggle of the Ethiopian people for the purpose of inspiring and advancing the revolt of the colonial peoples in Africa and Asia against imperialist domination; (f) to utilize the international crisis for the purpose of advancing the class war against "our own" imperialist government in every instance.

13. The fulfilment of these tasks is, primarily and in the first place, a matter of effective *independent* working class action on an international scale. All forces of labor must unite to prevent, by means of strikes and similar measures, the manufacture and transportation of all war materials to Italy and the granting of all financial aid and credits to Mussolini. Public opinion must be mobilized for these ends as well as for blocking the avenues for transporting Italian troops and an extensive boycott of Italian products, which is all the more necessary because of the widespread official sabotage of the financial and economic sanctions ordered by the League against Italy. Equally important are strong moral and material support for the anti-fascist forces within Italy, the establishment of fraternal relations with Italian immigrants and refugees in the various countries and the most vigorous efforts to counteract all nationalistic propaganda against the Italian people as such.

14. For the labor movement it is also of vital importance to render vigorous support to the policies and activities of the Soviet Union in the present international crisis. The efforts of the Soviet Union to obtain prompt collective action on oil sanctions and to commit the League of Nations to decisive collective action against the aggressor in case of an attack in Europe (Germany) or in Asia (Japan), must receive the wholehearted backing of all anti-fascist, anti-war and anti-imperialist elements everywhere. But under no circumstances should this be interpreted to mean that working class strategy in the capitalist world must be mechanically modeled along the lines of Soviet diplomacy. The two have a common aim and purpose, for the interests of the proletariat are one internationally; but they carry on their fight on altogether different planes, with altogether different methods, in altogether different forms!

15. The working class in any country cannot, directly or indirectly, associate itself with the politics or aims of any of the imperialist powers or combinations of such powers in the present Ethiopian situation. Yet, in particular circumstances, it may be necessary and possible in the interest of the anti-imperialist aims of the working class, to raise demands for governmental action in the crisis. In England, for example, where the problem of sanctions is of such immediate concern, the line of the Labor Party in the recent election campaign should have been to point out that sanctions, as carried out by the Tory government, were essentially an instrument of British imperialist policy and to emphasize that only a Labor government could advocate and apply sanctions in a manner that would truly advance the cause of peace and Ethiopian independence because only a Labor government could or would couple sanctions with a general anti-imperialist program that would remove all possibility of such sanctions remaining an instrument of British imperialism. Such an anti-imperialist program would include: self-determination for all British colonies; the surrender of all

British mandates; the arming of the colonial peoples in Africa; the annulment of all treaties protecting British imperialist interests abroad and providing for the partition of colonial regions, especially Ethiopia (e.g., the treaties of 1896 and 1906); the withdrawal of all government protection of British investments abroad; etc., etc. If such a program is initiated, then it is clear that the Labor government's advocacy of sanctions against Italy could not possibly have an imperialist content. In this way the two false extremes—one of pseudo-revolutionary rejection of sanctions, altogether, and the other of opportunist support of the Tory government in sanctions, are avoided and a realistic Marxist policy achieved.

16. In France, the above line is applicable with even greater force, for in France official circles are very lukewarm to any League action against Italy. In this country any labor or even coalition labor-radical bourgeois government will have to embody an anti-imperialist sanctions course, as outlined above, in its program.

17. It is important to emphasize that this program of sanctions on an anti-imperialist basis must be considered as an entity, as an entire whole. The validity of the advocacy of sanctions depends entirely upon the simultaneous advocacy of the *anti-imperialist program*. Without such a program, sanctions would retain their imperialist character and certainly could not meet with any countenance from the labor movement.

18. Except in this form, as support of sanctions *on an anti-imperialist basis* by a labor government, sponsorship or advocacy of governmental sanctions would not advance but retard the interests of the working class in the present international situation, for objectively it would come to serve the aims of the pro-sanctionist-imperialist combination, as the Comintern now recognizes in critcising its original position (see remarks of Manuilsky and Kuusinen, quoted above). This, of course, does not preclude the possibility of raising—for the sake of exposing the imperialist character of bourgeois foreign policy—demands on the government, provided they are made an organic whole of an anti-imperialist program. The concrete demands we put to the government depend on the specific situation in each country. But in every case, the demands we make on a bourgeois government must be of a nature to expose its imperialist character and to advance the interests of the working class and colonial peoples, particularly those engaged in war at the moment. We demand of and dare the imperialist government to comply with our demands (including sanctions); its failure to do so or its sabotage of such demands only serves to reveal its imperialist aims and interests.

19. In all of its activities, the working class movement must beware, on the one hand, of chauvinism tricked out in an "idealistic" garb (Anthony Eden's "devotion" to peace and the League of Nations), and, on the other, of the mystical pacifism of the Lansbury variety, which, despite the best of intentions, can lead only to sterility or, even worse, to virtual advocacy of the claims of the "hungry" fascist and semi-fascist powers to a more adequate share of the loot of imperialism (see Lansbury's proposal of a world conference to bring about a "more equable distribution" of the world's resources). Only Marxism, realistic and revolutionary at the same time, can guide the policies and activities of the international working class in a situation of such immense difficulty and complexity.

Lenin or Luxemburg?

By BERN BRANDON

IN THE APRIL ISSUE of *Controversy,* discussion organ of the Independent Labour Party of Great Britain, Jon Kimche in a contribution termed "Approach to a Programme" raises a number of questions in regard to Imperialism which are of significance to the international labor movement. First and perhaps foremost, they are significant of the intellectual ferment in the ranks of the I.L.P. today, indications of the slow, halting, and as yet feeble steps being made by a hitherto hard-headed and "practical" section of the British Labor Movement to achieve theoretical clarity. Nor is this new life peculiar to Britain. It is an international development that the Communist movement can ignore only on pain of revolutionary isolation and, ultimately—if the German experience means anything, something infinitely worse—non-revolutionary death. Secondly, the questions illustrate once again the inability to understand Imperialism except in terms of Marxism-Leninism. The author of "Approach to a Programme," whose familiarity with Lenin's theory of Imperialism is based solely on the Berne Resolution of 1915, would retire it to the museum of revolutionary antiquities in exchange for the theory of Luxemburg, a forgotten skeleton into which he tries to breathe flesh, life, and blood and perform the magic of a resurrection. It would be an unfair exchange that would simply pile practical error upon theoretical confusion and diserve the revolution we are both dedicated to serve.

Let us look to Kimche's argument. He contends that the conditions of the present epoch are largely other than those of the 1900-1925 period (the exact significance of 1925 he nowhere explains—B.B.) and therefore our tasks, methods, and policy, arising from the different conditions, must also be different. Lenin, he continues, made the classical analysis of the period that gave rise to the World War in the Berne Resolution of 1915. (Marxists have always believed that his classical analysis appeared in the work on *Imperialism*—B.B.) This was the epoch, according to the resolution, "in which capitalism attained the highest stage of its development; in which the greatest importance is assumed not only by the export of goods, but also by the export of capital; in which the organization of production by cartels and the internationalization of economic life revealed serious proportions; in which the colonial policy brought about the partition of nearly the whole of the globe, in which the productive forces of world capitalism have outgrown the restrictive framework of the national state divisions; in which the objective conditions for the realization of Socialism have become fully ripe."

Now, asks Comrade Kimche,

"1. Can we still speak of capitalism in that imperialist period in which it attains the *highest* (my emphasis—B.B.) development, which is the eve of social revolution" when "Marxists have time and again demonstrated the downward trend, the decline, the decay of capitalism . . . for twenty years . . . from its highest point"? If Lenin analyzed "the *highest* stage," then "the nature of the present period which is marked by the *declining* stage must be different.

"2. First in order Lenin places the export of goods and the export of capital. Yet between 1913 and 1925 British exports declined by 21% and 51% (Again I call attention to the artificiality of the 1900-1925 epoch of the writer; why 1925 as the start of the new epoch instead of 1913?—B.B.). Since then these figures have declined still more, the export of capital almost to zero. The importance of the export of goods or capital is therefore no longer a major characteristic of the present period."

"3. Recent years have witnessed the gradual breaking up and dissolution of cartels. "In place of organized(!) international production we now experience production controlled and assisted by the capitalist state nationally and sometimes (!) imperially."

4. Although "Lenin speaks of the partition of the whole world, yet during that period it was possible for Germany and Japan to wax fat on exports to the British Empire, while Great Britain in its turn could reap the profits of the American market. This, too, has now ceased. Again it is the state that has stepped in to preserve the territories under its control for the privileged exploitation of its own national capitalists."

Conclusion: "These four main issues very briefly demonstrate the transformation that has taken place in world capitalism since Lenin made his analysis. . . . Lenin proceeded from his analysis to the conclusion that 'the real essence of the present (1914-1918) war is the struggle between Britain, France, and Germany for the distribution of the colonies and for the plunder of the competing countries' . . . It is clear (!) to us that today in 1935 this is not the essence of the world situation."

And all this—and more later on—from one who says that "The Marxist analysis is an inestimable guide to action." His is a labor of love in which Jon Kimche, a real artist, loves a lifeless formula to an even deeper death.

