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REVIEW OF THE MONTH

THE BETRAYAL

NEVER, since 1914, has Europe shown such signs of war madness as has been displayed during the past two months. We, the Communists, expect nothing but war under capitalism; it is one of the inevitable symptoms of its decay. We have vainly appealed to the Labour movement to recognise this, and to organise a united workers' front to combat it. But no; our complacent Labour leaders, led by the professional middle-class career-mongers of the I.L.P., have refused to join together with the Communists to resist international imperialism. They are deliberately carrying out, step by step, the identical policy, practised by Henderson, Thomas, and Havelock Wilson, against Germany at the opening stages of bloody 1914. These heroes of the recruiting platform, who fight all their enemies with their mouths, were valiant opponents of imperialism in 1914. By imperialism they meant *German* imperialism, and helped, by their skin-saving recruiting thunder, to organise the British masses for war. Many of the best proletarian fighters in the rank and file of the I.L.P. were rightly indignant at the jingoistic and charlatan tactics of these tub-thumping war maniacs. And although our I.L.P. pacifists were too intent upon denouncing the Labour renegades to notice the subtle antics of their own leader, Mr. J. R. MacDonald, on the militarist slack-wire, they did at least make a whole-hearted denunciation of the 1914-18 war. So effectively did these rank and filers protest that many simple-minded wealthy pacifists, particularly Quakers, thought it their duty to finance the I.L.P. as a bona-fide anti-war party. The events of the Ruhr invasion demonstrate that not only have the I.L.P. leaders betrayed the international masses; they have equally misled their wealthy pacifist friends. For, following in the footsteps of Havelock Wilson and Henderson and Thomas, the middle-class I.L.P. leaders are now denouncing imperialism—*French* imperialism. Let us emphasise that, from the standpoint of the international working class, a British labour leader is equally a knave, whether he attacks the war policy of France or of Germany. In either case he is deliberately playing the game of British capitalism—which is to create an ultra-nationalist psychology among

the masses as one of the necessary conditions for recruiting them for a future war. Is there any essential difference between a Havelock Wilson denouncing Germany in 1914 and a J. Ramsay MacDonald or Philip Snowden "going for" France in 1923? If there is any difference it is this: since 1914 we have learnt by experiences, bought with human lives, that our duty in the British battalion of the international proletarian army is to fight, by every and any means, the most alert and unscrupulous group of imperialists history has ever known—the British capitalist class.

Mr. R. C. Wallhead, of the I.L.P., the brave gentleman who fluttered from constituency to constituency, up and down the country, on the lookout for a safe seat in Parliament, has declared that the whole international socialist movement is opposed to the French imperialists. As becomes a leader of the Two and a Half International, it is characteristic of this individual to overlook the most elementary facts. He is not aware, we suppose, that on January 10th, the Foreign Committee of the Belgium Chamber was led by Vandervelde in an enthusiastic speech *approving* of the Ruhr invasion, and he is not aware, we suppose, that every one of the prominent leaders of the Belgium Social Democratic Party declared in favour of the action of France. And this is the person who castigates the Communist International because it insists upon discipline.

Once there was a time when the I.L.P. had a high opinion of Karl Liebknecht. When he was tried, as a German Socialist, for fighting the *imperialists in his own country*, he declared:—

"If the German Socialists, for instance, were to combat the English Government and the English Socialists the German Government, it would be a farce or something worse. He who does not attack the enemy, imperialism, represented by those who stand opposed to him face to face, but attacks those from whom he is far away and who are not within his shooting range, and that even with the help and approbation of his own government, is no Socialist, but a miserable hack of the ruling class. Such a policy is not class war, but its opposite—inciting to war."

These brave words, rising from the grave of the heroic and martyred anti-militarist, seem as though Liebknecht's spirit had returned, but for an instant, to denounce the villainous anti-French machinations of the MacDonalds and Snowdens. Let these people give a lead against imperialism by starting at Downing Street. They dare not: They are afraid to attack the imperialists "who are within their own range" because that demands something more than resonant periods and parliamentary wind-baggery. It means, what it has meant to Marcel Cachin, and the many Communists in France who *did* fight the imperialists within their range—it means imprisonment and perhaps worse. In the scathing words of Liebknecht, the official policy of the I.L.P. on imperialism is identical with what he denounced as the hack work of the ruling class and as an incitement to war.

WM. PAUL.

THE PARTY ORGAN : What it can do for the Movement

BY C. M. ROEBUCK

[The appearance of the "Workers' Weekly" marks the beginning of a new epoch in Labour journalism. The Communist Party has at last broken away from the traditional weekly Labour newspaper and has now produced an organ which makes a direct appeal to the masses upon the problems and struggles of their everyday life. The following article, among other things, gives a splendid history of the famous "Pravda," the organ of the Russian Communist Party, which is the greatest working class paper in the world.]

ONE of the most important decisions ever made by the Party in this country was to accept the report of the Party Commission and to change the general nature of the weekly organ. There can be no doubt that most of the material which used to appear in the *Communist* was too theoretical for a weekly mass organ. All articles which discuss theory and details of policy ought, of course, to appear in the COMMUNIST REVIEW.

The Commission dwelt briefly on the question of an internal party organ, but did not clearly explain what must be its functions. Its most important task is that of acquainting the members at large with what is being done by the various special bodies and groups of the party. The importance of this is absolutely imperative for a highly centralised and disciplined movement like ours in order that the members may have that universality of outlook which should characterise all Communist organisations. To-day the experience of every local worker, the complaint which is constantly raised amongst local workers that they do not know what the rest of the party is doing, shows the needs for an internal organ. And the largest Communist Parties of to-day—the Russian and the German—have just this kind of internal organ to record just this kind of news.

The Commission pointed out, as all must admit quite rightly, that the *Communist* should not be "a budget of articles on the political, international, or economic situation" (we might add "a weekly family journal for the orthodox Communist household"), but a live reporter and interpreter of the working class life and struggle. But the example which the Commission gave was most unfortunate. It contrasts the editor (wrongly) saying he must have an article on Reparations "because the newspapers are full of it," with the editor (rightly) sending a reporter to the meeting of the London Trades Council to do a stinging story on anti-communist manœuvres there. The inference will be that international news is what is wrong, home news is what is right. Yet this is absolutely untrue, and probably only the haste with which the report was compiled prevented a better statement of the case. Is there another issue which is closer to the workers to-day than that of Reparations? In this case the editor *must* put in an article on Repara-

tions, precisely because the bourgeois press, which the majority of the workers read, is full of it. On the other hand, there is no need for him to put in articles on the Dempsey-Carpentier fight, or C. H. Norman's case against Bottomley, merely because these two subjects are prominent in the bourgeois press. Obviously the line of demarcation proposed by the Commission was not the right one. The right one is, and can only be: "Are working class interests directly involved?" This will enable us to separate the right foreign news from the wrong, and the right home news from the wrong.

There are other points arising in connection with the make-up, the question of distribution, etc. These, however, are both minor in themselves and dependent directly upon the much larger point to which I now come, and which is the subject of the present article. I mean the question of the contents of a Communist paper for the masses, and in particular the question of workers' letters.

