

faithful little band of exiles, authors of the Famous "Program" to behold their propaganda efforts rewarded in so unexpected and unheard of a fashion. "Imperialism, mad with rage, destroys itself."

Such in short, are the various elements of the Dramatis Personae who willy-nilly, enacted the tragi-comedy planned by British Imperialism and so skilfully staged by Reuter and the Indian press. Enraged Anglo-Indians, dumbfounded Moderates, trembling Nationalists and gleeful Vanguardist danced momentarily to the tune of the Imperialist piper. But the end of the drama is not yet. The Program, so lovingly planned and so laboriously broadcasted among what was hoped a tiny section of the Indian intelligentsia, by the Vanguard Party, seized upon so ruthlessly and flung to the breeze of countrywide publicity by the cunning Imperialist, will do its own work in its own way, among that section of the population to whose deepest needs and highest aspirations its clauses correspond. The end is not yet in sight. "Imperialism, mad with rage, destroys itself."

If the purpose of the Official Prompter behind Reuter was to terrify the Extremist Nationalists and to draw the loyal Moderates yet more closely within the Imperial embrace, one must congratulate him upon his temporary success. Indian Landlordism and Capitalism have run, shrieking, to the arms of their Protector; so-called Indian Extremism has shudderingly disclaimed all identity or sympathy with a program which does not go farther in its demands than the advanced republicanism of modern Europe. The attitude of both classes is characteristically revealed in their press. Says the liberal "Leader", organ of the Moderates:

"The program is drawn up in accordance with the modified principles of Bolshevism, and is intended to appeal to the cupidity and self-interest of the masses.—We neither believe in Utopias, nor in the efficacy of direct action for attaining them.—In the existing conditions of India, attempts at revolution would lead to a terrible reaction."

Thus it is made clear to the Imperial Overlord that the Liberals, that growing politically-minded class of big industrial capitalists, will stand by the Government against any attempt to upset the existing order, in which they possess a sufficiently large stake. As for the Landlords, always outspokenly Tory in sentiment and notoriously pillars of the Empire, let them speak in the words of the President of the Bengal Landholders' Association, addressing the Viceroy on December 24th:

"Your Excellency can rely on the ungrudging support and sincere assistance of the landlords in the maintenance and preservation of law and order. We trust that Your Excellency's Government will not lend countenance to the agitation which may be engineered by interested parties against the rights and privileges of the Zemindars (landlords) which have been long enjoyed by them, and which have been recognized by the sovereign powers for centuries."

To which His Excellency, the Viceroy, replied:

"You may rest assured that I realize the great services rendered by your class in the past, and that I look to the maintenance of close and cordial relations. You may feel confident that your rights will not be disregarded, and that your aims and aspirations will receive sympathetic consideration at all times.—I am not unmindful that from one quarter, an attack has been made upon your rights and position. I gave you the clearest assurance that it is a mischievous campaign of this kind takes definite shape, you may rely on the government to afford you the fullest support of the Law in combatting it."

We may assume from the above citations, that the Government has been successful in rallying its two main props to meet a threatened (and fictitious) crisis,—the Big Landlords and the ambitious Liberals, constituting the upper strata of the Indian bourgeoisie. This alone was worth the expense of an excessively long cable.

But this is not all. The consternation that reigned in the Extremist camp at the publication of a program gratuitously attributed to Bolshevik sources and coupled with the names of some of the Nationalist leaders threw the entire Congress into confusion worse confounded, and in their extreme haste to white-wash themselves of any evil intentions, certain very interesting confessions of faith have been made, not less interesting for true Indian revolutionaries, determined to overthrow existing evils, than for a government equally determined to maintain them. The class-character of the majority of the Congress Extremists has been revealed for what it is,—petty-bourgeois reformists, bent upon winning for themselves a place in the sun, ready to use the bent shoulders of the masses to climb thereto, but in no way willing to lift those masses higher than their present miserable state. Harken to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, organ of Extremist Nationalism and erstwhile champion of the oppressed proletariat and peasantry:

"Our first duty is to avoid, by every possible means, antagonizing any section or class of our population at this juncture. For India to accept what may at best be described as political and economic experiments as the solution of our problem, will be far from safe. What lines the National State in India will take to work out a reasonable reconciliation between the conflicting interests of landlord and tenant, of capital and labor, must be searched, discovered and adopted by us, after we have secured control of our own state life. In the meantime, all classes or interests in the community must combine to work together."

The Government may rest content, but one interested in the freedom of India is tempted to enquire, "How, without the determined backing of the masses, are you going to secure control of your own state life?" And how, given the inevitable class-affiliation between Indian landlords and capitalists with the Imperial overlord, are you going to make every section of the Indian community combine in cooperation?

The *Independent*, organ of Congress Extremism, writes editorially in its issue of Dec. 24:

"The Program stands condemned on its own merits, because in its plan (of mass action and a countrywide general strike) there is no room whatsoever for Love Force; our faith is in Non-Violent Non-cooperation based on Love Force."

The Government should chuckle, and probably does, but we would enquire: "How are you going to do it when Mr. Gandhi, a greater prophet of Love Force than any one of you, tried it for two years and failed?"

The *Bangalor Katha*, organ of Mr. C. R. Das, himself the author of a new "mass" program, said by the Anglo-Indian press to bear a close and tell-tale resemblance to that of the "Vanguard" party, defines its attitude thus:

"We do not agree entirely with this program. The class which will be victorious in a conflict between classes will lord it over the rest. That state of affairs cannot be called the freedom of the whole country. We want freedom for the entire Indian people,—we are not content with the liberation of a particular class."

The Government, hugging the two richest and most politically minded classes to its bosom, may rejoice at this doctrine of class-reconciliation and freedom for the entire Indian people, but we would point out to Mr. Das and his followers that the experience of that "perfect" democracy, the United States of America, of France and Switzerland and post-war Germany, prove that it cannot be done. The class-domination exists, whether it be of the bourgeoisie or of the proletariat. Champions of the working-class prefer the latter, as in Soviet Russia.

In conclusion, we will quote a few choice sentiments from *The Mussulman*, classical organ of Mohammedan Extremism, at which the Government (theoretically) quakes. Let it quake no longer. The world of Islam, if one may judge by the words of *The Mussulman*, is on the side of the rich and privileged minority, and against the oppressed majority. In its editorial comment of Dec. 29 it declares:

"The Program,—advocates the abolition of landlordism and confiscation of all large estates without any compensation. It is a silly proposal. It advocates nationalization of all public utilities. The acceptance of this proposal means the destruction of all charitable and religious endowments. Neither Muslims nor Hindus will tolerate such interference. The proposal of universal suffrage, if adopted, would mean chaos. Countries which have been enjoying parliamentary institutions for centuries have not yet been able to extend the franchise to every man and woman. The fixing of an eight hour day for five and a half days a week as the maximum duration of work for all laborers, including agricultural laborers, would, instead of furthering their interests, be prejudicial to them and would not, we think, be in the best interests of the country."

So much for religious extremism, which, exposed in its true colors, becomes rank reaction. British Imperialism will sit tight for many a long day, while such philosophy is safely indulged in and propagated in India, both by orthodox Gandhists and Mussulman Khalifatists. The little experiment in melodrama has borne rich fruit for the Government; it has found out many things which it might have, but apparently did not know before.—the bogey of Bolshevism blinded its usually keen intuition. "Imperialism, mad with rage, destroys itself." The Vanguard program of mild social democracy, sown like the Dragon's Teeth throughout the length and breadth of India, thanks to the insensate fear and fury of blind Authority, has sunk deep in the soil and will spring forth, one day, in the shape of new leaders, armed with the power of a new Idea, which will sweep the Indian people on to Victory and Freedom.

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Hullo, Fimmen, Vandervelde & Co.

What has become of your International Strike?

By A. Lozovsky.

Three weeks after the representatives of the Amsterdammers and of the Second and 2½ Internationals, together with the bourgeois pacifists swore that they would prevent a war at any price, French troops marched into Germany. The far sighted apostles of peace had thought of every possibility of war, only this one had never occurred to them.