Let us examine his arguments one by one. Can we still speak of capitalism in that imperialist period in which it attains the *highest* development, when Marxists have demonstrated its *downward* trend, its decay and decline from the highest point of twenty years ago? We certainly can. Are these not contradictories which mutually exclude each other? Absolutely not. Why? Because when Lenin said that capitalism had reached its *highest* stage in Imperialism he was not speaking the language of a Shylock, who knows that 3% is higher than 2% and 6% is the *highest* rate he can legally charge. Lenin was using the language of the Marxian economist and revolutionist who understood the progressive development of capitalism through its manifold stages, from merchant capitalism with its mercantilism, to industrial capitalism with its laissez-faire, and ultimately to finance capitalism with its imperialism, the last, final, and highest stage of capitalism, because with it ends the historically progressive mission of capitalism, i.e., the socialization of production; with it begins its decay and decline, and beyond it lies the new world of hopes fulfilled, of promises made fact—socialism. It is the final and highest stage of capitalism because the contradictory tendencies that were latent in its very inception, contradictions that make capitalism a nightmare of opposites,

and which become visible, grow, and assume new and more violent forms as the system itself expands—the progressive accumulation of capital at one pole corresponding with the progressive accumulation of misery at the opposite pole, the progressive socialization of production with the progressive socialization of poverty, the higher productivity of labor with the increased exploitation of labor, the increasing tyranny of dead labor with the increasing slavery of living labor, the growth of a leisure class that eats without working with the growth of a working class that works without eating, the absolute growth in the magnitude of constant capital with the relative decline in the magnitude of variable capital, a falling rate of profit with an increased mass of profits, the growth of more violent competition with the growth of monopoly, the dominion of industry with the destruction of agriculture, the growing internationalization of economic life through world *imperium* with the growing self-sufficiency of the national state, and so on—these ever more insane, ever more anti-social, and ever more opposite-pulling tendencies in which the process of accumulation asserts itself, are transformed in the epoch of imperialism into a boomerang which pierces the very heart of the system it was intended to serve and brings decay and death to the mother that gave it life.[1] To be sure, death does not lay its hand on every land at the same time. Nor does this tendency to decline preclude a growth of certain branches of industry, of certain strata of the bourgeoisie, of certain individual countries,[2] There is no magic formula that can be indiscriminately applied to effect the desired results. Capitalism remains just as complex in death as in life. But the never-to-be-forgotten essential is that capitalism in life and in death presents no mystery.

Its uneven progress in growth and decay, which Lenin termed the law of uneven development, can be measured, explained, and predicted by using the Marxist method as an instrument, a social scalpel, in dissecting the specific features and peculiarities in the development of class relations within and between the different national economics. Thus, the decline of British capitalism since 1914 was paralleled by the extraordinary upsurge in the United States, which culminated in the so-called "Golden Age." Or to put the process of growth and decay in terms of Marxian economics: a capitalist power is in growth when the rise in the mass of profits is more than sufficient to counteract the fall in the rate of profit, when it is able to overcome its periodic crises with renewed accumulation of capital, i.e., realized surplus value or profit, that carries the system to power and higher levels of capitalist accumulation; a capitalist power is in decline when the rise in the mass of profits is insufficient to counteract the fall in the rate of profit, when capitalist accumulation after each periodic crisis—the cyclical crisis still exists but in a sharper, more aggravated form—proceeds on a lower level, relatively and absolutely. This is the Marxian key to the secret of capitalist growth and decline, which no vague, purely empirical conclusion—such as Kimche's reference to the significance of 1900-1925—can illuminate or disclose. And the thing to be remembered, Comrade Kimche, is that this tendency to decay and decline appears for *all* capitalist countries in the epoch of imperialism, the last, final, and highest stage of capitalism, and as Lenin added, "dying capitalism."

And now to the second point. Can we still be, as Lenin put it, in the highest stage of capitalist development, i.e., imperialism, when the export of goods and capital suffered such a tremendous decline in England after 1914 and in the United States after 1929? And Kimche concludes, "The importance of the export of goods or capital is . . . no longer a major characteristic of the present period."[3] Again it is obvious that Comrade Kimche speaks only the language of Shylock. There is no denying the decline in the export of goods and capital since 1929. But hasn't every major depression, even in the upswing of capitalism, resulted in a decline of capital exports and goods? Could you say that capitalism was in decline every time exports of goods and capital fell below a previous high? And if a partial recovery takes place now with an increase in capital exports would you say that the decline of capitalism had been stemmed and we were now in a period of upsurge? These questions illustrate how utterly fantastic any explanation of the growth or decline of Capitalism must be which substitutes a dollar and cents explanation for an analysis of the inherent tendencies of capitalist accumulation in terms of its contradictions, antagonisms, and class expressions. Lenin said, "If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of Imperialism, we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism."[4] Any explanation that identifies exports of goods and capital with the stage of capitalism that gives them their peculiar significance, cannot distinguish the limbs of a tree from the tree itself. All things look alike to those who have no eyes.

But matters are still worse for Comrade Kimche and his explanation. Admitting that there has been a decline in the export of capital and goods (which, in turn, usually takes the form of capital), is it true that "The importance of the export of goods or capital is . . . no longer a major characteristic of the present period"? Just the opposite. It is precisely because the fields for profitable investment become increasingly narrower in the national and international field while enormous surpluses of capital lie fallow in the banks, seeking investment somewhere, somehow, that the imperialist powers strain every economic and political nerve to create autarchy for themselves, economic and political vassalage for their possessions, and sterilize unto impotence the competing imperialist capitals in

1 Comrade Kimche complains—in bold type—that *"The R.P.C. and the Trotskyists get us nowhere by pointing to the 'inherent contradictions of capitalism,' if they cannot demonstrate these contradictions and how they actually work."* Quite so. My advice to Kimche is simple: "When everybody else fails you, try Marx." Yes, Marx wrote three volumes demonstrating that "capitalism is a unity of opposites." A distilled summary of the contradictions—unintelligible, of course, unless you are familiar with Volume I and parts of Volume II—appears in Volume III of *Capital*, pp. 282-313. I am certain you will find, to quote your own words, Comrade Kimche, that "The Marxist analysis is an inestimable guide to action"—and if you will permit a slight addition—and understanding.

2 See Lenin's *Imperialism*, p. 112.

3 Lenin never gave equal importance to export of capital and export of goods. He gives as one of the essential characteristics of Imperialism "The export of capital, as distinguished from the export of commodities." *Imperialism*, p. 57 and p. 81.

4 *Imperialism*, p. 80.

the remaining world markets. Peace pacts and war pacts, open doors and closed doors, open diplomacy and secret diplomacy, sleek suavity and the big stick, trade agreements and trade wars, tariffs, quotas, embargoes, subsidies, currency wars, bribery, armies, navies, and war—all of these in turn are dedicated at varying times and in varying situations to the service of the ideal of finance capital—"a self-sufficient national state, and an economic unit limitlessly expanding its great power until it becomes a world kingdom—a world-wide empire. . . . "[5] Another point. It is precisely when new loans begin to fall off, when nations and peoples find it impossible to pay old debts by contracting new debts, that the tyrannical chain of gold to which they have been bound weighs heaviest on them. As Schulze-Gaevernitz once said, "The creditor is more firmly tied to the debtor than the seller is to the buyer." A study made by Simon Kuznets for the National Bureau of Economic Research confirms the persistence with which debt-capital was protected during the deflation of everything else. Between 1929 and 1932, whereas wages dropped 60% and salaries 40%, interest dropped a mere 3%.[6] Lewis Corey's study is even more instructive. In England, the income received from investments has become more important than the net gains from foreign trade. According to the Board of Trade, the British income from foreign investments in 1933 was £35 million. In 1930, the income from foreign investments was greater than the profits from foreign trade, nearly $1,000 million compared with $730 million.[7] Thus, the tyranny of finance capital is never so despotic as when new loans fall off and old debts are most pressing.

This leads up to the third point of the critique of Lenin. Lenin, Comrade Kimche would have us believe, predicted the development of capitalism as a result of cartelization along the lines of "organized international production." And now as a result of "the gradual breaking up and the dissolution of . . . cartels . . . we now experience production controlled and assisted by the capitalist state nationally and sometimes (!) imperially." Let us see what Lenin had to say in regard to the absurdity which Kimche attributes to him. "Certain bourgeois writers . . . expressed the opinion that international cartels are one of the most striking expressions of the internationalization of capital and therefore offer a possible hope of peace among nations under capitalism. In theory this opinion is absolutely absurd, while in practice it is a sophism and a dishonest defense of the worst opportunism. International cartels show to what point capitalist monopolies have now grown up and the *wherefore* of the struggle between the capitalist groups. This last circumstance is the most important; it alone explains to us the historical-economic significance of events; for the *forms* of the struggle may and do change in accordance with various, relatively individual, and transitory causes, but the *essence* of the struggle, in its class *content,* simply *cannot* change while classes exist. . . . The capitalists partition the world, not out of personal malice, but because the degree of concentration which has been reached forces them to adopt this method in order to get profits. And they partition it 'in proportion to capital', 'in proportion to strength', for there

5 *Imperialism and World Economy,* Bukharin, N. p. 109.
6 *The Coming American Revolution,* Soule, G. p. 175.
7 *The Decline of American Capitalism,* Corey, L. p. 448.