* * * * *

On the question of workers' letters, and of the part they play in the life of a Communist mass organ, we have much to learn, as in most other points of revolutionary practice, from the past history of the Bolshevik Party. Fortunately we have available a compendium of the Russian Party's experiences in the form of a jubilee number of *Pravda* for May 5th, 1922, which contains a number of articles by all the most prominent and experienced party workers, illuminating the difficulties and triumphs with which they met. From this number I make the following extracts. The name before each extract is that of the author of the article cited:

M. OLMINSKY says:—

"In December, 1910, the joint party leaders (Bolshevik and Menshevik) succeeded in creating a legal weekly, '*Zvezda*.' It closed the next summer, as the editorial board was partly arrested, and partly dispersed. In the autumn the paper fell almost entirely into the hands of the Bolsheviks, and changed its character: it rapidly began to come nearer to the working masses. . . .

"The abundance of workers' letters 'just hit the mark,' as the workers say; and it only stimulated the desire of the workers to create their own daily paper. '*Zvezda*' decided to assist this by a press agitation, and opened a subscription.

"Subscriptions came in, but not too quickly. Just at this time, however, took place the massacre on the Lena goldfields, which roused the whole Russian proletariat. A sharp increase in revolutionary fervour expressed itself, amongst other things, in an enormous influx of subscriptions to the paper. Factories, works, and separate groups of workers gave, each man his mite: the whole ran into thousands of roubles—the more valuable that these roubles bound the future paper to the working class-mass by a firm moral tie.

"On April 22, 1912, appeared the first daily paper in Russia published by, not for, the workers—'*Pravda*.' The workers awaited it with such eagerness that, from the first number, although the price was 2 kopeks ($\frac{1}{2}$ d.), it began to pay its way. The editorial committee consisted of Poletayev, Pokrovsky, and Molotov. . . . Contributors were Bonchbruyevich and his wife, and, most of all, Lenin and Zinoviev, living abroad, but giving the paper a firm line of policy. And the body of the paper was filled with living and vigorous matter by the working mass itself.

"With the appearance of '*Pravda*' there ceased the appeals for subscriptions. But when black days returned, the masses responded no less actively than at the time of the Lena massacre. . . .

"The Party Historical Commission has managed to find in the

archives of the Department of Police a letter written to Lenin at the time by one of the members of the editorial committee. I quote it in full:—

“ August 14, 1913. Our paper seems to be on its last legs, in its death agony, as you might say: but we are keeping our spirits up, and are not thinking of giving in yet. It is confiscated daily, but still circulates amongst the Petrograd proletariat in 21,000 or more copies. No. 10 (not confiscated) sold out in 30,000 copies. No. 11 in 35,000. The circulation is not falling, at any rate, and only confiscations have brought it down almost by half. As for losses, they are very great: but subscriptions are very great too. Never yet has a labour paper met with such sympathy and material support as now. Money and greetings pour upon us literally as if from a horn of plenty: there are days on which in two or three hours we get 240-300 roubles in subscriptions. While I am writing these lines to you money is constantly being brought in. Such an attitude naturally gives us courage and readiness to fight at all costs. The workers have become so accustomed, they have so grown into the paper, that it has become an immediate and essential requirement, and for them to lose it would be equivalent to suicide.”

STALIN writes:—

“The difference between ‘*Pravda*’ and ‘*Zvezda*’ was that the audience of ‘*Pravda*,’ unlike that of ‘*Zvezda*,’ was not the foremost workers, but the wide masses of the working class. ‘*Pravda*’ had to assist the advanced workers in rallying round the party banner those wide masses of the Russian working class which had awakened to the new struggle, but were politically backward. . . . ‘We desire,’ wrote ‘*Pravda*’ in its very first number, ‘that the workers should not merely limit themselves to sympathy, but take an active part in carrying on our paper. Let not the workers say that they are not “used” to writing; working class writers don’t fall ready-baked from the sky, but only work themselves up by their practice. Courage is all that is required.’

“‘*Pravda*’ saw the light at a period of the development of our party when the ‘underground’ was entirely in the hands of the Bolsheviks (the Mensheviks fled thence), while the legal forms of organisation, the Duma group, the press, the sick benefit societies, the workers’ insurance societies, the trade unions—were not yet won from the Mensheviks. It was a period of resolute struggle of the Bolsheviks to drive the Mensheviks out of the legal forms of organisation of the working class. The watchword of ‘withdrawing from posts’ of the Mensheviks was the most popular cry of the Labour movement. . . . Without the conquering of the legal organisations, the party could not under these political conditions have reached out its tentacles to the general masses and rallied them round its banner: it would have been torn away from the masses, and would have been transformed into a narrow circle, stewing in its own juice.

“In the centre of this struggle for the mass working-class party stood ‘*Pravda*.’ It was not merely a paper summing up the successes of the Bolsheviks in winning the legal labour organisations: it was at the same time an organising centre, uniting those organisations around the underground councils of the party, and leading the working-class movement to a definite end. As early as 1902, in his ‘What is to be done?’ Lenin wrote that a well-run national fighting paper was not only a collective organiser, but also a collective organiser. . . . During the period of the struggle for the underground party and organisations.”

national, states:—
its existence, as is known.
grad workers. In this case
liberals.

papers of the 1905 period. Look, for example, at '*Novaya Zhizn*,' which was published in Petrograd in 1905, and compare it with '*Pravda*' of 1912, or still more of 1917. In '*Novaya Zhizn*' (1905) we find side by side with Bolshevik writers such litterateurs as M.T., etc.; side by side with articles by Bolshevik leaders, we find long articles and sketches by such pillars of the present bourgeois 'democratic' reaction, as those mentioned. Not so '*Pravda*.' Here we find at once a classic type of purely proletarian paper. . . ."

G. SAFAROV says:—

" '*Pravda*' began its path in the factory and the workshop: in the 'Workers' Life' section. This section was run by workers, purest proletarians from the bench, who learnt the elements of grammar for the first time when writing about the oppression of the boss, the attacks and interference of the police, the difficulty of living conditions. Out of these worker correspondents, later on, grew up the builders of the proletarian state. . . ."

" The 'Workers' Life' section in 1912-1914 was a daily, skilful, faithful and ruthless accusation of all the horrors of capitalist slavery, which is founded on the capacity of workers for 'living on offal'—material, political, and educational.

" The 'Workers' Life' section set the tone for the paper. The facts of the life of the workers were generalised only in the leading articles. . . ."

" The 'Workers' Life' section of our '*Pravda*' beat the gutter rag '*Kopeika*,' which had flooded the working-class quarters. After '*Kopeika*,' we conquered, drove out, and killed the Menshevik '*Luch*' and '*Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta*.' Thanks to the third and fourth pages of our paper, the workers first learnt to read '*Pravda*,' and then to take an interest in its first two pages, in which were printed the leading articles on the fundamental questions of the Labour movement and international affairs. '*Pravda*' lived on the workers' coppers: yet its subscriptions altogether outstripped the Mensheviks' attempt to add some of the workers' kopeks and roubles to their subsidies from liberal pockets. Around the collection of subscriptions for and writing of letters to '*Pravda*' there was spun and woven the texture of our party organisation."

KUZMIN declares:—

" During the last year of '*Pravda*' there were printed 11,114 workers' letters, of which St. Petersburg gave 7,874, and the rest of Russia 3,240. The most frequent type of letter was in connection with strikes. During the first year there were 2,405 such letters, during the last 5,522.

" Thousands of workers participated in the writing of letters: they were often written collectively. . . . It was in this way that the proletarian movement grew around '*Pravda*,' and the idea of Bolshevism seized upon the working masses.