At the Hague we heard many speeches on *Red militarism*, and on the imperialist intentions of Soviet Russia. Every time that the leaders of the socialist and trade union movement—those leaders whose longing for the ministerial port folio is passionate—happened to speak of Russia, they adopted a particularly pathetic attitude. *Vandervelde* boiled like a samovar. *Jouhaux* exposed the *Red militarism* in fragmentary but powerful terms (he has a very loud voice). *Abramovitch* wept on the bosom of the pacific professors; pacifist ladies wiped his tears with their aprons, and were for their part plunged into the deepest sorrow because Soviet Russia is not built up on the pattern of their magnificently democratic and liberal fatherlands. When the Russian delegates made the proposal to consider the question of the Lausanne Conference and the impending occupation of the Ruhr, the reformist and pacifist gentlemen saw in this proposal only a despicable trick of the Bolsheviks against liberty-loving France, and found it more convenient to put our proposition under the tablecloth.

How many beautiful speeches against war were made! All the terrors of war were vividly reviewed, and painted in the most glaring colors. Radek, Rothstein and myself, were so touched that we wiped our tears away with our fists. "Now there will be no more war," we thought; "it is no joke when Vandervelde, Jouhaux, Huysmans, Renaudel, Thomas, MacDonald, and the other Grumbachs flourish their hands about like this! Mars will certainly be frightened away by these long-winded phrases and astronomical gestures!" After having wept with emotion for four days, we proposed to the speechifiers of the Amsterdam

and Second Internationals, on the fifth day, that we cease flourishing and really get to business in the matter of war against war. But our proposals wounded their finest feelings. When we were leaving the congress hall, one of the leaders of the reformist French C.G.T., Dumoulin, asked me: "How many renegades are there, in your opinion, at this congress?" To this I replied: "You will be able to ascertain the exact number of renegades at the first military conflict". You can now draw up the list, citizen Dumoulin, and do not forget to let us know what you personally have done towards organizing the international strike.

That which every body could see was going to happen, that which should have been energetically counteracted at the Hague, has happened. The French and Belgians, creators of peace, who swore to prevent any bloodshed in the future, are sitting at home and praying to the League of Nations, but do not breathe a syllable about a general strike! The only real protest against Poincaré's adventure, the only serious attempt to hold back the wild beasts of war, came from the Communist parties of France and Germany, and from the revolutionary unions of both countries. The printer's ink is not yet dry on the pacifist resolutions of the Hague, and the leaders of this congress, the leaders of the reformist and socialist trade union movement of Belgium and France, have already proved what anyone could foresee, namely, that the interests of the bourgeoisie are nearer to their hearts than those of the proletariat. Dumoulin can now make a count of the number of renegades in his own organization. And if he goes on to count the renegades in Belgium and in other neighbouring countries, he will find many old and familiar faces, the same who at the Hague raved against *Red militarism* and against the representatives of Soviet Russia.

Once again the reformist workers have been deluded, once again they have experienced an unheard of betrayal, another

victory of class peace. How often will the European workers have to be rudely awakened from these delusions before they cast aside the reformist-pacifist anaesthetic? How often? It is difficult to say. But what is certain is, that in the period between the Hague conference and the Ruhr occupation the workers have grown not merely three weeks wiser, but have gained the experience of years.

Hullo, Jouhaux, Henderson, Fimmen, Vandervelde, Dumoulin, and all the peace apostles of the Hague! What has become of your international strike against war?

POLITICS

The Amsterdammers and the Occupation of the Ruhr

By F. Maçon.

According to their own representations, the Amsterdam leaders are the greatest collection of 20th century heroes. What have they not done already for the proletariat. How they have defended the interests of the proletariat tooth and nail in every emergency! . . . All the newspapers are full of their heroic deeds. At the meetings at which speeches are delivered by Messrs. Fimmen and Oudegeest, they relate to their astounded audiences the histories of the many battles in which they successfully fought against the class enemy. . . . of the battles they are going to fight in the future. Their one aim and object in life is to fight against the Versailles treaty and its consequences. Even in their dreams they are occupied with the problem of emancipating the proletariat from the disastrous effects of the Versailles treaty. They are well aware that the Versailles treaty brings no peace, but is a constant danger for all, a seething volcano.

When, in April 1921, after the London ultimatum, it was feared that the soldiers of the allies might march into the Ruhr area, the Amsterdam International issued an appeal to the allied governments begging them, "to abstain from new sanctions, as the offers made by the German government, offers whose fulfilment was guaranteed by the German labor organizations, pave the way for a peaceful solution." The German trade unions, on their part, were placed under the obligation of doing their utmost to induce the German government to pay. At that time no occupation of the Ruhr area took place; perhaps the guarantees of the Amsterdammers sufficed for the Entente governments.

On September 14, 1922, the German Amsterdammers in the *Neue Welt* called a demonstration in Berlin, at which Fimmen, secretary of the Amsterdam International, spoke to the following effect:

"I may remind you that when the occupation of the Ruhr area was proposed before, we did our utmost to prevent it, and went so far as to be ready to reply with a general strike in the case of occupation; to-night I declare, on behalf of 25 million organized workers, that, should an invasion of the Ruhr area be again threatened, the International Trade Union Federation will do its duty."

This declaration of Fimmen's might lead us to assume that the Amsterdammers would really proclaim a general strike. But the cautious Fimmen provided for the necessary reservations by violent polemics against the German trade union leaders and the organ of the German Trade Union Federation whose nationalist attitude renders any action of the world proletariat in favor of the German workers extremely difficult!

On November 27, Edo Fimmen wrote in the *Vorwärts*:

"The most visible evidence of the will and determination of the trade unions to wage war on war, was evinced at the trade union congress held in Rome in April of this year. This congress was attended by 107 delegates representing a total of about 24 million organized workers, and imposed on the workers organized in the International Trade Union Federation the duty of counteracting all wars threatened in the future, by every possible means at the disposal of the Labor movement, and of preventing the actual outbreak of a war by the proclamation and carrying out of an international general strike. . . . The International trade union federation assumes the leadership in the war against war. . . . The world peace conference convened for December 10 at The Hague will gather together all the organizations claiming adhesion to the resolution passed at Rome."

The Hague conference, which has meanwhile taken place, only succeeded in manifesting the complete hollowness of the Amsterdam promises. The motion proposed by comrade Radek,

to unite all the forces of the proletariat into one united front against the danger of war threatened by the impending occupation of the Ruhr district, and call a 24 hours protest strike against the belligerent intentions of the bourgeoisie, was answered with chilly silence. The Amsterdammers swept the motion aside. In the *Metal Workers' Journal*, Fritz Kummer rightly points out that the attitude taken by the Amsterdam trade union leaders towards Radek's motion gave every reason to fear the worst. But the Amsterdammers at the Hague, left no room for doubt, that, should the danger of war arise, they would behave precisely as they did in 1914. This was expressed most clearly of all in the speech of Vandervelde, who maintained the right of national defence against armed attack; on this point he received the most lively support from the chairman of the German trade union federation, Grassmann.

The occupation of the Ruhr has become an actual fact, and the Amsterdam International has the opportunity of convincing the whole world of its heroism. The German Amsterdammers are waiting on tenterhooks for the International trade union federation to rush to their aid, and perform some miracle having for its main object the removal of all necessity for exertion on the part of the German trade union leaders. The *Vorwärts* triumphantly reports that on January 16 the International Trade Union Federation consulted on "organizational measures for the energetic combating of militarism and the danger of war". But in the official communication of the I.T.U.F. we read:

"It was unanimously resolved to enter into immediate communication with all affiliated national bureaus, in order to consider the possibility of decisive action, and to adopt preparatory measures for the steps to be taken, so that the workers of all countries may be in readiness to answer any summons made by the International Trade Union Federation and its affiliated organizations, so that the resolutions passed at Rome and the Hague may, if necessary, be converted into deeds. At the same time the bureau warns the workers against any attempt from this or the other side to induce them to plunge into ill-considered and unprepared actions. Above all, the bureau urgently warns the German workers against permitting themselves to be misled for nationalist and chauvinist actions."