cannot be any other method of division under the system of commodity production and capitalism. But strength varies with the degree of economic and political development. . . . To substitute for the question of the *content* of the struggle and agreements between capitalist combines, the question of the *form* of the struggle and the agreements (today peaceful, to-morrow not peaceful, the next day again not peaceful), is to descend to sophistry."[8] It is all too easy to mistake the shadow for the substance, the form for the content. This Lenin understood, and warned against. The abstract economic possibility of international cartelization by no means signifies its actual probability. At the most it represents an extremely unstable equilibrium of competing capitalist combines based on the economic division of the world in order to eliminate or modify competition, allot sales quotas or trade areas, fix prices or limit production—any or all of these may be accomplished. Such an international agreement no more signifies the elimination of a conflict of interests between the individual enterprises belonging to the cartel, than does a trade agreement, stabilization of currencies, or armaments limitation pacts between nations. Monopolist cartels only relatively and temporarily suppress competition, the equilibrium being most stable when prosperity is general and profits are high. The moment, however, profits decline competition breaks out savagely and international agreements become mere scraps of paper. We ask, with Lenin, "is it 'conceivable', assuming that the capitalist system remains intact . . . that such alliances would not be short-lived, that they would preclude friction, conflicts and struggle in any and every possible form?"[9]

And now for Comrade Kimche's last stricture. He does not agree with Lenin that in the epoch of Imperialism "colonial policy has brought about the partition of nearly the whole of the globe," an epoch "in which the productive forces of world capitalism have outgrown the restrictive framework of the national state divisions" and "in which the objective conditions for the realization of Socialism have become fully ripe." Literal-minded Englishman that he is, he believes there is a contradiction between "partition of the whole globe" (Lenin says *"nearly* the whole of the globe") and the fact that "during that period it was possible for Germany and Japan to wax fat on exports to the British Empire, while Great Britain in its turn could reap the profits of the American market. . . . Capitalism following the law of least resistance and attracted by the largest profits expands, and develops the colonial countries, until the stage is reached when colonial profits shrink, when the colonies, due to their own development and to the rise of national and revolutionary movements, are no longer willing fields of exploitation. Again capitalism, following the least line of resistance, falls back on its own home market by driving out—with the assistance of the state machine—its competitors and thus creates there a privileged preserve for intensified exploitation. At home, however, the saturation point is quickly reached, and now the big imperialist powers turn to their not yet fully developed territories and there repeat the process of driving out competition and of intensifying exploitation." And this, according to Comrade Kimche, is "Imperialism in motion." It bears a

8 *Imperialism,* Lenin, pp. 68-69.
9 *Imperialism,* Lenin, pp. 107-198.

far closer resemblance to the Mexican jumping bean. What Kimche fails to recognize is that Imperialism is neither a choice nor a policy, to be adopted freely and abandoned equally as freely as circumstances seem to require. On the contrary, it is a definite stage of capitalism, of which the characteristic *economic* features are: saturation of domestic market in terms of capital and goods; excess productive capacity especially of the "heavy" and mass production industries; surplus capital, resulting in excess plant capacity, aggravated competition, and a relative decline in profits; the growth of monopoly, struggling aggressively for foreign markets because of the constant threat of excess capacity and excess capital; the dictatorship of finance capital which dominates both the monopolist combines and the monopolist banks.[10] This is the economic bed-rock from which an analysis of Imperialism must stem. Only on this foundation does Imperialism resolve its inner and outer tendencies, autarchy and outward expansion, as reciprocal and mutually interacting manifestations of a common underlying economic necessity. And only from this point of view can we understand why monopolistic tendencies within the national body have called forth tendencies to monopolise territories outside the home state, why world relations have been developed to a maximum while tariff barriers have been erected between each nation and the world, why capital has been exported while a cry goes up over foreign supremacy, why economic life has been internationalized while a savage effort is made to bottle it up within national boundaries. Yes, Comrade Kimche, "the Marxist analysis is an inestimable guide to action; it shows what must be done and why."

But contrariwise, the Marxist analysis shows what must not be done and why. And this brings us to Kimche's "alternative" to Lenin—the theories of Rosa Luxemburg. Now there is little purpose and less need to reanalyze the thesis of Luxemburg. Bukharin's classic analysis of her theories in *Der Imperialismus und Die Akkumulation Des Kapitals* still remains a high water-mark in Marxist criticism. But in partial extenuation of Rosa Luxemburg it must in all fairness be conceded that she is solely responsible neither for some of her critics nor for her own progeny, whose ignorance of her theories is often as profound as their ignorance of Marx. Comrade Kimche is especially in point. He offers a brief and shallow sketch of her theory of accumulation, in no place presenting her definition of imperialism, and concludes with "We can now see Imperialism in motion" by elaborating the mechanics of his double-play, Imperialism to Nationalism to Imperialism, a non-sequitur which is as foreign and remote to the logic of Luxemburg as it is to Marx.

Now there is a logic to the Luxemburg thesis. But her whole structure falls because it is predicated on a false premise, her theory of accumulation. Instead of recognizing that the process of accumulation asserts itself in the reproduction of the capitalist-worker relation on an ever higher scale with its accompaniment of an ever increasing production of commodities—a conception that *identifies* accumulation with the whole extension of capitalist production—Luxemburg isolates one momentary and transi-

10 *Monopolistic Capitalism and Imperialism,* Corey, L. Modern Quarterly, Summer 1932, pp. 84-93.

tory phase of this incompleted process, the realization of the value of commodities through their sale, and *identifies* the accumulation of the *money-form* of commodities with the whole cycle of production and reproduction, i.e., accumulation. From this major premise, the root of all evil, her corollaries follow with inexorable logic. Since, according to Luxemburg, the process of accumulation is a process of accumulating *money,* it is clear that neither the workers nor the capitalists can be the source of accumulation: the former, because they are unable to purchase that share of the goods which represents surplus value, the share for which they receive no payment; the latter because they would merely be transferring money from one pocket of their class to another pocket without accumulating one cent of additional capital. Therefore, accumulation can proceed only as a result of dealing with "third persons," the "non-capitalist world milieu." And this constitutes Imperialism. Or, as Luxemburg put it, "Imperialism is the political expression of the process of capital-accumulation in its competitive struggle for the rest of the yet unpossessed non-capitalist World-milieu."[11]

With no claim to originality, let me indicate some of the errors and absurdities of this definition, none of which are accidental or capricious but which are ultimately connected with her faulty theory of accumulation. First, a struggle on the part of Capital for the "rest" of the non-capitalist world is nothing new, existing in the sixteenth as well as in the twentieth century. Is Imperialism synonymous with Capitalism in all its stages? Second, it follows from the above definition that a struggle for an area that is already a part of world capitalism is not imperialism, i.e., Alsace-Lorraine, the Saar. Third, it follows from the definition that a struggle for an area already possessed by some capitalist power, i.e., most of Africa to give just one example, does not constitute imperialism. Finally, the whole definition suffers from the fatal defect that it in no place takes into consideration the historically concrete and peculiar features of Imperialism as an expression of Finance Capitalism, Merchant Capitalism with its Mercantilism, Industrial Capitalism with its Liberalism, Finance Capitalism with its Imperialism—all these phases in the development of Capitalism are hidden or loosely tied together in the highly abstract and general conception of "Capitalism as such." Yet, how else can the "political expression" of Capitalism be grasped unless it is based on an understanding of the specific class-economic features of this Capitalism? Is not politics in the final analysis nothing but a means to the extension of a given system of production-relations?[12]

No theory is sound which cannot withstand the ravages of revolutionary criticism. Do any of Comrade Kimche's views satisfy this elementary requirement? There is an indissoluble connection between sound theory and effective revolutionary action, fallacious theory and ineffective action. Has the time come for the proletariat to sacrifice Leninism on the altar of the accumulated crudities amassed by Comrade Kimche? But

11 *Die Akkumulation des Kapitals,* Luxemburg, R. p. 361. "Der Imperialismus ist der politische Ausdruck des Prozesses der Kapital-akkumulation in ihrem Konkurrenzkampf um die Reste des noch nicht mit beschlag belegten nichtkapitalistischen Weltmilieus."

12 *Der Imperialismus und die Akkumulation des Kapitals,* Bukharin, N.

the matter does not end here. What are we to say of a system of views which bears no relationship whatsoever to a proposed course of tactical objectives? Yet this is the note of confusion on which Comrade Kimche brings to a close his "Approach to a Programme." Under the naive belief that his tactical course is derived from his excursion into theory, Kimche lays down the following "objectives" in the present world situation: "To avert the outbreak of war which in the present disorganization of the working class movements and the present position of the Soviet Union would be a catastrophe for the working class, the strengthening and hastening of the revolutionary movement in the colonies, a developing attack on the capitalist system at home embracing the day-to-day demands of the workers and at the same time striking a blow at the heart of the capitalist system." This statement of working class objectives is sound—as far as it goes.[13] But the objectives flow neither from the theories of Kimche nor from the theories of Luxemburg. What Kimche has done is to throw Lenin out of the front door only to let him in through the basement, repudiate him in theory only to adopt him in practice. The result is rich in irony, for as the Russian proverb goes, you cannot break through a door that is wide open.