" Questions of the principle and tactics of the working-class movement were dealt with in the following articles (in the second year of '*Pravda*'s' existence only):—

Trade union movement	...	...	...	...	281
Working-class movement in 20 different countries	...	...	...	...	271
Working-class press	...	...	...	...	190
Insurance	...	...	...	...	167
Liberals and Mensheviks	...	...	...	...	107
Labour Welfare	...	...	...	...	99
Freedom of Coalition	...	...	...	...	79
National educational questions	...	...	...	...	76
Social Democratic Duma Group	...	...	...	...	71
Populists and the peasants	...	...	...	...	52
Women's and children's labour	...	...	...	...	49
Co-operation	...	...	...	...	40

Economic questions	....	...	...	...	...	...	38
War	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
Eight hours' day	...	...	...	...	...	...	23
Octobrists	...	...	...	...	...	...	20
Alcoholism	...	...	...	...	...	...	14

In addition, there were printed during this year 593 reports of trade unions, and 169 letters illustrating peasant life.

"It was in this way that '*Pravda*' worked, and in this way that it educated the public opinion of the proletariat. It was in this way that it gave a ready response to all the requirements of the working class, giving a firm, consistently Marxist, decisive and revolutionary fighting policy."

HERTIN, Business Manager, 1912-1914, records:—

"The office used to receive scores of letters, particularly from the country. 'We very much want to see the good old "*Pravda*," but it's no good subscribing by post: they don't hand it over, and take you as well, as likely as not. Couldn't it be done secretly?' And the office despatched this legal paper 'secretly,' in sealed envelopes or parcels, inside other papers, etc.

"It is not out of place to say here that this working-class paper had a fairly substantial circulation in the countryside amongst the peasant, especially during the second year. A special peasants' section was even instituted. . . .

"It can be boldly asserted that throughout the vast expanse of Russia there was not one working-class corner which the paper did not reach, even in one copy, and from which workers' correspondence did not come. While the industrial giants like Ivanovo-Voznesensk, the Donetz, the Ural, Baku, Ekaterinoslav, Briansk, Nikolayev, Riga, etc., received '*Pravda*' in hundreds and thousands of copies. Baku, for example, took 3,000 copies during 1914.

"There was the closest connection between the number of subscriptions and correspondences. It was rare that a correspondent's letter did not bear some such note as: 'When you print something about our factory, send us so many copies extra.' Even in Petrograd the appearance of a letter from this or that works called forth increased retail circulation in the ward concerned. Thus, the Putilov works on such days took up to 3,000 extra copies, the Baltic 1,500, and so on.

"The enormous prestige enjoyed by '*Pravda*,' and the importance of the correspondence from the workshop, may be discerned even from a fact like the following. When a letter appeared from the 'Provodnik' works at Riga, the Petrograd office of the firm immediately wired Riga, and, at the request of the latter, the subservient local authorities nearly always confiscated the issues on arrival, irrespective of whether the central censorship had passed it or not. Nevertheless, here, as always, we turned out to be cleverer and more inventive than the capitalists: on that day an insignificant number were sent as camouflage, while the bulk order went the next day to another address."

MOLOTOV, Secretary, says:—

"From Paris and Prague we daily received a packet of articles from Lenin and Zinoviev. They wrote on the most various theses, the articles reaching us in 3-5 days. Of course, this was most inconvenient for a daily newspaper; but we put up with it, because it was impossible for them to come to Russia. We received so much material from them, so valuable were their guiding articles, that, during the first six months at any rate, it would be difficult to find ten numbers in which there were not several articles or notes by these contributors. . . . The articles themselves were supplemented by letters to the editor. . . . Round the paper there grew up hundreds of new contributors—working men and women from the factories and workshops, shop assistants, lower grades of various Government institutions. Daily there came a pile of workers' letters, often scrawled, and at first not very effective; but the

working-class correspondents did see that, with corrections, '*Pravda*' was always publishing an increasing number of their letters.

"Repressions fell thick and fast upon '*Pravda*' and its staff. Few 'lasted' for more than several months. They were arrested, expelled, etc. But who could calculate how much was undergone by the other contributors—the workers, commercial employees, etc. Many and many a note and letter in '*Pravda*,' although unsigned or not fully signed, involuntarily gave away the correspondent to the boss. And once having reached him, the boss or foreman not only gave free vent to every kind of uncomplimentary expression, but rarely left him in the factory or workshop. All this only bound up '*Pravda*' the more closely with the advanced workers, and through them with the whole working mass."

"We followed the subscription list ever so closely. We knew of what enormous importance this was not only for the paper, but for the party itself. When a subscriber came in from a new factory, we knew that this meant a party nucleus would be organised. Around '*Pravda*,' one worker always gathered a group. '*Pravda*' gave them daily instructions, in the articles on political questions. In the correspondence from factories and works, they had information as to the life and struggle of the workers. They revealed the cancers of capitalist exploitation, and in them every word and example was a living call to solidarity and battle.

"'*Pravda*' received an endless number of greetings from workers and downtrodden employees. Almost with every greeting the worker sent a small sum (tens of roubles, roubles, often kopeks), usually collected amidst a group. Individual subscriptions were more rare. Group, or sometimes workshop, subscriptions were the almost invariable rule. There was a precious and mighty bond with a union of the workers. Strikes in one factory called forth sympathetic strikes in another. Particularly great was '*Pravda*'s' part in the strike movement then developing. Strikes were going on continuously in all all branches of the industry, but particularly in the metal trades. Strikes grew daily in number, in size, in duration. The Mensheviks shouted about 'the strike frenzy,' and accused '*Pravda*' of exciting it. What did '*Pravda*' do?"

"It did not hesitate, at times of intensity in the strike movement, to turn itself into what might be called a strike bulletin. Daily, like war communiqués, '*Pravda*' published reports of the strikes in progress. The strike news was at that time the pulse of the paper. And it was just for this reason that '*Pravda*' was the soul of the struggling workers. . . .

"At that time my office, that of the secretary, was filled with a living torrent of men and events of revolutionary strength and audacity, such as only arise at such moments as the period of '*Pravda*'s' activity.

"Here comes rolling in a builder from a job on the Ligovka, carrying enormous, ragged pieces of wallpaper, on which, in a large irregular hand, in pencil, were described the demands of the striking workers. 'Print it, comrade, so that our lads see it in to-morrow's paper. It must be printed—news from a news sector of the strike front.

"Here, again, are three metal workers from 'Siemens and Halske,' where for two months a strike has been going on that is watched and supported by the whole of the Petrograd proletariat. On the spot this 'Big Three,' well known to me for their daily visits to the actual strike centre, discusses the strategy and tactics of the strike in half-whispers on one side. They will soon draw up a short note, explaining what should be our policy and what the Siemens workers can hope for. We discuss every step with them. 'To-morrow it has got to be in the paper,' they say firmly. 'All right, comrade, it shall be done.' And we know that to-morrow, at the strike meeting on the harbour, '*Pravda*' will be eagerly read by thousands of workers.

"Or here is a new contributor, shyly handing in a short note about

a foreman hated by all the men in the shop. He asks us to look through it, make the necessary corrections, and publish. He asks, could his name be kept out of it. We consent. He goes away, and I know he will come again and yet again. And others follow. . . ."