The warning to the workers, not to allow themselves to be persuaded by others to plunge into "ill-considered and unprepared action", appears to be the reply of the Amsterdammers to the open letter of the Communist International and the Red International of Labor Unions, in which these two organizations appeal to the Amsterdammers, and to the 2 and 2½ Internationals, to prepare a joint action in the form of a protest mass strike. The warning to the German workers, not to let themselves be misled for nationalist and chauvinist actions, is the counter-assurance of the leaders of the International Trade Union Federation that they will undertake nothing against the occupation of the Ruhr, for they will prove to the German Workers by hundreds of examples that the workers have let themselves be misled for nationalist and chauvinist purposes by their party and trade union leaders, that they have fought on the side of Stinnes and company, instead of carrying out their promises, made in April 1920 to the Amsterdam trade union international, of fighting against Stinnes for the purpose of fulfilling the reparations.

Meanwhile the proposals of the Communists and revolutionary trade unions for joint action against French and German imperialism have been insolently scoffed at by the German Amsterdammers. The action taken by the revolutionary leaders of France against Poincaré encounters a conspiracy of silence. In the appeal issued by the German Trade Union Federation, in which the workers are summoned to resistance against the Ruhr occupation, the united front with the bourgeoisie is openly preached, and the attempt was made to obtain the signatures of great industrial magnates to the appeal. Instead of a joint fight of the whole proletariat against all war mongers and exploiters we are offered a united front with them, with workers and employers joint protest demonstrations, and 2 minutes "standing still in the street, to meditate on the disastrous consequences of the war". This is the fight put up by the German Amsterdammers. The French Amsterdammers have also issued an appeal, and in this we read that the occupation of the Ruhr district is a dangerous error.

"an error, because the burden of reparations will be increased by considerable military burdens, by the maintenance and provisioning of a thickly populated district, without there being any possibility of showing what advantage is to be gained."

In the Belgian Chamber on January 10, Vandervelde set the tune for the light of the Amsterdammers against the occupation of the Ruhr. His words were as follows:

We are unanimously agreed, that our claims and those of the French and Italians, are sacred claims, and must be paid by Germany. France has given her blood, and there is no responsibility greater than that borne by Germany; the great German industrial undertakings remain a constant threat against peace".

Vandervelde's words were emphasized by his colleague Georges Hubin, who then continued:

"I regret that the *Vorwärts* has recommended the workers of the Ruhr area to call a protest strike. The German Social Democrats, who have done nothing to prevent Stinnes and his like from enriching themselves, recommend the general strike as soon as it is a question of working for payment of the reparations".

On January 20 we read in the *Vorwärts*:

"Whether the devastations involved the property of the poor or of the rich, whether the men who have been dragged to prison for resisting illegal violence have acted as friends or foes to the labor movement, is all the same! The worker's instinctive feeling for right and human dignity fully recognizes that all these questions are not of paramount importance at this moment. We could almost wish that among the arrested, on whose behalf the workers sprang forward so courageously there had really been an open opponent of the labor movement." The attitude taken by the workers would then appear in a clearer light, and the respect in which they are held by friends and foes would be increased".

The attitude thus adopted by the German Amsterdammers will doubtlessly give Mr. Fimmen the opportunity of ceasing the preparations for a defensive action on the part of the workers. And this will be an opportunity for the Amsterdammers to prove, as the Germans, Belgians, and French have already done, that the Amsterdam International is merely a society for misleading the proletariat and entertaining the capitalist wolves. In the whole of the German trade union press there is only one voice to be heard which not only holds aloof from the national humbug of the German trade union federation, and of the Social Democrats, but calls upon its members to take action against it. In the organ of the Butchers' Union we read:

Let us beware of the agitation against foreigners, provoked by nationalist circles; no colleague should participate in this swindle. We must not forget that the French workers are just as little satisfied with the proceedings of the French rulers, and are raising loud protests. We warn all colleagues to keep clear of all nationalist jingoism".

In the hour of the occupation of the Ruhr, the whole of the active elements of the Amsterdammers have become reconverted to nationalism. They follow the same path as in August 1914. The passive elements, on the other hand, send telegrams of petition to the League of Nations, that this may appear on the scene as the Angel of Peace, and bring salvation to all countries from the evil of capitalism. The demi-gods of the Amsterdam league of heroes cannot endure the common struggle of the proletariat of all countries against Versailles and capitalism. In such struggles they cannot deck themselves in frock coat and silk hat, cannot strike upon their perfumed shirt fronts. The fight against Versailles and against the Ruhr occupation will be carried out by the revolutionary masses alone, without setting the Amsterdam heroes into motion.

Open Letter

To the Executive Committee of
The British Labour Party,

London.

Gentlemen:

Out of the 228 men sent up for trial in connection with the riots in the village of Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces, 172 have been sentenced to death by imperialist justice. The history of the case may not be unknown to you. In the winter of 1920-21 the discontent among the poor peasantry of the United Provinces, where Feudalism reigns supreme under the protection of the British government, was very acute. In many a place this discontent broke out into open revolt against the oppression of landlordism. The British government, which always poses as the protector of the tenant and has given some legal shape to this pretension in order to secure the "loyalty" of the peasant masses, however, did not hesitate a moment to send armed forces as soon as the "life and property" of the loyal landowners were menaced by poor cultivators driven to revolt by

It seems that Fritz Thyssen is not an open opponent of the workers in the eyes of the *Vorwärts* people; all he wants to do is to abolish the eight hour day, in which aim he is aided by Schippel, Cohen, and Kalitzky,—good social democrats. . . . Ed.

hunger. Thus the traditional illusion of the Indian peasantry about the "benevolence" of the *sirhar* was shaken and they found themselves face to face with the forces of State coercion allied with tyrannical landlordism. This combination of forces led up to the incident at Chauri Chaura, which was brought about by Police provocation.

The men, arrested after the Chauri Chauri riots and after the outbreaks that subsequently spread in the surrounding districts had been suppressed by unrestrained use of bayonets and other forms of terrorism, were charged with the "murder" of a number of policemen at Chauri Chaura. 22 policemen were killed in the affray; but the dispensers of imperialist justice conveniently overlooked the facts that the affray was begun by the policemen firing on peaceful demonstrators, and that the number of men killed and wounded in consequence of firing volleys on a crowd of several thousand must have exceeded the casualties on the government side.

One hundred and seventy-two men, many of whom were hungry peasants and who were so hungry because they had been forced to contribute too heavily to the fund for helping the "war for democracy", stand sentenced to be "hanged by the neck until dead". This legal murder is being perpetrated in the name of "law and order" and "good government". The real crime committed by these was to rebel against unbearable economic exploitation and to demonstrate the desire to fight for their rights. In doing so, they had to challenge the feudal absolutism which flourishes in India under the benign protection of British Democracy. These men will legally murdered for having spontaneously expressed the noble principles that inspired the glorious Peasant Revolts of Great Britain and other European countries. In order to defend the rights of landlordism, which constitutes its most loyal support, British Imperialism is committing a barbarous deed which will even surpass its own none too admirable records in India. This prostitution of justice will be unparalleled in its majestic vindictiveness and brutality.

On behalf of the toiling millions of India, and in the name of "justice and fair play", in which you believe so implicitly, we call upon you to lead the British working class to intervene and demand the reprieve of the condemned champions of the Indian peasantry. We call upon the British Labour Party to exert pressure upon the government by means of Parliamentary action, as well as by strikes and demonstrations in case parliamentary action fails to bring about the desired effect. You must take these steps if you want to prove that you are not a party to the imperialism of the British bourgeoisie. If you fail to act in this tragic moment, you will go down in history with the blood of the Indian peasantry on your head, and you will stand charged with the betrayal of those principles of "freedom and democracy" that you claim to advocate. At the same time we appeal directly to the British proletariat to repudiate your leadership in case you fail to act and thus condone this legal murder by infuriated Imperialism.

Zurich, February 2, 1923.

M. N. Roy.

For The Communist Party of India.

The International Situation in 1922

By M. I. Maisky (Moscow).

During the year 1922 the wave of revolution ebbed. This ebb-tide had already set in during 1920, so that last year brought nothing fundamentally new or interesting.

The receding tide of revolution is synonymous with the rising flood of reaction. This was very clearly expressed in the course of the past year in the sphere of politics. In both large and small countries, in victorious and vanquished lands, in England and in Estonia, in France and in Albania, the same tendency of evolution is everywhere to be observed.