And now just one more word. These are not academic speculations satisfied to live in death somewhere in the cloister of space-time. They are vital considerations that find a point of reference in the very warp and woof of the social fabric. Revolutionary theory is the mid-wife of history. It has an important task which it must do well if the working class, the hope and promise of the future of mankind, is to go forward. In recent years the proletariat of the world has reaped many a bitter harvest of defeat. Even the most advanced section of the working class movement, the international Communist parties, has too often misunderstood, misapplied, and misused its theory, and like the apples of Sodom it has turned to ashes in the mouth. The movement must stop sowing the seed of bitter fruit. Only then will it stop reaping the whirlwind. The movement must once again become equal to its theory. Only then can it claim its great heritage to use, not as a mystic incantation to be recited before battle, but as a practical instrument in the revolutionizing of the world. There are many Kimches all over the world. They are honest, hard-working, and thoughtful, yet doomed to revolutionary impotence to the extent that their intellectual armor remains incomplete and defective. They must be shown, in the words of Marx, that, "The theories of the Communists are not in any way based upon ideas or principles discovered or established by this or that universal reformer. They serve merely to express in general terms the concrete circumstances of an actually existing class struggle, of a historical movement that is going on under our very eyes."

---

13 To give but one shortcoming: It is not sufficient simply "to avert the outbreak of war." What shall the proletariat do in the event that war comes despite our efforts? Lenin indicated and then demonstrated one of the sweet uses to which capitalist adversity could be put in transforming imperialist war into civil war. If war is as near as Kimche correctly maintains, we cannot limit our preparations to mere attempts to avert it.

The Need for Communist Unity

An Unanswered Letter to the Communist International

NEVER WAS THE UNITY of Communist forces so essential as it is today. Never were the fruits of disunity so obvious. The sound unification of the world communist movement is especially urgent today because of the acute danger of imperialist war and the growing menace of fascism.

The resolutions of the Seventh World Congress have now been published; so have the reports in full and the discussions. After an examination of these decisions, we declare that we are willing to collaborate with all our energy in the execution of these decisions in the spirit of the following declaration made by Comrade Dimitroff in his summary speech at the Seventh Congress: *"We want the workers who belong to the Second International and the Amsterdam International and those workers who belong to other political organizations to discuss the resolutions with us; to bring us their practical proposals and supplementary proposals, to try to think of the best methods of application and to join us hand in hand to carry them out in practice."*

The ICO wrote a detailed letter to the ECCI before the Seventh World Congress and a second letter directly to the Congress. We accepted the invitation of the ECCI extended to "All Communists, Social Democrats and independent workers and trade unionists to participate in the discussion before the Congress and in the Congress itself." We received no answer to the letters and to the discussion articles which we sent. We regret that despite this appeal of the ECCI we were not permitted to participate in the discussion or the Congress. Therefore, we have to say now what we would have said at the Congress itself.

The ICO has, for the past seven years, fought with all its energies for genuine democratic centralism as well as for communist tactics to be pursued in mass work—especially in the trade unions and in the application of the united front policy—as aimed at by the Seventh Congress in its resolutions. This is well-known to all politically active workers in those countries in which the ICO has adherents. We are convinced that our participation in the Congress would have been of great value in the drafting of the resolutions and would have aided in making them more appealing to the masses. We are further convinced that our participation in the Congress would have aided in preventing new errors arising in the tactics aiming at solving a number of vital problems facing the working class today (attitude to the new problems of war arising as a result of the existence of the U.S.S.R., the role of bourgeois democracy in the fight against Fascism, the People's Front, People's Front Government, and attitude towards fascist mass organizations).

The ICO has not only criticized the ultra-left course which is now condemned but has also contributed theoretical and practical constructive pioneer work for correct communist policies in all fields thru its exemplary work in the proletarian mass organizations. These facts cannot be ignored

if the resolutions of the Seventh Congress are to be translated correctly into practice and serious opportunist deviations are to be reduced to a minimum and finally overcome.

The adherents of the ICO have at their disposal trained and well-organized forces for overcoming "ultra-left, sectarian elements," for overcoming the isolation of the vanguard as demanded by the Seventh Congress, for the prevention of serious opportunist deviations, for a policy of winning the broad working masses for Communism. We, therefore, offer re-unification with the C.I. on the basis of the resolutions of the Seventh World Congress and the program and statutes of the Comintern. We are ready to carry out these decisions in a disciplined fashion.

The first resolution, on the report of the ECCI, calling for a reform of the CI, is, in its essentials, in accord with what was demanded by the ICO. It must be made possible for differences of opinion—caused by misunderstandings, inexact formulations, omissions, sources of errors in the resolutions—to be ironed out within the CI and its sections by means of a thoro discussion within the framework of inner party democracy. In addition to the adherents of the ICO, many of those Social Democratic and politically unattached workers, who have moved in the direction of Communism on the basis of the experience gained during the past seven years, regard the attitude of the CI toward re-unification with the ICO as the acid test for the practical application of the new resolutions—as the acid test of your effort to put life into the Seventh Congress decisions for instituting party democracy, for constructive work in the trade unions, for correct united front tactics, for a break with sectarianism.

We are willing to do our all to help lay a firm foundation for genuine democratic centralism, to realize in life the decisions of the Seventh World Congress for democratizing the Comintern and against the mechanical transference of tactics. The recognition of the contribution or services of leading party comrades for the sake of communism should not become the basis for the party members giving up or limiting their right to criticise the party leadership. Otherwise, it would lead to the dangerous conception that party leadership is infallible and would serve as an obstacle to the development of genuine Bolshevik self-criticism, initiative and self-reliance in the ranks and leadership of the Comintern—so necessary for the realization of real party democracy and a collective international leadership, as demanded by the resolution of the Seventh Congress.

Attempts to disrupt the ICO, as made by several CPG functionaries, have failed not only because of the firmness of the trained cadres of the ICO; they have also left very unfavorable impressions upon those workers who are sympathetic to communism and would like to make the liquidation of the ultra-left course and the application of the new resolutions the starting point for firm connections with the CI and its sections. The question of the re-unification of the ICO with the CI transcends the significance of those immediately involved.

The resolution on the activity report of the ECCI states that:

"It is necessary to concentrate the actually operating leadership in the sections themselves." Emphasis, therefore, should be shifted to the working out of the basic political and tactical positions by taking into account the concrete conditions and peculiarities of each individual country.

The resolution goes on to state that "as a rule, direct interference in the internal organizational affairs of the Communist parties is to be avoided." The leadership of the CI is to aid systematically in the formation and the training of cadres as well as of real Bolshevik leaders in the various Communist parties "so that the sections *will be able, on the basis of the resolutions of the various CI congresses and the plenary sessions of the ECCI, to arrive at the correct solution of their political and tactical problems quickly and independently in case of a sudden turn in events.*" The CI is to aid the Communist parties "in utilizing their own experiences as well as the experiences of the international Communist movement seeking, however, to avoid the mechanical transference of experiences from one country to another and to *replace concrete Marxist analysis by schematism and general formulas.*"

We are in agreement with the above statements. They coincide not only with our demands but correspond to the practice in our ranks. For example, the CPG-O has continually given a concrete Marxist analysis of the political and economic situation before and after Hitler's seizure of power and has deduced therefrom the political tasks of communists in full detail, as subsequently confirmed by the facts and most recently by the Seventh World Congress itself. As early as 1929 we defined fascism as the open but indirect dictatorship of finance capital characterized by a counter-revolutionary mass organization composed of petty-bourgeois elements, peasants, and workers attracted to fascism because of their disillusionment with the Social Democrats and because the CPG did not succeed in winning these strata for Communism in time because of its false tactics. In order to prevent the establishment of a fascist mass basis, we proposed a united front and a communist trade union policy for the mobilization of the masses, for the struggle "against the offensive of capital and the fascist menace, for the struggle of shifting the burden of the crisis to the ruling classes." As early as 1929 we proposed a program of action of which the "main content consisted of such slogans and demands which made the defense of the direct economic and political interests of the working class against fascism the starting point and the main content of the proletarian united front." (Quotation from the resolution on the report of Dimitroff, Rundschau 44).

The CPO of the U. S. put forward a correct estimate of the perspectives of the revolutionary struggle in America and especially had a correct attitude toward developments in the A. F. of L. Therefore, the CPO-U.S. was able to utilize the upward swing of the American labor movement in order to create a strong basis for communist influence in the trade unions. The CPO of the U. S. undoubtedly has a decisive position in the progressive movement in the trade unions and in the movement for rebuilding the craft unions into industrial unions and for the establishment of a labor party.

In our ranks we don't have to fight any "dogmatic, sectarian, ultra-left attitude." We have thoroly considered the above-mentioned questions with our membership. These problems, however, must be thoroly gone over in the CI, before the entire working class, as a necessary pre-requisite for the training of "true Bolshevik cadres and leaders who will be capable of arriving at the correct solutions for the political and tactical tasks of

the Communist movement in case of a sudden turn in events."

Only an organized discussion and a thoro examination of all these questions, with the participation of the entire membership, can enable the Communist parties "to utilize their own experiences as well as the experiences of the international Communist movement and to avoid the mechanical transference of the experiences of one country to another and to replace concrete Marxist analysis by schematism and general formulas."

Only the broadest discussion among the entire membership, continuous critical control of the application of the resolutions, of the actions and acts of omission of the leadership thru the membership, creates the possibility of a good selection of cadres and of raising the political level of the leadership of the CP sections. Such a broad discussion does not preclude a firm leadership of the CI and the Central Committees of the various sections; on the contrary, it is organically tied up with it. Such a broad discussion and examination of all tactical problems does not weaken the power of action of the Communist parties; on the contrary, this power is enhanced thereby. An important part of the work of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, before the seizure of power, consisted of such critical discussions and polemics. This aptitude for a thoro discussion of all questions of struggle made the Bolshevik party ripe for the leadership of the proletariat and the working masses in general in the struggle for power. There is no other way of really Bolshevising the other sections of the CI. If the resolution on the reform of the CI will clear the way for such sound inner party life, then, there will be no obstacle for the members and followers of the ICO again working in the ranks of the CI.