Similar evidence, and not less interesting, is given us in another article by Comrade Olminsky, who is one of the oldest members of the Russian Party. In a review of the "*Zvezda*" and "*Pravda*" period of the Party (1911 to 1914), he writes:—

"Outsiders used to express their astonishment at the mass of communications, and talked about the extremely wide network of reporting organised by '*Pravda*.' They simply could not believe that '*Pravda*' had no organisation of reporters, and that all communications were written by the workers themselves. . . ."

Evidence of the enthusiasm and the attention with which workers followed the progress of their paper is afforded us by the mass of greetings which used to come to the editorial offices, both on the occasion of the first anniversary and at other times. Here for example is a letter from a group of workers of the Nikolaiev railway:—

"We send you our greetings, dear paper, that you have lived a year, and we hope you will never leave our path. . . . We greet all the workers of your apparatus, whose light points out the path for the development of the workers' class-consciousness. '*Pravda*' has done so much work during one year, that no book-keeper can total it up. . . ."

"The workers gather round '*Pravda*' like bees round a hive: it has gathered many of them together under its banner, and has armed them with knowledge."

"What has '*Pravda*' given us? It has lit in the workers' hearts the sparks which some workers allowed to go out. Now it has lit up the bright path for us, along which all class-conscious workers should go."

"We have been receiving our dear '*Pravda*' only three months. This is a very short time, but we have found more in it than in any other papers during the last three years. We see the life and struggle of our comrades for a piece of bread: we see the sacrifices made by the working-class to improve its position. '*Pravda*' supports our spirits, and helps us to make our own sacrifices more easily."

The lesson of the Russian and other working-class movements in respect of the party press was summed up for us in the organisation resolution of the Third World Congress of the Communist International. I remind comrades of the essential passages, as many will not have the theses conveniently at hand:—

"39. . . . All that goes on in the Communist nucleus of the factory, all that is noteworthy from the social or economic point of view, from an accident at work to a factory meeting, from rudeness to the workers to the business report of the undertaking, should be communicated to the paper at the earliest possible opportunity. The groups in the trade unions must collect and send to the paper all important decisions and measures of the meetings and secretaries of their unions, as well as information characterising the activity of our enemies. The life of a meeting, life in the street, gives a careful party worker an opportunity of observing and critically appraising various details, the utilisation of which in the paper will clearly establish, even in the eyes of the indifferent workers, our connection with the requirements of real life.

"The editorial committee must regard with particular affection and devotion these communications about the workers' life and organisation in order either, by printing them as short notes,

to impart to the paper a feature of closeness to life and co-operation in its every need, or, by illustrating Communist theory with these practical examples, to adopt the best methods of making the great ideas of Communism accessible to the widest masses of the workers. As far as possible, the editorial committee must at the most convenient times willingly enter into conversation with workers who visit the office, listen to their desires and complaints evolved by their difficult conditions, carefully note them down, and make use of these notes to enliven the paper.

"In capitalist society, of course, none of our papers can become a completely Communist labour *community*. But even under extremely difficult conditions the organisation of a revolutionary working-class paper on these lines is possible. This is proved by the example of '*Pravda*' the paper of the Russian comrades, in 1912 and 1913. It represented in reality an extremely active organisation of revolutionary class-conscious workers in the most important centres of the Russian Empire. These comrades collectively edited, published, and circulated the paper, most of them, naturally, helping it out financially from their wages. The paper, on the other hand, gave them what they wanted, what was required at the time in their movement and what even to-day is of value to them in their work and daily struggle. Such a paper could, in truth, become for the members of the Party, and for many other revolutionary workers, 'their own paper.'"

* * * * *

The moral, I venture to think, is clear and convincing. Is it as clear from the section on the "character and contents of the main party organ," of the Commission's report (pages 30 to 32)?

Unfortunately, it is not. After the insufficiently clear definition of what is meant by "a newspaper of the working class," which has already been touched upon earlier in this article, the report proceeds to emphasise only the importance of "regular communications from the workers' front." The workers' front includes, *without distinction of relative importance*, "the big industrial centres, the principal works in the country, the important unions, etc." From this it naturally follows that special emphasis is laid upon the forming of groups of reporters, in addition to the regular correspondents of the paper at the points named.

What is said about the workers' letters? It is said that "reference is often made to them in the communications of the International concerning the press"; it states that these letters were a leading feature of *Pravda*, "and helped to make it a paper of the workers"; it says that "the value of such a section for our paper is obvious," adding the qualification that "it is necessary to recognise that a weekly with a limited space cannot do the same as a daily would"; and the paragraph ends with a statement that every encouragement must be given to workers to write to the paper, in order to build up some living connection with the daily life of the workers.

Before passing on to detailed points of make-up, the report explains that the paper is not only the best agitator of the party, but also the best organiser, in giving the lead on every possible occasion both to the party membership and to the masses outside.

That is all. Is mine a fair summary? A glance at the pages referred to will convince the reader that it is. Is the lesson drawn adequately? No one who keeps in mind the accumulation of evidence earlier in this article can say that it is. What is its fundamental defect? It is that workers' letters are treated as one category—important, but not more—of all news from the workers' front, instead of being the *fundamental* category. Other communications—from unions, trades councils, co-operatives, demonstrations, etc.—in the absence of workshop letters become not only disjointed, but in practice meaningless and ineffective. The relative importance is not allotted: and that spoils the whole effect.

Reference is not "often made" to workers' letters, in the communications of the International relative to the press: those communications *insist* on this feature as the essential characteristic of the workers' press. These letters did not "help" *Pravda* to become a paper of the workers: it was only such a paper because of their presence. To speak of "the value for our paper" of this section is putting the cart before the horse: our paper has value because it is the only place where the workers can write their letters and share their daily sorrows and difficulties with their comrades: just as our party has value only because it is the only party where the workers can find a programme which will achieve their emancipation. Again, it is quite true—arithmetically—that a weekly has not the same space to devote that a daily has. But the proportion can, and must be the same—quite half of the paper. What a monthly and weekly organ can do in this line, and the almost miraculous effect it has on the proletarian character of a paper, can be seen by comparing the issues of *All Power* (the R.I.L.U. monthly organ) or by a glance at *The Worker* during the years 1918-1920.

Approach the problem in another way. What is the position of our party to-day? Despite the terrifying pictures drawn by the *Morning Post* and the British Empire Union, we in the party know to our cost, and do not conceal it (because we are not afraid), that our party numbers only some thousands of members, of whom perhaps half are "active," *i.e.*, propagandists, agitators, organisers, literature-sellers, writers, etc. The party has not a great many more members than those organisations which were represented at the first and second unity congresses in August, 1920, and January, 1921. I do not say that their psychology is not different: the clarifying work of the international congresses on the one hand, and the attacks of the capitalist class and their hangers-on in the labour movement on the other, have welded our members spiritually into a homogeneous and determined whole. But that is all. *Objectively*, the make-up of the party has not changed appreciably: it has not yet struck root in the masses. The Commission's report has opened our eyes to the necessity of organising our members as fractions or nuclei within all existing forms of labour movement; but this does not increase the number of members; the number must be increased, because there is a certain minimum quantity necessary before you can get the effect of mass action. We must have some members active in the trade unions, some in the trades councils, and very few in the workshops. To get the effect of mass action in the trades councils we must get at the trade unions; to get the effect of mass action in the workshops we must get at the trade unions. Our nuclei are still infinitesimal. We must get at the trade unions which are organised in the mass. It is no use going to the trade

The need for making the factories and workshops the most important centres for our Communist activity and the importance of establishing Party nuclei within them cannot be over estimated. I am inclined to think, after several weeks' renewal of contact with the Party and an examination of its election records, along with the records of other party activities, that the party has lost contact in this direction. There are no party nuclei in the factories. We must ponder over this part of the report and ask ourselves whether this lack of contact with the factories has not something to do with the marked tendencies towards formal democracy in our ranks. The attitude of "We are prepared to support any party which stands for, etc. . . ." haunts me. We have got to have those party nuclei in the factories, and pave the way to the factory councils.