The political attack of capital assumed its acutest form in Italy. The governments of Bonomi and Facta showed a complete paralysis of official state power. They scarcely had the intention of doing anything, but if they had had any such intention, they would not have been able to carry it out, for the Fascisti ruled the country, and have now made themselves actual masters of Italy, after two years of fighting against the proletariat.

In the other great countries of Europe events have not been so dramatic as in Italy. But there have been many vacillations and changes, differing only in degree but not in quality from the events in Italy.

Let us take England. The most important political occurrence in this country last year, was the change of government and the new parliamentary election. Lloyd George, the cleverest

and most elastic leader of European capitalism, was overthrown, and his place taken by that petty-bourgeois simpleton Bonar Law. Conservative liberalism has been replaced by liberal imperialism. The results of the new elections signify a move to the right, and a step towards the open dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The attitude adopted by the new government with regard to the most important question for the English proletariat—unemployment—may serve as an example. Lloyd George talked a great deal about unemployment, and even did something (although by no means as much as he talked) to relieve it. Bonar Law will not even grant an interview to the representatives of the unemployed. This is the first snow-drop. It will soon be followed by other harbingers of bourgeois Spring, a Spring which may be more terrible to the working masses than the severest winter frost.

Let us take a glance at Germany. This is a republic without republicans. The state constitution is adorned with republican garb, but the whole administrative apparatus, and the whole military mechanism, are in the hands of the monarchists. The government commands—the army and the officials do not obey. But even this powerless government of powerless republicans does not suit the capitalists. Stanes presses the button, and the scene changes. With resigns, and the social democratic president calls upon the industrial magnate Cuno to take his place. But even the Cuno cabinet cannot satisfy the growing appetite of the industrial magnates. It is not energetic enough, not sufficiently permeated with the spirit of feudalism. The Cuno government is only regarded as a stepping stone to a full-blown cabinet of the capitalist dictatorship. We see that the hands of the political indicator have turned considerably to the right. But the hour has not yet struck for reaction in Germany.

And in France? In 1922 the black reactionary bloc ruled also in the land of the third republic, and as time passes the reactionary elements of this bloc ascend higher towards government. Briand was displaced by Poincaré. To-day even Poincaré is too weak. To-day he is suspected of sympathy with the "left". A new government is appearing on the horizon, headed by Tardieu, whose head is completely impervious against the penetration of any statesmanlike idea or political conception.

In France the scales were already heavily weighted with reaction, and 1922 not only brought no relief, but rather added fresh weight.

The line of political development of the four largest European countries thus shows the same fundamental tendency; an abrupt move to the right, towards open bourgeois dictatorship. We can observe similar developments in the smaller countries, as in Belgium, Holland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Scandinavian countries.

In the United States, where united capital has still firm ground beneath its feet, where the bourgeoisie is not yet threatened by any immediate danger of revolution, we observe the same "Fascist" evolution. But we observe here at the same time the growing resistance of the proletariat, a temporary slackening in the capitalist offensive, and a re-grouping in the camp of the bourgeoisie, as shown by the defeat of the republicans at the last election.

The political attack made by capital has been accompanied everywhere by an economic attack of equal violence. The year 1922 was a year of falling wages, of strong pressure on the trade union organizations.

The past year saw many severe conflicts between capital and labor in all large and small bourgeois countries, conflicts which in most cases, ended with the complete or partial defeat of the workers. These defeats were, in almost every case, to a great extent due to the treacherous attitude of the reformist leaders. This was seen in Germany in the strike of the South German metal workers and railwaymen, in England in the engineering struggle, which affected about a million workers, and in the strike of the American miners, etc.

The move to the right may also be observed in international relations. The three great questions—Germany, Russia, and the Near East—have become extraordinarily acute. The capitalist world, or, strictly speaking, the Entente, made an attempt towards a solution of these three questions. But the attempt ended in a great fiasco. This failure was due to capitalist reaction getting the upper hand of the more cunning capitalist liberalism.

Lloyd George wanted to solve the Russian problem by means of a compromise acceptable to both sides, and for this purpose convened the conferences at Genoa and The Hague. Capitalist reaction, chiefly represented by the French government and by the City of London, got the upper hand, and now, after Genoa and The Hague, the Russian question is farther from a satisfactory solution than it was a year ago.

Lloyd George was also anxious to solve the German question on the lines of liberal-capitalist reason. For a time it

seemed as if Lloyd George had overcome Poincaré's resistance. But here again capitalist reaction defeated capitalist liberalism. When the German question will be solved is still quite uncertain, more uncertain than a year ago.

The solution of the third question, that of the Near East, now being attempted at Lausanne, deserves the greatest interest. England—supported by France, Italy, and a whole troop of lesser vassals—is trying to create another treaty of Sevres. In August 1920, the great powers, without consulting Turkey or Russia, "decided" the fate of the Near East by a stroke of their official pens. They converted Turkey into a colony, and completely excluded Russia from the solution of the Straits problem. But they reckoned without their host. And the host speedily showed that he was not to be trifled with. The events of the year 1922 tore the treaty of Sevres to shreds. The conference of Lausanne was intended to solve the problem in a new manner, that is, in agreement with the host. But what do we see actually? Not only does Lord Curzon not even seek a way of compromise with Turkey and Russia, he actually throws every possible obstacle in the way of such a compromise. If Curzon remains master of the situation, he cannot attain, under the most favorable circumstances, more than a new Sevres treaty, with the same organic defects and the same inevitable results. What does this signify? One thing only: Even in the Near Eastern question capitalist reaction has won the upper hand over capitalist liberalism, and the noble lord in Lausanne is merely the mouthpiece of British Fascism.

As regards the prospects for the future, in Europe, revolution is at the ebb-tide. The bourgeoisie is increasing in power. The proletariat has passed over to a defensive attitude. Capital attacks, and the working class defends itself, but not always successfully. A sad picture! And yet pessimism was never more out of place than to-day.

The upward movement of reaction cannot and will not last long. European capitalism has received its death wound. It is not dying rapidly, its death agony is protracted, but it cannot rise again. A Fascist dictatorship may throw the proletariat to the ground for a time, Mussolini and Curzon may cause the masses much unnecessary suffering, but they cannot save a bourgeois economy which has gotten into a blind alley.

But even in the matter of a dictatorship the bourgeoisie has but poor prospects. Two great obstacles bar the way. In the first place the Comintern, which, though still not sufficiently strong, is none the less of immense significance. This great organism, which at present has but little flesh on its bones, gathers new strength from the supply of fresh proletarian blood, so soon as the situation assumes a revolutionary character. And the Fascist terror is bound to lend the situation such a character. The second obstacle in the way of a capitalist dictatorship is Soviet Russia. The fact that a gigantic state, actually ruled by workers and peasants, really does exist, weighs like a nightmare on the consciousness of the European bourgeoisie.

As long as the Comintern and Soviet Russia continue to exist, European reaction cannot raise its head very high, Fascist possibilities are limited, and every grade of bourgeois dictatorship obtained under such circumstances furthers the revolutionary education of the workers. The Italian Fascism will not annihilate the Italian proletarian movement, but it will certainly annihilate the reformist opportunist delusions of this movement. It will be the same in other countries. The epoch of reactionary offensive brings much suffering and sorrow to the working masses of the west, but it steals their heart and strengthens their will. And thus the bourgeois dictatorship of to-day paves the way for the proletarian dictatorship of to-morrow, for the all-European socialist revolution. And there are many signs that this day is not so far distant.

The Rulers of Lithuania and the Occupation of Memel

By A. L-r, Lithuania.

The rulers of Lithuania, this young "democratic" republic, have learnt much during the few years of their political independence. They know very well that the maintenance of the god-designed "order" in their country, that is, the maintaining and securing of democratic powers of exploitation and oppression in the hands of the large agrarians, profiteers, clergy, and ambitious soldiers, requires as a first premise the ruthless crushing of the class war movement among the proletariat of town and country, and among the landless peasants. The theory and practice of this knowledge have been learnt by them in the hard school of Tsarism, where the blows fell on their own shoulders. The Lithuanian reactionaries have even improved on these methods by a few genuinely Lithuanian variations—corresponding to the level of culture.