The resolution on the report of Dimitroff, "The Offensive of Fascism and the Tasks of the CI in the Struggle for the Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism" contains the liquidation of the ultra-left trade union and united front policy. The resolution recognizes the "temporary defeat of the proletariat in Central Europe, in Germany, Austria, and Spain." This does away with the nonsensical talk of denying the defeat of the working class in Germany until the end of 1933. We welcome this and consider it as a pre-requisite for learning from the defeat.

Fascism is, on the one hand, correctly defined as the rule of finance capital. This is a welcome differentiation from the dangerous confusion on the essence of fascism which contributed considerably towards the CPG being unable to fulfill its tasks. This same resolution, however, contains the dangerous formula according to which fascism is the "open, terrorist dictatorship of the most chauvinist, the most imperialist elements of finance capital." This is both false and dangerous because it lends aid and comfort to the conception of the Social Democrats that finance capital can be expected to make a fight against the fascist dictatorship.

As to the united front, the resolution correctly states that the united front movement "is still in its infancy." It goes on to say that, todate, in France "the *first* advances of fascism have been defeated." This takes the ground from under the illusion that "the road to French fascism has been closed." The resolution lacks an adequate concrete analysis of the very serious shortcomings and errors of the French united front movement. This analysis is all the more necessary since the French experience has been put up as the international model at the Congress.

The resolution states that the united front "is the most important immediate task of the international labor movement in the present historical epoch." We welcome the strong emphasis on the necessity of turning to the reformist organizations. This is especialy urgent in view of six years of ultra-leftism and the "united front from below." But the resolution lacks a simultaneous emphasis of the limits and the objective of the united front movement. The Seventh Congress gives directives not only for the next few months but for a longer period. Therefore, the resolution should have stated expressly and unequivocally that the winning of political power by the working class is not possible thru the united front movement. The seizure of political power presupposes that the Communist Party is already the leader of the majority of the working class, i.e., the leader of the working class for an armed uprising, a civil war, and not only for partial and immediate demands as in the united front struggle. To be silent on this, for fear of repelling a temporary ally, will lead to opportunist deviations and to a possible collapse of the strong united front movement. The failure to uncover the limits of the united front movement weakens the correct appeal of the resolution "not to give up independent work of Communist education, organization, and mobilization of the masses." A true united front movement is not weakened but strengthened thru a clarification of its limits.

United front tactics can only serve as the means for ushering in the struggle for the seizure of power. The united front movement is indispensible for this purpose. To grasp clearly the limits of the united front movement is the pre-requisite for the proper organization, as demanded in the resolution, "of elected (or in the countries under fascist dictatorship selected from the most authoritative participants in the movement) non-partisan class organs of the united front in the factories, among the unemployed, in the workers' districts, among the small townsfolk and in the villages." Only when these non-partisan broad class organs of the united front are conceived of as the preliminary stages of the future political soviets can the united front movement build the organs for an extra-parliamentary struggle for partial demands. Without these organs, serious successful partial struggles are impossible. The experiences had in these broad non-partisan united front organs during the struggle for partial demands from the starting point for the transformation of those organs for partial demands into political councils (soviets)—into organs for the struggle for political power.

The failure to define the limits of the united front movement leads to the false position the resolution takes towards revolutionary transition slogans. Paragraph 8 of the resolution says: "In the circumstances of a political crisis when the ruling classes are no longer in a position to cope with the powerful sweep of the mass movement, the communists must advance fundamental revolutionary slogans (such as, for instance, control of production and the banks, disbanding of the police force and its replacement by an armed workers militia, etc.).

It is false to issue these slogans only after a political crisis among the ruling class has broken out. The formulation "control of production, of banks" is dangerous because it blurs the difference between the revolutionary character of the slogan of workers control of production as a transi-

tion slogan for the struggle for power and the "large-scale socialist projects (DeMan Plan, etc.)". This only confuses the workers and misleads them in the direction of the Social Democratic demand for economic democracy with the bourgeoisie. Every such lack of clarity hinders the development of the fighting power of the united front movement; while the correct propaganda of revolutionary transition slogans, such as workers control of production, is a pre-requisite for the non-partisan united front organs fulfilling their tasks. This propaganda is an indispensible link for effecting, for leading, the united front movement from the defensive to the offensive, as the resolution correctly demands.

Such an error of omission is particularly evident in the resolution in the paragraph on the united front or People's Front Government.

"If with such an upsurge of the mass movement it will prove possible and necessary in the interests of the proletariat to create a proletarian united front government or an anti-fascist People's Front Government, which is not yet a government of the proletarian dictatorship, but one which undertakes to put into effect decisive measures against fascism and reaction, the Communist Party must see to it that such a government is formed."

It is conceivable that in the course of a mighty united front movement based on strong non-partisan united front organs the question of the government is put before it—before the Communists have a majority in the non-partisan class organs of the united front. Under such circumstances the attitude of the Communists toward the formation of a government is decisive for the winning over for communism of the masses organized in the united front movement. A situation may arise when such an experiment is necessary in order to eliminate the very last of democratic illusions of the workers. In this sense, Lenin proposed to the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries in September 1917 to dissolve the coalition with the bourgeois parties, especially with the Cadets, and to take over the government. Under the condition that this government would grant the Bolsheviks full freedom of action, Lenin was ready to support it. This was correct because the preparations for the struggle for power, the ultimate aims of the Communists, were facilitated. In the same sense, the CPG (Spartacus League) proposed to the trade unions, the Social Democratic party, and the Independent Social Democratic party of Germany to take over the government and pledged to support it on the same conditions during the Kapp putsch in 1920. This policy was approved in principle by Lenin. During the united front actions in 1922-23 the CPG supported Social Democratic governments in Saxony and Thuringia on the basis of their acceptance of a program of partial demands which guaranteed the CPG freedom of activity and presupposed the break of the Social Democracy with the bourgeoisie. The CPG had as a base of support in the execution of this policy broad, extra-parliamentary mass organs (factory councils, proletarian centurions and committees for control of supplies and prices). This policy was essentially correct despite some errors in its application which must be avoided in the future. The slogan of "a government of the anti-Fascist People's Front," however, dangerously blurs the class character of such a government because it provides for the possibility of participation by the bourgeoisie in such a government. This we reject.

We likewise reject all entrance of Communists into a so-called united front government. The resolution speaks of the possibility of the entrance of Communists into such a united front government and leaves it to the Communist parties to decide on the basis of the concrete situation, whether they will or will not enter. The resolution defines the pre-requisites for the formation of a united front government as a situation in which: "(a) the bourgeois state apparatus is paralyzed so that the bourgeoisie cannot prevent the formation of such a government; (b) in which the broadest masses of the workers strongly oppose fascism and reaction but are not yet ready to take up the struggle *for Soviet power.*"

The 1923 experience in Germany teaches us definitely that "when the masses are strongly opposed to fascism and reaction but are not yet ready to take up the struggle for soviet power, every united front government or even People's Front government will be swept away by fascism and reaction, because the workers not yet being ready to wage the struggle for Soviets affords the bourgeoisie the possibility of strengthening their shattered rule. Thus, such a government will inevitably lead to a "banal parliamentary comedy" which will make the masses lose faith in the CP and give the bourgeoisie a new breathing spell. To send Communists into such a government is to break the backbone of the united front movement. The conduct of the Communist members of such a government is not determined by the good will or ill will of these Communists but exclusively by the extra-parliamentary fighting power of the masses organized in the united front. The entrance of the CPG into the Saxon and Thuringian governments in 1923 came despite the objections of the then leadership of the Party and on the basis of the decision of the ECCI. The Saxon experiment failed, tho the CPG could count on the backing of broad extra-parliamentary class organs with whose help, before the entry into the government, the Party was able to lead important mass struggles. The present proposed participation of Communists in a united front or People's Front government must all the more lead to failure; for example, in France, where the CP is, as a result of its opportunist errors, neglecting the organization of extra-parliamentary struggles and united front organs. The attitude towards the question of a government is not merely a question of the possible future. The correctness of united front policy depends upon the correct or false position on the united front or People's Front government. For fascist countries the slogan of a united front or People's Front government is completely out of the question and harmful. Such slogans can have only the following effects: 1. The development of the Social Democratic workers will be hindered and thrown back. 2. It will make it easier for the Social Democracy to take up its coalition policy with the bourgeois parties or groups and *this time* it will be with the approval of the Communists. 3. It will enable the Social Democracy to make another counter-revolutionary attempt at saving capitalist class rule on a bourgeois democratic basis when fascism is overthrown. 4. It will weaken, nay, even disarm, the Communists in the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship, in the preparation of the armed uprising and against all reformist tendencies.

The resolution further suffers from a dangerous omission and unclarity in the section on the attitude of Communists towards bourgeois democracy. The incorrect statements by Dimitroff in his speech which were to the

effect that it is no longer the choice between bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship but between bourgeois democracy and fascist dictatorship and that the Communists in such a situation must defend bourgeois democracy is not repeated in the resolution. The resolution says:

"In the struggle to defend against fascism the bourgeois democratic liberties and the gains of the toilers, in the struggle to overthrow fascist dictatorship, the revolutionary proletariat prepares its force, strengthens its fight in contacts with its allies and directs the struggle towards the goal of achieving real democracy of the toilers—Soviet power."