The same issues were raised in the debate on our work within the unions, and again let it be understood that it is not a question of formal organisation, but of the means to revolutionise the masses. Even when allowance is made for unemployment, there are far more workers in the factories, etc., than there are unemployed, or even than in the trades unions. This issue was raised as sharply in the Red International Congress as in the Comintern Congress. And here let me dispose of the notion which has been running through the minds of many party members in this country as in others—that there is any intention or ever was any intention of winding up the Red International of Labour Unions. The Red International is necessary to the international working class movement. It has increased its influence, and will increase its influence the more sharply the revolutionary issues are brought to the forefront of the experiences of the masses. It is a necessary rallying centre for the revolutionary unions of the world in their struggle against Amsterdam and their progress towards Communism.

In order to overcome the prejudices of the syndicalists of France a concession was made by the R.I.L.U. Congress. Instead of insisting upon the unions affiliated to the R.I.L.U. having an organisational contact with the Communist Party in the respective countries, this is now optional. This has been taken by some to mean *no* contact with the Communist parties whatever. This notion we must combat with all our might. The best way of ensuring the unity of action between the two organisations is for the Party membership to push ahead with its nuclei organisation within the Red International, as in every other organisation, demonstrating by organised work that the Communist International is the actual leader of the proletariat in all its struggles.

The debates on the Executive report covered briefly practically all the tactical problems of the parties of the international. The essentials of the debates which I have indicated formed the basis of all the discussions concerning the parties for which there is not space to deal in detail. The Executive Committee's report was agreed upon as confirming the leadership during the interval between the Third and Fourth Congresses and the Decisions of the Third Congress.

The reports on this section of the Congress proceedings were the most interesting of all. The leaders of the International took the floor, and how gladly we greeted our Comrade Lenin's return. In his usual business-like way he proceeded straight to the subject to hand, though warning us that he intended to limit himself to

only one part of the subject under discussion, viz., The New Economic Policy in Russia. In his speech to the Fourth Congress he disposed of the critics of the Russian Revolution in such a way that we feel that any subsequent attack can only be the result of an absolute refusal to face facts. Comrade Lenin's speech along with the speeches of Comrades Clara Zetkin, Trotsky and Bela Kun constitute a masterly survey which leaves little more to be said about the fundamental features and the unfolding of the Russian Revolution.

Comrade Zetkin's speech* ought to have come first. She gave the historical setting of the revolution in relation to the European working class movement. She illustrated the effect of the development of imperialism during the latter part of the nineteenth century, showing how it had created a new political orientation within the ranks of labour away from the path of revolution to reformism; and how it propounded the theory that revolution was *not* necessary to secure the emancipation of labour. Then came its collapse with the imperialist war of 1914-18 and its revival under the banner of capitalist reconstruction, holding out hopes of better times for the workers by peaceful collaboration with the capitalists. Throughout the whole of its history it had been actively eliminating the will to revolution.

Into this atmosphere the Russian Revolution came like a thunderbolt to begin the process of liquidating throughout the world the revisionism and reformism which had so long ensnared the workers. The Russian proletariat struck the first mighty blow of the world revolution against capitalism. Its progress through the varying tempos of the world revolutionary developments had provided the working class with tremendous lessons, demonstrated the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the use of force, the supreme need of the party of revolution, the necessity of knowing how to use the peasantry to aid the proletarian revolution, how to advance and how to retreat.

Comrade Lenin took up the theme of the New Economic Policy, and placed it once and for all in its correct revolutionary setting. He referred to his analysis of the Russian situation in 1918, when he declared that for Russia to advance to State capitalism under the dictatorship of the Proletariat would be a marked advance for that country. And here he incidentally referred to the discussion of the programme of the International and the necessity for all parties not only to consider plans of advance, but also plans of retreat. The volition of the revolution had taken them further than it was possible for them to consolidate. In February, 1921, they were nearer a rupture with the masses of the population than at any time since the beginning of the Revolution. They had gone too far. The masses had sensed that before they had taken the measure of the situation. Hence the New Economic Policy.

The fundamentals of the economic situation had not altered since 1918, and they took up the theses enunciated then, and elaborated them with a greater certainty and completeness. They were now witness to an all-round revival. The famine had been a terrible blow. Nevertheless, with the introduction of this policy the peasants had liquidated the famine and paid their taxes. The

* A verbatim report of this magnificent speech by Clara Zetkin appeared in last month's REVIEW.

light industries had made and were making rapid progress. The revival of the heavy industry was their greatest problem. Without substantial State aid these could not revive. There had been much talk concerning the concessions. But these concessions up to now existed mainly on paper. There was much cry, but little wool. Capitalism refused its loans, the workers and peasants of Russia were culturally backward—they were isolated. Yet they were winning in spite of errors.

There has been much talk about our errors, and apparently by people who have little reason to be noisy concerning errors. There is one great difference between the errors of the Bolsheviks and the errors of the bourgeoisie and their followers in the Second and Two and a-Half Internationals. The Bolsheviks say 2 plus 2 equals 5. Now, that is an error that can be corrected. But our opponents say 2 plus 2 equals a burning candle.

Much has been said about our famous rouble. Very well. Since the introduction of our New Economic Policy we stabilised the rouble for a period of three months. In 1922 we have stabilised it for a period of five months. The progress is in the right direction and compares very favourably indeed with the dancing exchanges of the capitalist countries of the West. We shall stabilise the rouble, and we shall revive the heavy industry, even if there be no loans from the capitalist countries, although it may take a longer period. Already we have saved 20,000,000 gold roubles for our heavy industries. We need many millions more. We shall get them by persistent work and economy. By these means the proletarian State will be strengthened, and the path to Communism assured.

The rôle of the New Economic Policy is therefore perfectly clear as a transition measure for securing the willing co-operation of the peasantry with the town proletariat in those countries where agriculture is backward or has assumed forms of a peasant proprietary character. It is therefore not simply a measure forced upon Russia, but an historical necessity in many countries, if not, indeed, for every country, pending the growth within the new social order of the economic foundations of higher forms of agricultural or industrial organisation leading on to Communism.

Comrade Trotsky developed this theme as follows. He said: "The possibilities of the upbuilding of the socialist economic system, when the essential conquest of political power has been achieved, are limited by the degree to which the productive forms have been developed, the general cultural level of the proletariat, and the political situation, national and international."