Hundreds and thousands of revolutionary socialists and communists have been languishing for years in the prisons of the republic, awaiting indictment and trial. A few weeks ago the comrades in the fort of Kovno carried out a hunger strike on the occasion of the death of comrade Yanusevski, due to tuberculosis contracted in prison. The Lithuanian labor press of all languages (with the exception of the tame *Sozialdemokrat*), even the purely trade union organizations, are exposed to continual persecutions and reprisals, and are kept fighting for their very existence. All strike agitators are severely punished. The clergy, on the other hand, are not only permitted to carry on with impunity their well organized system for crushing out every spark of natural intelligence in their followers, but enjoy the fullest support of the authorities. The profiteers flourish and carouse, the workers sink deeper and deeper into want and misery. In such wise acts the Lithuanian bourgeoisie, so it and its accomplices protect the sacred principles of democracy.

So much for the policy with regard to internal affairs. The politicians and diplomats of reactionary Lithuania were not spectators of the diplomatic performances of Brest-Litovsk and Versailles, or of the "actions" of d'Annunzio in Fiume and Zeligovsky in Vilna without profiting thereby. With great acuteness they recognized the main principle on which the policy of the present rulers of Greater Europe is based, and these are the footsteps they follow.

Lithuanian troops (the "Iron Wolf" is not a "band", but an organized and equipped division of troops) have occupied the Memel district.

The Lithuanian government, which has been continually protesting against the robbery since Vilna was occupied by the Poles (it is characteristic that at that time Zeligovsky's troops were designated as "bands"), and appealed to the "conscience and justice of humanity" as incorporated in the League of Nations, this same government of human conscience and justice now shields the conquerors of Memel, and lends them support.

There is no doubt but that the whole Memel enterprise is favored by England. It is one of the many moves in the game being played by the great imperialist powers since Versailles. England (England's bourgeoisie) is anxious that—for the time being at least—Lithuania should not be subjugated by Poland. Naturally it is commercial interests of various kinds which play a leading part here.

In addition to this, England is in any case entirely opposed to the fulfilment of Poland's wish to incorporate the Memel district. Poland is for too much the servitor of Poincaré and of French capital, and this would signify a fresh strengthening of French, that is, anti-English influence.

But the Lithuanian rulers, who are willing to aid English capital by pushing the working masses of Lithuania, Memel, and East Prussia, about the board like pawns, have overlooked one point in their calculation towards realizing their imperialist designs: that the day is approaching when the international proletariat will seize power, and put an end to the imperialist policy of international capital. And then the Lithuanian proletariat, at the present time intimidated by the treachery of the social democrats, and shrinking from any revolutionary action, will be strong enough to burst its chains, and to set up a dictatorship which will change the republic of profiteers and parsons into a republic of the proletariat.

The task of the Lithuanian proletariat is to make it clear to the rulers of Lithuania that the working masses are not to be trifled with. This first urgent duty of the Lithuanian proletariat, that is, unrelenting class war against the national Lithuanian bourgeoisie, must be carried out in a common fighting front with the proletariat of East Prussia, now engaged in the sharpest conflict with the East Prussian bourgeoisie.

"The Communist Danger"

Poincaré's government appears to be contemplating an extensive state action against the communists. The preparations made against the "inner enemy" are equal to those undertaken for attacking the "outer enemy" in the Ruhr area.

The existence of the joint committee of action of the CGTU and the French CP has caused the government much anxiety. After the decision regarding the occupation of the Ruhr Valley had been reached in the French ministerial council, it was decided at the same time to attack the communists. As may be seen from an official communiqué, the government wanted to prevent a sitting of the committee of action at which the delegates to the Essen conference were to give their reports. A special session was convened for this purpose by the ministry for internal affairs, and was participated in by: the minister of justice, the minister for the interior, the state attorney and the attorney general, and the head of the political police. This session

resolved on the arrest of the following communists: *Monmousseau*, general secretary of the C.G.T.U., *Maranne*, district secretary of Seine and Oise, *Pietri*, secretary of the Youth Union, *Gourdeaux*, member of the executive of the C.P.F., *Treint*, secretary of the F.C.P., *Lartigue*, secretary of the C.G.T.U. These comrades were accordingly arrested in their dwellings in the early morning hours of Wednesday, January 10. Their apartments were searched at the same time.

Further, in St. Quentin three trade union leaders were arrested: *Massot*, secretary of the Paris metal workers union, *Jacob*, secretary of the textile workers union, and *Semard*, secretary of the railwaymen's union. They were arrested on their return journey from Essen. Another secretary of the C.G.T.U., *Cazals*, has been imprisoned, according to the *Humanite*.

At the same time the premises of the *Humanite* and the C.G.T.U. were searched. In the *Humanite* office the room and cupboards of comrade *Cachin* were broken into, despite the "immunity" assured by the laws of the French "democratic" republic to the deputies of its chamber.

At the first hearing the arrested were informed that they were charged with "plotting against the inner and outer security of the state". According to the news which we have received up to now, the arrested comrades have selected the following Counsel for their defence: *Monmousseau* the barrister *Torrès*, *Maranne* the editor of *Humanite*, *Delhay* and *Treint*, comrade *Maurice Paz*, *Pietri* the deputy, *Vaillant-Couturier*, and the international secretary of the union of ex-service men, *Albert Fourier*. The cause of our comrades thus appears to be likely to develop into a great trial for high treason.

This violent coup on Poincaré's part has stirred the workers of the whole of France to the profoundest depths. The *Humanite* breathes a splendid fighting spirit. The most important unions have already protested against this act of brutality, in their central committees, and everywhere the same will is expressed: Now or never! The joint committee of action continues to meet, it summons the workers of the whole of France to hold mighty protest demonstrations against the policy of interior and exterior violence pursued by Poincaré's government. Fresh committees of action are being formed all over the country. The centrals of the C.G.T.U. and of the Communist party of France are making appeals to the French working class.

Poincaré has sown the wind, and will reap the storm. The government of Loucheur and Schneider, the government of the Iron Works Committee, imagines that it can destroy the communist movement. Communism in France will emerge stronger than ever from this its first great combat. In the *Populaire*, the paper of French social democracy, Leon Blum complains that the French government is doing the work of the communists. "It really looks", he writes, "as if all the governments who follow one another have resolved to impart life and vigour to communism. In giving way to the threats of the royalists, the governments play into the hands of the communists."

Every French workman can now clearly grasp the connection between Poincaré's inner and outer policies. The French comrades have thoroughly realized that the whole object is the common enslavement of the French and German workers. Let us reach out across the frontiers, and join in the common fight against international capitalism.

ECONOMICS

The World Economic Situation in the Fourth Quarter of 1922

By E. Varga.

The Reparations Question and the Anglo-French Antagonism

At the present moment (beginning of January), the main point of interest is the break which has taken place in Paris between France and England. This event cannot have caused any surprise to our readers. In our report on the London conference in July 1922 we had already stated our conclusions:

"The Entente still exists. But the English Parliament recently granted an extraordinary subsidy of £100,000 for the study of means of defence against poisonous gases, and further two million pounds for the building of 500 new war aeroplanes. And when the member of the Lower House, Wedgwood, addressed the question to Lloyd George, whether these aeroplanes were necessary in view of France's extensive armaments, Lloyd George replied: "In adopting these measures we have taken all circumstances into consideration".

If we study the documents of the January conference in Paris, we arrive at the conclusion that the breach in the Entente is to be attributed to the same causes which had already rendered the first London conference in July, and the second conference in December of last year, so lacking in tangible results. The cause is the conflict of interests of the two European imperialist powers: England and France. The reparations question is only a small part of this world wide antagonism.

It is not our task here to recapitulate the whole entangled history of the reparations question. We shall merely touch upon the main tendency of its development. At the time of the conclusion of peace, the victors were of the opinion—without in the least examining Germany's paying capacity—that Germany had to pay for all the damages suffered by the allied states during the war. After a time the decisive question became one of arriving at a correct estimate of what Germany was able to pay. And as Germany's paying capacity is very small, every succeeding phase of the reparations negotiations reduced the figure of Germany's obligations. In January 1921, the total obligation was fixed at 226 milliard gold marks. In the ultimatum of May 5, 1921, the reparations were fixed at 132 milliards gold marks. But at the same time it was obvious that this sum was not to be taken seriously, for interest bearing bonds were issued only to the amount of 50 milliard gold marks, while the remaining 82 milliards remained without interest and undistributed until further notice.