This formulation is not incorrect, *but* in the face of the confusion which has been created as to the relation of communism to bourgeois democracy it is inadequate.

It is necesary to say that Communists do not defend bourgeois democracy as such, not even when they are defending the democratic rights of workers against the attacks of fascists and other reactionaries. Even in the struggle against fascism within the bourgeois state no heed must be paid to the democratic rules as far as the fascists are concerned. The democratic rights of the workers can be defended in the long run and thoroly only thru the revolutionary liquidation of bourgeois democracy which is the bearer of the germs of fascism. We fight against the limitation of the democratic rights of the workers. We fight for the denial of democratic rights to the fascists.

We fully approve section 3 of the resolution on the unity of the trade union movement. "The Communists are decidedly for the re-establishment of trade union unity in each country and on an international scale. . . . In countries where there are small Red trade unions efforts must be made to secure their admission into the big reformist trade unions. . . . It is the duty of Communists to work actively in the reformist and united trade unions, to consolidate them and recruit the unorganized workers for them." We agree with the provisions for the trade union work. This is no lip service on our part, because the ICO has always and everywhere worked along these lines. The fact that the resolution ignores Communist fraction work is to be regretted; but it is probably the necessary price paid for the elimination of the ultra-left past.

The second paragraph in section IV of the resolution on the tasks of Communists in the individual fields of the anti-fascist movement is wrong:

"Communists must enter all Fascist mass organizations which have a monopoly of legal existence in the given country."

This formulation is entirely inadequate and improper. The necessity of Communist work in the fascist mass organizations is undisputed. The shortcoming of the resolution consists in the fact that it does not analyze concretely the peculiarities of this type of work which can only be disruptive. The CPG-O has done so and has, therefore, done practical work and attained successes which the numerically stronger CPG has not achieved. The formulation of the resolution which pledges all communists to belong to all fascist mass organizations makes it harder for the CP to select the appropriate forces for disruptive work in the fascist leagues. Thus it also fails to see one of the most important possibilities of destroying the fascist organizations—namely, mass resignations. It nourishes the illusion that it

is possible to work in fascist organizations with a view of winnng them over as organzations instead of organizing their destruction.

We agree with section VI on the strengthening of the Communist parties and the struggle for the political unity of the working class. The CPG-O issued the slogan of a "United CPG" a year and a half ago; this is essentially the same as the slogan in the resolution but already represents the concrete form and its transitional character. Obviously this cannot be done in the manner proposed by Comrade Walter of the CPG in his article in the *Bolshevik No. 18* in which he advocates the creation of a united organization of the working youth into which the Communist Youth League of Germany should enter and that this organization should itself select its name and decide its international affiliation and relations to political parties. The proposals of Walter are in strict contradiction with the five fundamental conditions put forward by the resolution of the Seventh Congress as pre-requisites for unification with Social Democratic organizations.

The resolution on the report of Comrade Ercoli on the tasks of the CI in relation to the preparation of a new world war by the imperialists is more replete with omissions and greater indefiniteness than the report itself. The greatest shortcoming of the resolution is that it does not give a concrete analysis of the attitude which should be taken by communists in case the bourgeoisie of their country line up on the side of the Soviet Union in a war.

We agree with section IV: "The Communist parties of all capitalist countries must fight against military expenditures (war budgets)." We agree to the pledge of the Communists: "To lead the opponents of war organized in the struggle for peace to the struggle for the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war against the fascist instigators of war, against the bourgeoisie, for the overthrow of capitalism."

We consider it unfortunate that the following section from the Stuttgart resolution was taken over without any criticism: "If, nevertheless, war breaks out, it is their duty to work for its speedy termination." This formulation may be turned into an obstacle for the Communist parties and the working class in a situation in which the bourgeoisie of a country which has started the war as the ally of the U.S.S.R. urges a speedy end of the war in order to abandon the Soviet Union. If this formulation is repeated without reservation, it can facilitate in such circumstances the work of bourgeois pacifism and social patriotism in their efforts to confuse the workers.

Section VI of the resolution on war lifts the bars and opens the gates to dangerous opportunist deviations: "If any weak state is attacked by one or more big imperialist powers which want to destroy its national independence and national unity, or to dismember it as in the historical instance of the partition of Poland, a war conducted by the national bourgeoisie of such a country to repel the attack may assume the character of a war of liberation in which the working class and the Communists of that country cannot abstain from intervening."

If every war waged by the bourgeoisie of a country in order to prevent the national dismemberment of its own territory in case of defeat can be a struggle for national liberation, then, all imperialist wars of today can

become possible national wars of liberation, because every country is today threatened with national partition in case of defeat. For example, fascist Germany would be threatened with this fate, if it were defeated by France or vice versa. For instance Lenin thought that, properly speaking, the defense put up by the Serbians against the attack of the Austrians in 1914—taken by itself—was a war of national defense. Lenin, however, declined to look upon the attack on Serbia in itself and rejected the slogan of the defense of the fatherland also for Serbia.

At this point, the lack of a clear analysis of the tasks of the working class and Communists in those countries whose imperialist bourgeoisie fight on the side of the Soviet Union is particularly evident. It is necessary, in the event of a war against the U.S.S.R., to distinguish clearly between countries which are against the U.S.S.R. in which countries the workers and the Communists must advocate revolutionary defeatism— and the tasks of the workers and Communists in those countries which are on the side of the Soviet Union. In the latter countries the Communists and workers have the task of fighting not for the defeat of their own country but for the transformation of the imperialist war waged by their own bourgeoisie into a civil war and for the victory of the Red Army and the Soviet Union.

The resolution on the Soviet Union adopted on the report of Manuilsky treats of the successes of socialism in the Soviet Union and the extension of Soviet democracy. This resolution must be approved by all Communists and the viewpoint contained therein must be defended against all Social Democratic and particularly Trotskyist attacks against the Soviet Union and the CPSU.

How well-founded is our criticism of the omissions and shortcomings of the decisions of the Seventh Congress, can be seen from the various opportunist mistakes characterizing the policies of important sections of the CI since the Congress. The policies of the CP of France are a crass example of the danger of right opportunism in the application of the united front tactics—a danger indicated by the Seventh Congress itself. The CPF has given up regular and effective criticism of the reformist conceptions of Social Democracy from the viewpoint of Communist fundamentals. The erroneous idea that an alliance of the proletariat with the petty bourgeois working masses—a true people's front—could be realized by an agreement with capitalist parties has led the CPF to neglect the most urgent tasks of the class struggle in France. The so-called People's Front policy of the CPF has hindered and continues to hinder an effective struggle against the emergency decrees of the Laval government because no agreement for such a struggle could, of course, be reached with the Radicals. Furthermore, in spite of the clear decision of the Seventh Congress that a mass self-defense organization against fascism should be created, the CPF not only does not attempt to carry out this decision but publicly warns the workers against all efforts in this direction. This, likewise, is due to the tendency of the CPF to avoid friction with the Radicals in order to build up the so-called People's Front.

The leadership of the CPG has during and since the Congress advocated the false and illusory conception that the fascist German Labor Front could, in its lower units, be transformed into an instrument of class struggle

and that the rebuilding of class trade unions could be carried out within the framework of this Fascist Labor Front. (Speech of M. Fuchs at a trade union conference during the Seventh Congress, reported in *Internationale Gewerkschafts Press Korrespondenz* No. 17-18.) Such a policy not only furthers dangerous illusions about the character of fascist organizations but also hinders any effective work for the creation of class trade unions. Under the present conditions in Germany such trade unions could be built up only as illegal cadre organizations; the tactics proposed by the CPG make it impossible to observe the rules of conspirative work which are necessary for these organizations. Furthermore, the CPG seeks to form a so-called People's Front with Liberal and Catholic bourgeois groups and considers the struggle for democratic rights for all as the central task of the anti-fascist struggle in Germany. The CPG propagates the convoking of a national assembly on the basis of general popular suffrage after the overthrow of the Hitler regime and the formation of a People's Front government with eventual participation therein by Communists. This course for the restoration of bourgeois democracy, of the Weimar Republic in Germany, must lead the CPG to being dragged along by the Social Democracy and must make it incapable of fulfilling its historic role as the organizer and the leader of the mass struggles of the workers, struggles which alone can prepare and bring on the destruction of the fascist dictatorship, as the leader of the struggle for Soviet power.

The same false line of alliances with bourgeois groups and for the restoration of bourgeois democracy has been adopted by the CP of Italy. Such an approach is especially dangerous for the Italian CP at this moment when the Italo-Ethiopian war lends particular international import to its activities. This position of the CPI is all the more to be regretted in view of the experience with the Aventine bloc and with the so-called anti-fascist concentration which showed the fallacy of all the hopes that an alliance with bourgeois anti-fascist groups could bring any effective help to the proletarian struggle.

The deviations in regard to bourgeois democracy manifest themselves in a particularly crass form when they are transferred mechanically to countries where bourgeois democracy is still relatively strong and not yet seriously challenged by Fascists as *the* form of capitalist dictatorship (U.S.A., Canada, England). In such countries the concentration of activities by the Communist Parties on the defense of democratic rights in general can only lead to the weakening of the struggle against the concrete manifestations of the attack by capitalist reaction which is preparing the way for fascism.