On the international situation there arose an interesting controversy. The subject of the capitalist offensive can hardly be dissociated from the international crisis of capitalism, nor can the struggle against the Versailles Treaty. Comrade Trotsky, in a too-brief survey of the international situation (having devoted the greater part of his speech to the Russian revolution), argued that capitalism is in a state of constant crisis, whilst the working class is not ready to end the crisis by seizing power. The crisis is not maintained at the same tempo. It had its ups and downs which would continue for some time. Within that period we should witness a period of Wilsonism in Europe under the pacific leadership of the Social Democratic Labour Parties, either in alliance

with Liberals or without such an alliance. During this period we should have to guard against this social pacifism entering the ranks of the Communist International. The dangers from the Right were more pressing under these circumstances than any danger from the left. This does not mean that capitalism is finding a solution to its problems. The nineteenth century was the epoch of concessions to the working class. 1914 ushered in the epoch when these concessions could no longer be made. The forces of production had outgrown the old framework and the capitalists could find no solution to their problems. The period of pacifism could only be short lived. It was the last flicker of a candle burning itself out.

Comrades Friedlander, of Austria, and Ravenstein, of Holland, challenged this diagnosis of the situation, and argued that, rather than a period of pacifism, the whole tempo of the revolution would be quickened by the violent action of the reactionary movements which had manifested themselves most powerfully in recent days. The rise of Facism in Italy, Germany, and other countries, the aggressive attitude of the French Government, the ascendancy of the reactionaries in Britain in the form of the Conservative government, etc. Everything, they declared pointed to more violent actions and crises rather than to the possibilities of any pacific period.

Comrade Radek, who gave a masterly survey of the international situation, said that these comrades were looking too closely at the immediate situation. Comrade Trotsky looked over a much longer period, and he did not differ with him. It is true that the capitalist offensive is extending and intensifying along the whole political and economic front, and its climax has not yet been reached. The question arises: What prospect of success has such an offensive? This wave of counter-revolution is not the outcome of a period of general economic revival, but represents an attempt to effect the forcible arrest of economic decay. The counter-revolution cannot bring bread and peace. We have, therefore, to do now with an offensive, which has no prospect of victory, however ruthless it may be. The social basis of this counter-revolution is very narrow. It lacks the élan, it lacks the affiliations, and it lacks the foundation which would render possible a long and victorious campaign."

Comrade Trotsky followed the discussion with a long article in the Congress paper, called the *Bolshevik*, in which he answered that there is hardly any ground for the categorical assertion that the proletarian revolution in Germany will be victorious before the internal and external difficulties of France will bring about a governmental and parliamentary crisis. Elections would return the Left bloc. The repercussion would deal a heavy blow at the conservative government in England, strengthen the opposition of the Labour Party, and in all probability lead to a crisis, elections, and a victory for the Labour Party, either alone or in league with the Independent Liberals. The social democrats of Germany would immediately quit their semi-opposition, and begin the "linking up of the great democracies of the West," bring Scheideman back to power, etc. That such a regime could only be short-lived was obvious. To us the bourgeoisie is not a mere stone precipitated into the abyss, but a live historical force which struggles and resorts

to manœuvres, and we must be prepared to grasp all the methods they employ, and understand all the measures they adopt if we would finally precipitate them into the abyss.

Following on this diagnosis of the situation Comrade Radek again developed the application of the policy of the United Front, and analysed again the demand for a Workers' government, and in the process making perfectly clear that we had to face the situation as stated in the words of Clara Zetkin: "The aims and trends of any historical development are plainly to be seen. But the tempo depends mainly upon the subjective energies of the historical process, upon the revolutionary consciousness and activities of the proletarian masses." "In the estimate of this factor so many imponderabilities are concerned that it is impossible to prophesy confidently concerning the tempo of the world revolution." But whether slow or quick, it is the duty of the Communist International to be in the forefront of the fight leading to the conquest of power.

I do not propose to deal with these questions in this survey of the Congress. With regard to the first problems, in no case was there the introduction of entirely new issues. The theses presented were in the main an elaboration of the theses of the Second and Third Congresses, more especially the Second Congress. To attempt to summarise them here would take too much space. An abridged edition of the Congress proceedings is prepared, and it will be better to follow the reports therein than to attempt to further condense them into an article.

With regard to an examination of the parties, many came under close scrutiny, chief of which were the French and Italian parties. In both cases agreements were arrived at with the delegations to bring the parties more in line with the requirements of the Communist International, the constitution of which both parties had repeatedly affirmed. In both cases there were questions of political confusion, the ridding of the parties of social democratic notions carried forward from the parties of the Second International. In the case of the Italian party, led by Bordiga, who had not yet rid himself of the absentee philosophy arising from his earlier anti-parliamentary outlook. The full story of the Italian and French party developments are worthy of special articles for the study of every member of the party here.

Comrade Schuler, on behalf of the Y.C.I., gave an interesting report of the struggles of the Youth to build up their International. And it should be mentioned that our party did not shine in that report. We were told that the Youth had to work hard to persuade the party of the necessity of developing the Youth movement, and that it had been impossible to get an article in our party organs dealing with the organisation of the Youth.* This attitude

§ Readers of the REVIEW are advised to study the inner struggles of the French party which have been ably dealt with by E. Verney. See the November number and a special article which appears in this issue. We shall deal with the Italian party in a future number.—Ed.

* This sweeping statement, which appeared in the report submitted by Comrade Schuler, is not true so far as the COMMUNIST REVIEW is concerned. And the E.C. of the Y.C.L. in Britain have already written to the Editor of the COMMUNIST REVIEW to assure him that he is not involved in the charge put forward by their international delegate. Although the COMMUNIST REVIEW has never received one single article from the Y.C.L., we were able to procure a splendid historical outline of the growth of the

of indifference to the Youth has been a characteristic of quite a number of the parties of the adult international. Nevertheless, the Youth International has established itself and grown in power. Its tasks were defined at its second congress as follows: (1) To defend the economic needs of the Youth; (2) To educate the Youth systematically in the Marxian doctrine; (3) To carry on anti-militarist campaigns among the young workers in and outside the bourgeois armies.

Since the Second Congress great strides had been made in these tasks. The Young Communist Press reflected better to-day than at any time previous, the daily struggles of the young workers, whilst we can safely say that the Young Communist Leagues of Germany, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia and Denmark are becoming real militant organisations. It is interesting to note that the Communist Youth organisations in France and Czecho-Slovakia have been suppressed by the State, whilst the adult parties have remained quite legal.

The time is urgent as never before for the closest working arrangements between the Youth organisations and the adult parties. The Communist International therefore declares, "That the United Front of the young and the adult workers for a common struggle against capitalism and reaction is an absolute necessity, and calls upon its parties and the entire working class to stand for the interest and demands of the working class youth as well as for their own, and to make them the subject of their daily struggle."

Four comrades, led by Comrade Zetkin, reported on this question of work amongst women, and again our party came in for severe criticism. But first let Comrade Zetkin address a few words as introduction, for she says the work of the Women's Secretariat is misunderstood by our own comrades in the International.

"They misunderstand the work of the Communist among the women and the tasks of the national sections and of the International in this connection. This, with some, the remains of an old view, with others it is wilful prejudice because they do not sympathise with our cause and even partly oppose it.

The International Women's Secretariat is not, as many believe, the union of independent organisations of the women's movements, but a branch of the Executive of the Communist International. It conducts the activity not only in constant co-operation with the Executive, but under its immediate leadership. It has nothing to do with any feminist tendencies. It exists for systematic Communist propaganda amongst women."

Having made the position clear as to the task of the women's section, it will be well for us to reflect on the criticism of our party.