Nothing but the fear of public opinion in England and France kept the allies from stating candidly that they did not hope to get any more than 50 milliards out of Germany. As Keynes predicted, Germany proved incapable of paying even the sum fixed in the London ultimatum: 2 milliards gold marks and 26 per cent of the export. A moratorium was thus granted for that year were fixed at 720 million gold marks and 1450 millions in kind. But in 1922 Germany could not raise even this sum, and a fresh moratorium had to be granted for the last 5 months; the payments due to Belgium were covered by treasury notes to be paid later.

As we have seen, no agreement could be reached between England and France on the question of this moratorium. Already Poincaré had produced his demand that no moratorium be granted to Germany without a "productive pledge". At that time the question was passed on unsolved to the Reparations Commission, and as the demand concerned was a special one of Belgium's, France had not the possibility of pressing forward to the breaking point at that time.

A circumstance playing an important rôle here, is the existence of two antagonist tendencies in French politics. While the great peasant masses, pensioners, and officials, desire a peaceful policy, and only wish for the stabilization and possible improvement of the rate of exchange of the franc, there are, on the other hand, wide strata of heavy industrial undertakings striving for a military and imperialist policy. This policy is dictated by the necessity of combining French ores with German coal; the attempts to bring this about by peaceful negotiations with the German bourgeoisie have so far been without avail. It must here be taken into consideration that the consequence of a policy of violence—the further depreciation of the franc—is by no means undesirable to the French capitalist. Depreciation of the franc signifies an automatic reduction in wages, and French heavy industry, rendered dependent on extensive exports (by having gained Lorraine, and by the combination with the iron industry of Luxemburg and Belgium), would find its struggle for the world markets facilitated by the low value of the franc. It must finally be taken into consideration that France's finances are on the verge of ruin, and that she has already expended 100 milliards of francs for the restoration of the devastated regions, without having received any large cash payment from Germany. It is thus comprehensible that, despite the fear of war like adventures prevailing among wide strata of the people, the whole of bourgeois public opinion nevertheless firmly supports Poincaré in the question of "productive pledges". The antagonism which has split the Entente is not a new one. At the London conference of last summer, England refused to accede to the measures demanded by France, demands in all essentials the same as those now formulated.

It may be assumed that the events of the last quarter of 1922, are in general known to our readers. After the Reparation Commission had visited Berlin in the beginning of October, Bradbury produced a plan for a 5 years' moratorium. To this Barthou replied, on the 25th of October, that a moratorium could not be granted without pledges, and that the reparations question would have to be solved together with the question of the interallied debts. The same was repeated by Poincaré, in his Senate speech of November 9. He said:

"On behalf of the French government, I declare that we will not tolerate a further reduction of French demands, and Parliament and country alike support me in this . . . I have shown that German industry is enjoying actual privileges behind a show of misery. A great part of the revenues of the country are free from any taxation whatever, and enrich the treasuries of the great industrial magnates or of their foreign banking accounts."

He repeated the demands he had formulated in London, as follows:

"A 60 per cent participation in the proceeds of certain industries, erection of a customs line around the Ruhr area,—collection of taxes in the occupied German territory, and collection of the proceeds of the state mines in the Ruhr area and of the forests in the various provinces of Germany."

There then followed, on November 14, the official note of the German government to the Reparations Commission, requesting a moratorium for three or four years for all payments, whether in cash or kind, and further, a foreign credit of at least 500 million gold marks. In return for this, Germany offers: action towards the stabilization of the mark; the German Reichsbank is to place 500 million gold marks, in gold or securities, at the disposal of this action. As soon as the rate of exchange of the mark will have regained confidence at home, the German government will raise an inner gold loan. Even during the period of the moratorium one half of the proceeds of the internal loan, and the whole of the foreign loan, are to be used to pay reparations.

This measure is to bring about a stabilization of the mark. Essentially the same plan is contained in the letter sent by Cuno, representing the new government, to the English prime minister, on December 9. Both German propositions were rejected.

It was under these circumstances that the London conference met. Here the conflicting interests of England and France clashed. While France maintained that the German state was depreciating the mark and steering towards bankruptcy intentionally, in order to avoid paying the reparations, Britain was of the opinion that Germany's economics were actually ruined. "According to all information which I have received," said Bonar Law, "Germany is on the brink of collapse. I regret having to say this, but I believe it to be true. The tragical thing about it is that there can doubtless be no improvement for Germany until the mark is stabilized, but that the experience of the whole world, our own experience during the past year, and the opinion of every political economist, go to show that precisely the attempt to stabilize the mark will lead to the breakdown of industry which we ourselves have experienced. We must keep all this in view."

He formulated the question as follows: "What is the best method of getting out of Germany the amount which it should pay?" The Allies could not agree on the method, for France demanded *productive guarantees*, that is, the occupation of German territory, while the English were of the opinion that such a procedure would bring about Germany's complete economic ruin without gaining the hoped for payments for France.

The unbridged chasm between England and France having thus become apparent, France set to work in the Reparation Commission, in agreement with Belgium and Italy, to create the legal premises required for an invasion of Germany. It was decided on December 27, against the vote of the English representative, that Germany had become guilty of a voluntary default by the incomplete delivery of the wood ordered. This verdict was delivered in spite of the fact that Germany offered to deliver the shortage by March 31, 1923. It was further decided that the oft-mentioned difference between a "default" and a "voluntary default" does not exist, that the two terms were synonymous. After these preparations the conference of the Allies began on January 2. England as well as France brought ready-made solutions to this conference. We shall briefly outline the substance of these two propositions in the next section.

IN THE R. I. L. U.

No Instructions from Moscow — No War against the Bourgeoisie

(R.I.L.U.) The revolutionary miners affiliated to the Red International of Labor Unions consider it necessary to convert into deeds the words spoken by their representatives at The Hague. They have made a proposal that the Miners' International affiliated to the Amsterdam Trade Union International should join forces and call a 24 hours protest strike of the miners

in all countries, against the occupation of the Ruhr and against the dangers of war. This proposal, signed by Comrade A. Katinin on behalf of the Russian Miners' Union, the Union of Hand and Brain Workers of Germany, the United Miners' Federation of France, the Miners' Union of Alsace-Lorraine, the Bulgarian Miners' Union, and the Federation of Chilean Miners, and addressed to the secretary of the reformist international, Frank Hodges, reads as follows:

"The occupation of the Ruhr area is an attack on the German and French miners. The international situation has become so acute that the outbreak of war is imminent. In accordance with the resolutions of the Frankfurt Congress, the miners are bound to fight against imperialism and against the Spa agreement. The undersigned organizations therefore propose to you to call a 24 hours protest strike of the miners in all countries against the occupation of the Ruhr and against the dangers of war. We await an immediate reply."

The following reply was received to this telegram:

"The Miners' International takes no instructions from Moscow. Hodges, International Secretary."

Another fact that reveals the treacherous tactics of the Amsterdamers. When the Red International of Labor Unions proposed to the Amsterdam International, in March 1922, to have a joint aid to the locked-out British engineers, the heroes of Amsterdam declared that their hands were full with the relief work for starving Russia. To-day they reject the proposal of the revolutionary miners' unions, to join them in a common struggle against war,—with the stupid impudent excuse that the Amsterdamers take no instructions from Moscow. Sassenbach himself, the 3rd secretary of the Amsterdam Trade Union International, and the mainstay of the German Amsterdamers, pleaded that no international mass strike against the Ruhr occupation be proclaimed.

The Amsterdamers warn the German workers against nationalism and chauvinism. But at the same time, the *Vorwärts* favors a national strike, because it considers such a strike to be the only means by which the proletariat can save the German nation. The poor simpletons have entirely forgotten that in 1848, Marx proclaimed that the nation can only then be saved, when the proletariat constitutes itself as the nation.