The war danger is more and more imminent. Mussolini has started a colonial war. Hitler is arming feverishly. The sharpening of class relations in Hitler Germany cannot be sufficiently utilized to organize mass resistance leading to the overthrow of fascism because of the present condition of the CPG and the weakness of all workers organizations. The lack of a CP in Italy able to fight effectively has encouraged Mussolini to seek escape from domestic difficulties by resorting to the advantage of war. We consider it our duty to do all in our power to strengthen the CP in every country so that they will be able to organize mass resistance and to give Communist leadership. The trained underground members of the

CPG-O can be of invaluable aid in this. In America the CPO has won decisive positions in the trade unions which are an indispensable point for the application of the trade union tactics decided upon at the Seventh Congress. In other countries where there are ICO members and followers they occupy important positions in the proletarian mass organizations and possess trained cadres.

Our examination of the resolutions has led us to the following conclusions:

1. The resolutions offer the basis for the liquidation of the ultra-left course; 2. the basis for the application of the reform of the CI, considered by us as necessary, as decided by the Seventh Congress; 3. for correct united front tactics and a Communist trade union policy for winning the broad working masses for Communism; 4. The fact that unclarity, omissions and errors are still to be found in the resolutions, that there is reluctance in the CI to their application, and that it can lead to dangerous right deviations do not constitute an obstacle to re-unification as far as we are concerned. These omissions, errors, and unclarities can and must be eliminated in a broad organized discussion among the entire membership. Thru party democracy it becomes possible for differing viewpoints, within the limits of communist fundamentals, of course, to exist and express themselves fully within the party, without impairing the discipline or weakening its fighting power. Party democracy means that a minority has the right to express its viewpoint within the limits of communist fundamentals but that the decisions of the majority are to be carried out by the entire membership regardless of differences of opinion. We don't ask for any special privileges. We are prepared to dissolve our organization when unity is established on the basis of inner-party democracy on the lines herewith indicated. Inner-party democracy for all members is for us sufficient for disciplined cooperation in the CI and its sections.

The Buro of the ICO, therefore, proposes a meeting with representatives of the CI in order to talk over the entrance, the concrete realizations of the unification of the ICO with the CI and its sections.

We ask the ECCI to name the place and the date and to inform us of same as soon as possible.

For the International Communist Opposition

HEINRICH BRANDLER
JAY LOVESTONE

November 9, 1935

Problems of the Indian Revolution

THE REVOLUTION in India involves many fundamental problems of strategy. These problems are of the highest complexity and importance and involve largely uncharted fields. A group of Indians sympathetic to the International Communist Opposition recently drew up a resolution on the tasks of the bourgeois revolution in India, the relation of the proletariat to it, the question of alliances and class leadership as it presents itself there, their attitude towards the National Congress, etc. This resolution they sent to the I.C.O. for comment and we give below a summary of the I.C.O. resolution on the question.

The resolution begins by commending the Indian comrades for their recognition that "the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution in India can be successful only thru the establishment of Soviet power." However, they still nourish false or unclear views on the question of proletarian hegemony, and relation to the petty bourgeoisie.

The Indian comrades correctly state that the Indian bourgeoisie cannot be counted upon as an ally, that the revolution can only be realized in a struggle against them, that the driving force of the revolution is an alliance of all workers of the towns and on the land. But when they go on to state that the numerical weakness and the weakness of its organizations oblige the proletariat to accept the political leadership of the petty bourgeoisie, or that the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution does not require the Communist Party to play the leading role in that revolution, or that the Communists should not at present concern themselves primarily with a direct winning of the masses for Communism but rather with support of the left petty bourgeois elements of the "National Congress" in their efforts to form a new petty bourgeois left Congress party, then they are going counter to the lessons of the Russian and Chinese revolution.

The devolpment of the Chinese revolution todate has clearly shown the role of the individual classes of Chinese society in the struggle against feudalism and imperialism; this development has, furthermore, led to the establishment of Soviets in various sections of China and thereby demonstrated that the establishment of a democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants is the form taken by the bourgeois revolution in a colonial country. Specifically the course of the Indian revolution will be different from that of the Chinese, but in order to work out the specific tasks of the revolutionary struggle in India, Indian Communists must base themselves on the general lessons which the Chinese revolution has taught colonial countries.

The Marxist-Leninist position on the tasks of the bourgeois revolution differs fundamentally from the bourgeois viewpoint. The bourgeoisie linked to feudal property by numerous economic bonds is striving to make a compromise with feudal forces because it is primarily interested in the protection and extension of capitalist property and because it fears that a radical destruction of feudal property by a working class movement will also menace capitalist property and capitalist exploitation. The success of

the bourgeois revolution, however, as Engels pointed out and as history has confirmed, depended in the past and depends more so today in the epoch of imperialism on the working class movement which sets its aims beyond that of the bourgeois revolution. The working class is prompted by the desire to carry the revolution as far as possible so that it is transformed into the socialist revolution. Precisely because the working class is by no means bound to bourgeois property and exploitation it alone is capable of logically solving the tasks of the bourgeois revolution.

For this reason Lenin stood for the hegemony of the proletariat in the bougeois revolution, meaning by proletarian hegemony that the working class and its revolutionary party take over the political leadership of the petty bourgeois masses in city and country to solve the problems of the bourgeois revolution in alliance with and against the will of the bourgeoisie. Lenin looked upon the Soviets established in Russia in 1905 as an organ of this alliance realized under proletarian hegemony and the germ of the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants in Soviet form in various sections of China. It was thereby shown:

That proletarian hegemony was realized in sections of China which were not well developed industrially and where the industrial proletariat was numerically very small because the Soviets and the Communists organized all proletarian and semi-proletarian elements in city and country—not only industrial workers but also the wage workers of the handicrafts, the workers on farms and poorer sections of the peasantry.

That proletarian hegemony and democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants thru the Soviets in general could be established and defended only under the firm political guidance of the Communist Party.

That petty bourgeois political groupings and parties do not promote the alliance of workers and urban petty bourgeois elements and peasants on which Soviet power is based. Rather, they disrupt this alliance insofar as they become tools of capitalist defense; that is instruments of the struggle of wealthy peasants, merchants, and similar forces fighting against the policies of the Soviets which seek a thorogoing solution of the agrarian problem in favor of the poor and middle peasants and the raising of the standard of living of the workers. The activities of various petty bourgeois groups in the Chinese Soviet areas resulted in driving a wedge between the alliance of workers and peasants formed by the Communists and thus served the counter-revolution. Chinese experiences have generally shown that the various petty bourgeois so-called left-wing groups standing somewhere between the official leadership of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party either openly went over to the camp of counter-revolution or at best played the role of unreliable, temporary allies of the revolution.

It is not possible as our Indian friends maintain to link up the demand for the establishment of Soviet rule under proletarian hegemony in the Indian revolution with the demand for the political leadership of the revolution by the petty bourgeoisie and a petty bourgeois party. The hegemony of the proletariat means the political leadership by the working class and the Communist Party. The formation of Soviets and the seizure of power by the Soviets is, as the Chinese example has shown, only possible under a firm, proletarian Communist movement. The petty bourgeoisie

cannot under the conditions now prevailing in India (i.e., the existence of a rather well developed capitalist industry, a modern industrial proletariat and the existing class antagonism of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat becoming decisive for social relations) play an independent leading role in the revolution. The petty bourgeoisie differentiates itself from the political views of the working class by its petty bourgeois prejudices, including in the first place its defense of bourgeois property. In order to draw the petty bourgeois masses into a thorogoing struggle for the expropriation of the feudal exploiters and the imperialists, it is necessary to free them of those inhibitions and vacillations and turns which result from their prejudices. For this purpose it is also necessary to overcome the influence of the specifically petty bourgeois policies and parties in the ranks of these masses.

Moreover, that section of the petty bourgeoisie which is decisive for the revolution in India is the peasantry, i.e., the rural petty bourgeoisie. Peasants require the leadership of the cities as all previous revolutions have shown. Who will give revolutionary leadership to the peasants? The Indian proletariat or the Indian petty bourgeoisie consisting of small independent artisans of the cities, the small dealers, the intellectuals? It is enough to pose this question in order to realize the error of our Indian friends. Numerically weak tho the industrial proletariat may be in relation to the total population of India, yet its social value and the possibilities of organizing it are much greater than those of the urban petty bourgeoisie. Add to this the inability of this urban petty bourgeoisie to play a political role independent of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The leading role of the Chinese proletariat and the Chinese Communists in the Chinese revolution is a recognized fact. If the Indian proletariat has not yet played the same political role as the Chinese, it is certainly not due to the fact that it is numerically weaker because in relation to the total population the industrial proletariat of India is approximately as strong as that of China. The reason lies in the fact that the Indian proletariat is backward as far as political maturity and organization is concerned. In India, moreover, there has up todate existed no Communist Party capable of preparing and leading masses in action in the entire country. It is correct as our Indian friends say that there can be no talk of political leadership by the Indian proletariat as long as there is no Communist Party. On the other hand, however, the victory of the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist revolution in India, the establishment of Soviet rule is impossible as long as there is no Communist Party which has authority and enjoys the respect of the great mass of workers.