"In England, organisation for conducting systematic agitation among the feminine proletariat is altogether lacking. The Communist Party of England excused itself by its weakness, and has continually refused or postponed the setting up

Youth Movement by Comrade Leontieff. This lengthy article was published in the REVIEW and the type was offered to the Y.C.L., free of charge, to enable them to issue it as a pamphlet. This offer, for some reason, was not accepted. Our readers also know that the REVIEW, of its own accord, helps to push the sale of the *Young Communist* by publishing a free advertisement every month.—Editor of COMMUNIST REVIEW.

of a special body for systematic agitation among the women. All the exhortations of the International Women's Secretariat have been in vain. No Women's Secretariat was established; the only thing that was done was to appoint a woman comrade as general party agitator. Our women comrades have organised various meetings for the political education of women out of their own feeble means. . . . The British section of the International cannot remain indifferent to the fact that millions of proletarian women are organised in suffrage societies, trades unions of the old type, in consumers' co-operatives and in the Labour Party."

Need I quote more? Comrade Hertha Stern supplemented these observations, and there is no doubt that we have to be up and doing. Without the women, no revolution can hope to be successful. There are big possibilities here. Time and again the working women of this country have shown themselves capable of great actions, in rent strikes, in evictions, in strikes and in general agitation. Harnessed to the party they can be a power not to be despised. We are striving to make amends for our shortcomings. Since the Congress, the Party Executive has appointed a comrade to immediately get to work with the formation of the Women's Secretariat of the Party.

The discussion on the programme of the International revealed a sharp division in the ranks of the leaders of the International on the question as to whether temporary measures should appear in the programme of the International. In this discussion, Bukharin opposed Varga and Thalheimer of Germany. This is an issue upon which every party will have to make itself clear during the ensuing months. So far, only a few parties have submitted programmes for consideration and incorporation in the International programme. All parties are now instructed to have their programmes in the hands of the Executive Committee of the International three months before the next Congress, when the complete programme of the International will be formulated. Meanwhile, the programmes that have been submitted will be printed and issued throughout the International for discussion.

I will content myself, therefore, with a statement of the most important difference. Bukharin takes the following position with regard to the insertion of temporary demands in the programme: "Temporary measures, such as the policy of the United Front, the slogan of the Workers' Government, should not be put in our programme. These slogans are required by the present defensive situation of the proletariat; to put them in our programme is a retreat from our offensive." Thalheimer opposed as follows: "The present period of transformation is one of the most important on the way to revolution. In this period the Comintern must not fail in its duty. The inclusion of immediate demands is theoretically admissible so long as the theories upon which the demands are made are correct. Shortly before the October revolution, Comrade Lenin himself favoured the adoption of a programme of minimum demands.

These are the starting points for the development of the arguments of the respective positions. We shall have to return to this subject again, sufficient for the moment to set the party thinking on these issues.

THE BUILDING OF THE INTERNATIONAL PARTY.

Probably the most important development arising out of the Congress arises from the decisions taken concerning the Executive Committee. It was decided that the time had arrived to make a further stride in the direction of the International Communist Party. This consists in the reorganisation of the Central Executive on the basis of a centralised party. Instead of the Executive consisting of a number of representatives of various parties, the Executive has now to be elected by the International Congress. "It shall consist of the President, 24 members and 10 substitutes." This is the most important blow at the federalistic notions in the International, which is followed up by the ruling that "no binding mandates are permitted, and such will be declared invalid, because such mandates contradict the spirit of an international, centralised, proletarian world party."

In future, delegates sent from the various countries will go to the Congress, not simply to express the point of view of a particular party, but to be members of an international congress surveying and contributing to the solution of the problems of the International as a whole. It has been a habit of the majority of the delegates to survey the International from a national point of view rather than the reverse, just as it is a habit here for members of the party to start off their observations, "Well, so far as we on the Clyde are concerned. . . ." "We in the provinces are of the opinion, etc. . . ." I for one shall be glad when we can drop the name Communist Party of Great Britain, Communist Party of Russia, etc., and we can speak clearly and act in the name of an International Communist Party. But even in this case it is "a long way to Tipperary." We have to grow into it and step by step eliminate the things which impede our steps and take such measures as will positively build the organisation we require as the most effective instrument of the international working class.

By centralisation the International does not mean losing contact, and the experience of the last year has seen the development of means for more lively contact than hitherto. During the year the E.C. convened what were called enlarged executive committees. Their value has been thoroughly appreciated, and the Fourth Congress determined that there should be regular meetings of the enlarged Executive every four months. This enlarged Executive shall consist of (1) 25 members of the E.C.; (2) of three additional representatives from each of the following parties: Germany, France, Russia, Czecho-Slovakia, and Italy, also the Y.C.I. and the Red International of Labour Unions; (3) of two additional representatives from England, Poland, America, Bulgaria and Norway; (4) one representative from each of the other countries that are entitled to vote.

In addition, in order to make the International more and more an efficient organ of struggle, the Congress ruled that "it is desirable for the purpose of mutual information and for co-ordinated work that the more important sections of neighbouring countries shall mutually exchange representatives."

Again, let no member of the party think that careerists are going to stand much chance in the Communist International. "The Congress, in the most decisive manner, condemns all cases of resignations tendered by individual comrades of the various central

committees and by entire groups of such members. The Congress considers such resignations as the greatest disorganisation of the Communist movement. Every leading post in a Communist Party belongs not to the bearer of the mandate, but to the Communist International as a whole. The Congress resolves: Elected members of central bodies of a section can resign their mandate only with the consent of the Executive. Resignations accepted by a party central committee without the consent of the Executive Committee are invalid."

These important decisions begin to operate now. The new Central Committee of the International was elected at the Congress, whilst, in the selection of the Executive, toleration was shown to the old arrangement, the Central Executive now represents the International as a whole. The next Congress will see little toleration for the federalism of the past. With these important steps towards the International Communist Party, the Congress closed on December 3rd.

We had had four weeks of constant meetings, discussions, self-examination. For detailed consideration of problems there has been no Congress to surpass it. To convey all in an article for a magazine is impossible. But to sum up: The Congress reviewed the work of the last fifteen months and found the leadership of the Executive to be good. It examined the decisions of the Third Congress in the light of this experience, and found them correct. The details of tactics in relation to the organisations of labour and the particular problems with which they had to deal had received detailed attention. Many parties of the International had been closely examined with a view to helping them in their efforts to become more efficient sections of the International. Bold measures have been initiated in the reorganisation of the International in terms of an International Communist Party. And the preliminary discussions of the programme of the Communist International have given a lead to the parties to complete the process of formulating the work to be accomplished. A great work and a great Congress, contributing greatly to the one cause which is worthy of all the efforts that have been put forth—the triumph of the working class in world-wide Communism.

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THE FORUM

A Reply to David S. Reiss

BY B. TAMARKIN

As many of our readers know, we publish all controversial matter in the "Review" under the heading of the "Forum." The following contribution has been sent in reply to one which appeared in the "Review" last November. It is interesting to note the two disputants, in this case, are American readers; this shows the wide influence of the "Review" in overseas English speaking countries.

IT would seem that the purpose of the country which has, as yet, not attained the capitalist mode of production should not harbour any illusions. When it attains industrial development, it will suffer the class antagonisms and struggles that ail its more developed neighbour. It is a matter of the law, the tendencies of social development that concern Marx. And, he has discovered that, at basis, it is a matter—not, as we are told, of trade efficiency—but of the development of the forces of production themselves.