The situation is clear: The revolutionary workers want revolutionary class war against imperialism. The Amsterdamers do not want class war; once more they seek to save capitalism from the inevitable abyss . . .

Letter of C. I. and R. I. L. U.

To the Bureau of the International Trade Union Federation and to the Executive Committee of the Second International.

Dear Colleagues,

Moscow, Jan. 15, 1923.

You are informed of the present tragic situation of the Italian proletariat. Fascism is destroying the labor organizations with fire and sword, is killing hundreds of the proletariat of Italy. The Italian working class is being defeated in the struggle against the black reaction let loose against it. If the international proletariat, no matter to what political tendency it belongs, does not spring forward into action, and take energetic defensive measures against the Fascist robbers, the Italian proletariat will be bled to death. The Communist International, and the Red International of Labor Unions, propose to join with your representatives for the purpose of jointly considering as to the best practical measures to be adopted in the conflict against Fascism, and for working out a number of practical measures adapted for aiding our Italian brothers in their struggle against reaction. We for our part beg you to constitute jointly an international committee of action which will call upon the labor organizations of the whole world, and of every tendency, to fight against Fascism. If the workers of all countries do not break the power of Fascist reaction in Italy, they themselves will fall victims to the Fascism which already hangs over their heads in their own countries. We are prepared beforehand to accept all your proposals which are adapted for the fight against Fascism, and to aid the Italian proletariat in its struggle for emancipation from black reaction.

Hoping to hear in your prompt reply that you are prepared to take up joint action against the Fascist bandits, we beg you to accept the assurance of our sincere international sentiments.

The Presidium of the Communist International
The Bureau of the Red International of Labor Unions.
(signed) A. Lozovsky.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

The Trade Union Movement in Italy after the Fascist "Revolution"

By Luigi Repposi (Milan).

The trade union movement in Italy has suffered much through the "revolution" of the Fascists. The railwaymen's trade union has lost one half of its members, the Federation (C.G.L.) now comprises no more than 200,000 to 300,000 organized workers; the Italian Trade Union Alliance (*Unione Sindacale Italiana*) practically no longer exists, apart from a few small groups in certain places; the *Popolari* (Christian), although affiliated with the Fascists, also reports a reduction of membership. Only the membership of the Fascist trade unions has increased.

These circumstances make it particularly necessary for all those who meet on the common ground of class war to unite. But the reformists, who are much worried over the influence gained by the communists among the organized masses, and are besides anxious to find a possibility of alliance with the Fascists, while talking of the unity of the trade unions, in reality utilize the political situation for avoiding the convocation of congresses in which they would inevitably suffer defeat. They are making use of their position as leaders in order to dictate alterations in the organization and in the fundamental program of the trade unions, alterations in complete contradiction to the whole line of development of the unions. They seek to unite with the nationalists, and launch a campaign for driving out the communists. The Fascists have never had better allies, the proletariat never more efficient betrayers. The program of the "Committee for Trade Union Unity" (*Comitato per l'Unità Sindacale*) now formed in Italy, bears witness to the truth of this statement. In this committee we find Rinaldo Rigola, Ettore Gaetani (reformists), Alceste de Ambris, Olivetti (national syndicalists), Ronzani (d'Annunzio syndicalist).

At the meeting at which this committee for trade union unity was founded, they laid down their programmatic principles by proclaiming above all, adherence in the most decisive form to the principle of nationalism; the trade unions must never act against the nation; the trade unions wage the class war for the improvement of the position of the proletariat, but only on cultural lines. Co-operation with the bourgeoisie, where this is in the interests of the proletariat, was also emphasized as a fundamental principle. Silence was preserved as to international relations, as also on the organizations of the Fascists. But on the other hand the program distinctly declares that those who decline to recognize the nationalist principle and the cooperation of the classes, cannot belong to the trade unions. Trade unions as such must have no connection with any party; besides this, it is prohibited to form nuclei within the trade unions.

From all this it may be seen that the main endeavor is to exclude the communists from the trade union movement. The official leadership of the C.G.L. raises no objections to this policy; in the last number of its organ, the *Butaglie Sindacali*, it is clearly stated that only "pure criticism" is permitted in the free trade unions; if the communists intend continuing their struggle for the revolutionizing of the movement, they will be driven out. And while all this is being undertaken against us, every effort is being made towards unity with the Fascists. At one time the Fascists pretended to be willing to join a movement towards unity, but now they set difficult conditions, and demand that the whole organization declares itself for Fascism, and abandons all connection with the Amsterdam or any other International. Will the reformists refuse to do this? Yes, to-day they will refuse. But later? They have already made many concessions. The trade union movement has been stripped of all idealism, nothing remains but the business side, and it is to be feared that the leaders of the C.G.L., for the sake of being permitted to remain at the head of the movement, will accept everything the Fascists choose to dictate.

At the time when the Fascists commenced their offensive, they invariably insisted that they had nothing against the proletariat, on the contrary, they would always defend the legitimate interests of the proletariat. The methods employed by the Fascists for obtaining members are well known; to these they have now added fresh methods; state assistance, the state appointing them to all positions in the commissions, and granting state contracts solely to cooperative societies founded or managed by Fascists. The labor exchange, for instance, has been left to them, by which a large part of the proletariat is forced to enroll in the Fascist trade unions in order to obtain work. This is the

reason why the membership of the Fascist trade unions has so increased, and is now alleged to approach a million. Edmondo Rossoni, general secretary of the Fascist trade unions, declared a few days ago that he has distributed 250,000 new cards of membership. It must be further observed that the Fascist trade unions not only count workers among their members, but the owners of industrial undertakings, so that they are not trade unions at all in the strict sense of the term.

The program and methods of the Fascist organizations are as follows: To the class war they oppose the struggle of "individual capacity"; an individual in order to be spurred on to work must not be paid in accordance with a wage scale, but in proportion to his performance. This is the whole basis of their program, whose identity with the theories of bourgeois capitalism is perfectly obvious.

In the Fascist trade unions the members have no voice whatever; the episode of the seamen is characteristic of this. In the treaty of alliance entered into between d'Annunzio and Giolitti for the "socialist" seamen, and Mussolini for the Fascisti, it is expressly stated that every demand and action of the seamen must first receive the approval of the Fascist party!

At the present time the situation of the workers in Italy is one of political and economic slavery. No liberty, no justice, no rights. Imprisonment, blows, starvation wages—this today, is the fate of the Italian proletariat. And despite this the social traitors dare to say that we are the enemies of the proletariat, and must be driven out. And with regard to the Fascisti, d'Arragona states that their program is not antagonistic to that of the trade unions

FASCISM

In Fascist Italy

By A. B. (Rome).

Officially Fascism dominates life in Italy. Fascism wishes to appear as a renovating factor in every sphere of social life.

After the hesitations and uncertainties of the past democratic governments, we have now in Italy the strong government, the state, the authority regarded by every single individual as something sacred. This is the official formula. It has been inscribed on every wall, so to speak. The atmosphere is saturated with it. A regime of iron.

But anyone who happened to enter within the sphere of influence of the Fascist state at the beginning of the new year, could suddenly observe a typical incident, which is the more novel, in that it would not have been possible before the establishment of this strong government: The "Royal Guards", that is, the agents of the state police, were dissatisfied with the decree for their fusion with the Carabinieri, and in Turin, Naples, and other places they mutinied and set fire to the offices of the Fascisti quite in accordance with Fascist methods. The Turin newspapers reporting these events were confiscated. But one fact is known which only shows what a really strong government is capable of. The troops of mutinying Royal Guards forced their way into the cafes of the centre of Turin, compelled the high society visitors to rise to their feet, and forced them at the point of the revolver to shout "Down with Mussolini!"

On this occasion the Carabinieri and the Fascist troops succeeded in getting the upper hand again for the government. The "Fascified" police will proceed on very different lines in the future. In anticipation of the organization of the Fascist national militia, which organizes the Fascist troops under Mussolini's commands, groups of black shirts have commenced doing duty in the most important towns, as a support to the Carabinieri and the police officials. They perform the duties of the political and criminal police, as well as of maintenance of order and public morality. Fascism is also going to abolish crime. The first deeds of the Fascist patrols, forcing their way into houses and beating and arresting peaceful citizens, are so scandalous, that General De Bonno, chief of police and enthusiastic Fascist, has been obliged to adopt prompt counter measures. He disavows the actions of the Fascist troop police, and states they can only be permitted to work when accompanied by an authorized state official. The Fascist methods of controlling the cafes are particularly sensational, for here the police assume the right, as guardians of public morality, of acting like customers — but without paying.