This does not mean at all that our comrades must neglect their work in the National Congress and among its adherents or that they must ignore the differences between the left and right elements in the National Congress, between its petty bourgeois and the great bourgeois wing. It means this: The Indian Communists keeping in mind the words of Lenin ("Directives on the national and colonial question" at the II Congress of the C.I.), must in their relations to the democratic bourgeoisie of colonial countries and during their temporary alliances with it "absolutely maintain the independent character of the proletarian movement—even in its embryonic stages" and subordinate their work in the National Congress and its ten-

dencies to the task of creating a militant Communist Party of India. Communists must support the left-wing of the National Congress in its fight against the rights. The aim of the Communists is not, however, the formation of a petty bourgeois party under petty bourgeois leadership but the winning of support for the formation of a Communist Party. This means that the Communists must criticize the petty bourgeois weaknesses and vacillations of the left-wing of the National Congress; they must show that that the so-called "socialist" Congress parties are not really socialist organizations; that only the Communist program is a real socialist program and must attempt to form Communist fractions within these organizations with the aim of leading them into the future Communist Pary.

The formation of an effective Communist Party in India is necessary also because no organization under petty bourgeois leadership will be either willing or capable to organize the great mass of workers and peasants even in the loosest fashion. Witness the fact that the National Congress has not done so. Only a Communist Party and not a petty bourgeois party will be capable of building the trade union organizations of the workers and particularly the organizations of the dozens of millions of Indian peasants for the revolutionary struggle, i.e., help them to form their organs of revolutionary struggle and an alliance with the workers.

The I. L. P. Swings Right

By J.W.F.N. (London)

THE INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY annual conference was held this Easter at Keighley, Yorks. As a result of four days deliberations, indeed almost from the commencement, it became obvious even to the most politically inexperienced observer that the I.L.P. was now a mass of contradictions, full of internal dissent, and lacking in any decisive policy. The I.L.P. revealed itself as completely isolated from the working class, deliberately pursuing a policy of complete sectarianism. The spirit of hope and enthusiasm characteristic of the past was completely absent.

Far from advancing towards the revolutionary Socialist policy which it was hoped the I.L.P. might evolve after its break from the Labour Party, this conference registered the fact that the I.L.P. has gone back and is lapsing into futility, existing entirely on the past.

Contributory factors to this position were (1) the desertion of the majority of the Revolutionary Policy Committee to the C.P. in a most unprincipled manner, leaving behind them (especially among the provincial members who had looked to them for a lead) a feeling of disgust and frustration among their former supporters. (2) The absolutely cynical indifference of the C.P. (proud of their newly discovered opportunism) towards the conference and the issues which confronted it.

The Chairman, James Maxton, M.P., whilst talking of the necessity of building up a united front against war and fascism, and pursuing a policy based on class struggle gave clear expression to this policy of blind sectarianism when he said "when I look round for potential allies, I regret to say that it is almost impossible to find them. I can see individuals playing an honourable and courageous part in this situation, but I see them in organisations which are not making for peace but are urging on for war. And to attempt alliances or united fronts with such organisations is only to put our party in difficulties out of which we would soon have to extract ourselves as soon as the guns begin to rattle." In other words leave the mass organisations, the trade unions, the Labour Parties, etc., and fight war according to the I.L.P. line, as all other working class organisations are war organisations!

But exatly what is the policy of the I.L.P. with regard to the war issue? How does the I.L.P. propose to deal with the concrete war threat that faces the world's workers! That policy *is to be decided in three months time!*

Thereby hangs a tale!

In the summer of 1935, when the Italian forces invaded Abyssinia, the *New Leader,* the I.L.P. organ, took the line that the struggle of the Abyssinian people was a struggle for freedom from the imperialist aggressor and that all socialists must support the struggles of the Abyssinian people. It demanded that the workers must refuse to handle munitions, oil, and war material for Italy, that the workers must apply their own so-called sanctions. This line the N.L. maintained for some weeks. Then on instructions this whole line was suddenly dropped on the grounds that the I.L.P. must remain neutral and should regard the Italo-Abyssinian conflict as a struggle between *"two rival dictators,"* and that workers should ignore the whole struggle.

The whole statement containing this change of line was a deliberate flouting of the Derby resolutions on war, which though not yet a completely correct revolutionary policy nevertheless was regarded as an advance on the previous pacifist policy of the I.L.P. Indignation throughout the I.L.P. was so great that probably for the first time in the history of the I.L.P. the platform and the inner Executive Committee were defeated on a vital political issue, on a motion rejecting the new isolationist and completely passive line of the majority of the National Administration Council. The debate on this motion completely exposed the bankruptcy of the leadership. McGovern finding no political answer to the arguments of the floor descended to the vilest form of demagogy, by retailing alleged atrocities committed by the Abyssinians! In McGovern's view "Italy and Abyssinia are both anti-socialist states, their rulers are both dictators and only differ in the development of the country. It is unnecessary to make a choice, but in my estimation the rule of the Negus is the more brutal one." The delegates expressed their disgust with this line not only by defeating the political line of McGovern but also by securing the reference back of the N.A.C. report on the activities of that body on this issue. This expression of independence was the last the conference was to make, and it was to count for nothing. The following day after a night of rumours, the Chairman for the N.A.C. announced without any warning to the conference that ". . . The

Chairman of the Party, the three members of the inner E.C., the Parliamentary Group, and other members of the National Council are unable conscientiously to operate the decision reached yesterday. The N.A.C. therefore asks . . . that the matter at issue be referred back to the Party for decision in three months time by a ballot vote of the membership, and that in the meantime the conference should express its confidence in the National Council and allow liberty for the expression of differing views within the party."

This use of the bludgeon created considerable dissatisfaction among the delegates especially among those from London, but they received little support, especially after Brockway who had led the opposition ran away from his triumph by declaring " . . . it would be a bad blow for the Party if the decision taken the day before involved the loss particularly of the Chairman. I urge the delegates to accept the National Council's proposals for the sake of the maintenance of the I.L.P. and its work." Brockway the uncompromising opponent of all those whose policy does not accord with "revolutionary socialist principles" is prepared to sacrifice all principles in order to allow the I.L.P. to exist not on revolutionary principles he holds so dearly, or by the fact that the I.L.P. struggles for workers rights in every part of the globe, but on the personality of James Maxton, the chairman! The mask was off, the nature of the I.L.P. leadership was revealed, their lack of sincerity was becoming apparent. Nevertheless the big bludgeon had won, only 39 votes being cast against giving the N.A.C. their vote of confidence and 93 for the acceptance.

The rest of the conference proceeded under the effects of this "bombshell"; it was obvious that all interest had gone and that no hopes could be now entertained of any principled decisions being arrived at against the wish of the platform.

Conference having previously refused to declare for any clarification of electoral policy, by shelving this question, now proceeded after giving the N.A.C. a vote of confidence, to declare for the necessity of unity among the working class on a basis which would not prevent "the expression of revolutionary policy"! This unity to be brought about on a federal basis of all working class organisations allowing freedom of propaganda and organisation. All proposals to give this practical effect by fraction work and campaigns in the trade unions, Labour Parties, etc., and the putting of this proposal on a practical footing were opposed by the N.A.C. and rejected by conference.

The Trotskyites, throughout the conference, pursued their splitting tactics, and spread slanders about the Soviet Union. Their major achievement has been the complete misrepresentation of the Soviet Union's foreign policy, and which the N.A.C. has successfully used to prevent the I.L.P. workers from a clear understanding of the principles and tactics of communism. Nevertheless the Trotskyite shibboleths, complete with the "Fourth International," were decisively rejected. Conference declared its opposition to the building of such an International as envisaged by the International Communist League.

Opposed to the line of both the N.A.C. and the Trotskyites were a small group of delegates who persistently and effectively put the case for unity of all the communist forces on a principled basis. The *Daily Worker* correspondent was compelled to recognise that the most effective and principled statements came from the members representing this point of view, and with the usual C.P. love for finding labels, though expressing appreciation of their exposure of the Trotskyites, and the N.A.C. case, promptly labelled them as "Brandlerites and Lovestonites."

This conference marks a step back. Only the English section of the I.L.P. can with any accuracy be described as centrist, although at times this is doubtful. The Scottish I.L.P. and the strongest section is purely reformist and pacifist.

If the I.L.P. rank and file are desirous of going forward towards a correct revolutionary policy it must work for a new leadership. Already the signs are such that the long held belief that the I.L.P. leaders when all said and done are "really sincere" has been badly shattered. The leadership in shelving the question of secular education, being afraid of upsetting the Catholic vote whereby the four I.L.P. Members of Parliament are returned, has revealed to many members its unprincipled opportunism, and disgust is being freely expressed at these "honest critics of C.P. opportunism."

The Guild of Youth is openly expressing its opposition to the N.A.C. actions and has instructed its branches to publicly reject the N.A.C. policy. If the present line of the I.L.P. is continued it is doomed to failure and absolute futility, playing no role at all in the struggle for the successful achievement of workers power in Britain.

The International CLASS STRUGGLE

Volume 1 **WINTER 1936** **Number 2**

PERSPECTIVES OF SPANISH REVOLUTION

By JOAQUIN MAURIN

HOKUM ON PARADE

By Jay Lovestone

AMERICAN LABOR LOOKS AHEAD

By Will Herberg

COMMUNISM AND WAR

60 Pages

25 Cents