Thieves and criminals of every description will be dealt with by the Fascisti. The traditional system of investigation is replaced by a more up-to-date procedure: for instance torture. Either confess or have your bones and limbs broken by the ser-

vants of justice. Recently the whole of Rome was thrown into a state of excitement by the kidnapping of a child. The Fascisti declared that they would find the kidnappers immediately. Nobody had any idea who these were. Meanwhile some suspects had been arrested, and several of them admitted their guilt under the influence of Fascist brute force. The child has not been found, but justice has been done.

An efficient government must be well informed of everything, and keep an eye on the enemies of the fatherland. In Milan the Fascist election committee considered it necessary to carry out a political control of the inhabitants. The committee did not apply to the chief of police for this purpose, but to the landlords, who are close friends of the Fascisti, as the latter have done away with the state limitations to rents. Every landlord received a question form in which he had to fill in all particulars regarding his tenants, including their political opinions. These were quite innovations.

There is also the censor for letters and newspapers. Officially this control does not exist. The government denies its existence. The sole communist paper, the *Lavoratore* in Trieste, published the truth regarding the mutiny of the Royal Guards. The police immediately appeared and confiscated the page, and the paper appeared with a large blank. The workers fought for a copy of the paper, the whole edition was sold out at once. Great rage on the part of the president of police, who warned the chief editor the next day: "You are not permitted to publish your paper with blank spaces. The government does not desire it." We have decided on the next occasion to fill in the censored space by publishing a folk song: "Poor Theresa". The song is not new, but we are not inventive as the Fascisti.

Fascism liquidates old officialdom. Fresh forces are wanted, young forces, qualified workers! And Mussolini's followers occupy every high state position. A new life has begun. . . .

When drinking his coffee one morning, Mussolini — "after a moment of sharply concentrated deliberation" — appointed the deputy Edoardo Torre, pharmaceutical chemist by profession, to the position of minister for railways.

We shall not speak of the reforms announced by him in an interview. After many declarations and promises about clearing out the red railwaymen, a courageous journalist ventured to ask Torre what he thought of the great deficit in the railway budget. But the new minister is a Fascist; he answered fearlessly: "I shall state my opinion after the accounts have been calculated". Great admiration.

All the newspapers reported the following episode: The new minister travelled about. He occupied himself with instructing the staff with regard to discipline. Suddenly he sprang out of the train at one station, made a tremendous fuss, and threatened the most frightful punishments. Why? The train was not heated. A difficult railwayman ventured into the compartment which had been occupied by the minister, and ascertained that . . . the handle of the heating regulator was turned over to "cold". Technical knowledge triumphed Fascistically!

We will not speak here of the persecutions of the revolutionists, nor of the new principles of justice coming into force. As for instance the amnesty. All punishable acts committed on the occasion of political conflicts are to be amnestied on one condition; that these deeds were committed for national purposes. In this naive manner, the few Fascisti actually condemned for arson and murder are liberated. But the cruellest sentences continue to be passed on the workers who dared to defend themselves.

The printing offices of our newspaper have been invaded and destroyed. There is one office where the Fascisti come every time they require anything: they complete the destruction, and take away anything they find useful, typewriters and the like. Legally, we occupy the premises. But if we want to save our property, we must do so by night and by the aid of a master key. To-day I received news that the comrades have "stolen another setting machine". This is actually the case. We have "stolen" the machine, which belongs to us. Another Fascist success.

In Rome the Fascisti set fire to the business premises of our publishers' bookselling establishment. They then accommodated one of their clubs on the premises. We were insured against damages caused by riot. The insurance company informed us that they will not pay: The loss, so they say, has not been occasioned by riot as stated in the contract, but by the revolution. Article so and so excludes this from claim to compensation. Revolution! We cannot define the Fascist revolution theoretically and politically as such, but it has probably created so many new occasions for insurance that we shall lose the lawsuit against the insurance company. Fascist Italy is interesting.

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Loucheur, Stinnes & Co.

By Jacques Sadoul.

Before 1914, the exploitation of the two mightiest mining areas of the continent, Lorraine and the Ruhr, ensured the predominance in Europe of the German bourgeoisie.

In order to break this dominion, the victorious Entente had to destroy its foundations. The Versailles Treaty therefore provided for the separation of the ores of Lorraine from Germany, and their incorporation in France, while the Ruhr coal was left to Germany.

But even the most solemn agreements, written in the blood of millions of poor propertyless victims, and protected by armies comprising millions of soldiers, cannot hold good if they contravene economic realities. The Treaty of Versailles, like many other treaties, is nothing more than a scrap of paper, because it attempts to break up the natural unity of the Rhine valley.

The German metal industries are as little able to do without the ore of Lorraine as the French metal industries of Lorraine are able to dispense with the Ruhr coal. The mutual economic dependence of the two areas is inalienable. The Rhine flowing between them must again become what it was before, a connecting line. It is only possible to properly utilize the huge riches of the Rhine valley when the owners work in the closest relationship with one another.

What form will these close relations take?

Three possibilities may be considered:

- a) the (French) iron submits to the dominion of the (German) coal.
- b) the coal submits to the iron.
- c) iron and coal—incapable of dominating one another completely—are forced to make a compromise.

The ore of Lorraine, in the hands of victorious and armed France, will not submit to the Ruhr, that is, to vanquished and disarmed Germany. But on the other hand England and the United States, after making such great efforts for the overthrow of German dominance, will not permit France to establish her own supremacy on the ruins of Germany, by forcing German coal to submit to the sway of French iron.

Let us therefore examine the conditions for the realization of the third possibility, the only one which appears probable at the present time: an understanding between French ore and German coal.

The men on both sides, whose interests are chiefly at stake, and who are therefore best informed—the French and German iron barons—are perfectly aware that such an understanding is inevitable, and that it will be necessary, within a

short time, to form a Franco-German syndicate for the exploitation of the mines of Lorraine and the Ruhr. Both parties are preparing for this understanding, and both parties are naturally endeavoring to grant as little as possible, and to gain as much as possible, when entering into the agreement.

In order to fill and defend their cash-boxes—for this is the sole tangible reality in the whole affair—French and German capitalists are resorting to every possible medium of deception and violence.

In the last resort it is a question—and this no communist must forget—of what privileged rights this or that partner is to have over the sweat and misery of the workers, of what proportion of the riches squeezed out of the exploited workers of the Ruhr mines is to be granted to Loucheur, Schneider & Co., and how many millions in return for this are to be accorded to Stinnes, Thyssen & Co., from the no less scandalous exploitation of the miners of Lorraine.

This question, the one most essential for Stinnes, Loucheur, etc., is one which can be solved by corruption or by violence, by milliards of gold or milliards of shells. These knights sans reproche do not shrink from utilizing the national finances, and the national army, for their private interests and for the satisfaction of their own appetites. They drag both nations at their heels. And to be able to do so with more certainty, they carefully conceal their cash-boxes from sight. In France and Germany alike, the cash-boxes vanish behind a drop-scene painted in the national colors and bearing the dazzling inscription: Liberty! honor! fatherland! Words which for many centuries have served only too often to sacrifice the credulous masses to the designs of their oppressors. The feelings of the workers are again to be played upon, their idealism appealed to, and the same trap laid for them. Once more the German and the Frenchman, the workman and the peasant, the exploited tax-payer, is to be converted into a "heroic soldier", ready to sacrifice his life and possessions on the altar of his native country, that is, on the altar of capitalist profit.

Thus the German and French capitalists are in full agreement with respect to the division of the mines of Lorraine and the Ruhr. Four years of war, of suffering, of horror and of murder, ten millions of dead, thousands of milliards of debts—this has sufficed to convince them of the necessity of the agreement. All that remains to be settled is the percentage of profit to be assigned to each of these gentlemen. Hence all these negotiations, manoeuvres, and intrigues, carried on for the last