The purpose of the present article is to prove the correctness of the statements made by Marx. Therefore, I shall go into no discussion here of such errors as: "The theory of increasing misery is the theory of the social revolution," which, to say the least, requires great amendment to make it accurate.

Our bourgeois opponents belittle the rôle that the development of the technique in production plays in social evolution. In fact, it is the storm centre of their frothy rage. Superficial, like his compatriots, our Marx-critic reduces the determinate of social development and revolution to a matter of efficiency in trade competition.

"The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed, the image of its own future." Thus is Marx quoted from page 13 of *Capital*. Consciously or otherwise, Reiss performs the unpardonable error of tearing a sentence out of its indispensable setting; the section, serving to give the matter its intended meaning, is entirely omitted. Marx says:—

"Intrinsically, it is not a question of the higher or lower degree of development of the social antagonisms that result from the natural laws of capitalist production. It is a question of these laws themselves, of these tendencies working with iron necessity towards inevitable results. The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future."

Marx, here, plainly shows what he means by the last sentence. The

The sleeky lawyer, Morris Hillquit, in his *From Marx to Lenin*, includes in his quotations, upon which are based the attempts to disprove either Marx or the possibility of the permanency of the Proletarian Revolution in Russia, such extracts as employed by the far less able aspirant to the position of a Marx-critic. Where the latter gets his silly surmises as to the meaning of the above quotation will become clear hereafter.

However, Marx cannot be consistently accused of denying that "an industrially more developed country can sometimes be overtaken by a formerly industrially less developed country." On page 13 of *Capital* he says: "In this work I have to examine the capitalist mode of production, and the conditions of production and exchange corresponding to that mode." "Up to the present time" (July 25, 1867) "their classic ground is England."

Nor was it intended to convey nonsense such as: the less developed country will produce the same product and employ the identical methods in such production, as the more developed country. Marx' primary concern was not about how to produce bread, bibles or whisky. The matter was not one of "methods of production." It was a question of the capitalist mode of production, its immanent laws, enabling us to understand its growth and inevitable decay.

When Marx wrote: "The mono-

poly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production which has sprung up and flourished along with and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds ("sounds," please; not "ends") "The expropriators are expropriated"; where do we find even a suggestion, leaving along an explicit statement, to the effect that the proletarian revolution must inevitably occur first in the land of greater quantity production, as Reiss' comparison of Russia and America implies.

But let us see what Marx says: "Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out." (*Critique of Political Economy*, page 12.)

From the above, it becomes apparent that to attempt to set a rule as to the advent of a political revolution in one country previous to another, the imminency of such a revolution to be determined by a particular degree of economic development, is Utopian.

Statements made by Reiss would lead one to think that Marx did not take into consideration variations in social development in different countries. He might have denied the great influence of differing historic antecedents. But it is indeed significant that on that very page 13 of *Capital* we find: "Where capitalist production is fully naturalised among the Germans (for instance, in the factories proper) the condition of things is much worse than in England, because the counterpoise of the Factory Acts is wanting. In all other spheres, we, like all the rest of Continental Western Europe, suffer not only from the development of capitalist production, but also from the incompleteness of that development. Alongside of modern evils, a whole series of inherited evils oppress us, arising from the passive survival of antiquated modes of production, with their inevitable train of social and

political anachronisms. We suffer not only from the living, but from the dead. *Le mort saisit le vif.*"

I necessarily conclude that while Marx pointed to the development of society's economic powers, the increase in the productivity of labour through technical development, as the force heading us inevitably towards social revolution, nevertheless, he recognised the efficacy of a differing historical background to change the course, not the destination, the particular path, not the general direction, of social evolution. In other words, the process of social evolution shows us the laws of the growth and decay of capitalist production "working its way" by means of varying historical material towards a general goal.

"Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle." (*Communist Manifesto*—Marx and Engels.)

The false assumption is made that Marx thought the Proletarian Revolution inevitable in the more industrially advanced country, before the less developed. In his *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History* (1906), even Kautsky warns "against the popular interpretation" (misinterpretation) "of the historical materialism which holds that the land which takes the lead in the economic development invariably also brings the corresponding forms of the class war to the sharpest and most decisive expression." This particular point was in conformity with Marxism. Marx himself had made a related statement as far back as 1859, in his *Critique of Political Economy*, page 12, quoted above.

It is, therefore, incompatible with fact to state that "The social revolution in Russia may be non-Marxian. But to the extent that it is non-Marxian, to that extent is Marxism, non-economic and non-historical." Utterances like these only constitute an acknowledgment to revisionism that its contentions are well founded. They constitute a perversion of Marxism.

But such nonsense is no surprise when it is known to emanate from a man who worships the stock-in-trade of medieval philosophy and scorns those who value such work as that of Joseph Dietzgen, the working-class "philosopher." If Reiss had understood Dietzgen's *Nature of Human Brainwork*, the relativity of things would have remained no empty phrase for him. Perchance, the readers of the COMMUNIST REVIEW would then have been saved such flagrant impositions as the attempt to explain any-

thing torn from its connections.

In order to obtain exact knowledge, it is necessary to carefully examine the objective facts of the particular problem. But Mr. Reiss has no need of this. In order to intelligently discuss a Marxian question, he does not require a knowledge of Marxism from its originals; it is unnecessary to find whether in fact his "Marxian economists" were Marxian. To him, when dealing with the Russian Revolution, it is immaterial whether there is such an historical factor as the string of morbid conditions, inherited from a putrified feudal order; neither is it essential to weigh the influence of Western Capital.

"No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces, for which there is room in it, have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society." (Until here quoted by Reiss.) "Therefore mankind always takes up only such problems as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the problem arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation."

And what does Reiss say?—"If the working class is to wait with its social revolution until all inventions in the means of production have been made and until all capital will have been monopolised—for this is what the industrially most developed country would mean under capitalism—they may indeed wait with the social revolution for ever."

How well Mr Reiss has learned the art of perversion! "The monopoly of capital" is easily changed into "all capital"; "more developed" is twisted into "most developed." Is this corrupt method the way to prove Marx wrong in his fundamental tenets? It would be well for this muddlehead to cease criticising (as he has done heretofore) Marx' works until he has shed his bourgeois trickery; until he has acquired the proletarian mode of reasoning, which is indispensable to a Communist; until he will have understood Marx.

Before one can expect a social revolution, a political revolution must have taken place: the proletariat must have seized the powers of the State. The social revolution; new, higher relations of production; communist proprietorship: i.e., no proprietorship, but communist use of the social wealth; these cannot be consummated until the technique of industry, machine development, etc.,

have developed the productivity of labour to a point where we can put into practice the motto: "From each according his ability; to each according his needs."

This condition is, however, not required for a political revolution. Here, it is necessary that: (1) the mode of production shall be capitalist, i.e., the technique of production must be sufficiently advanced to have evolved a more or less homogeneous proletariat; (2) the class conflict must have grown to an unusual intensity; (3) the proletariat must possess sufficient knowledge and understanding to judge how to solve every new problem arising on the steep road to emancipation.

As regards the first point, Marx and Engels tell us that: "Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their involuntary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces above all, are its own gravediggers. (*Communist Manifesto*, page 20.)

As concerns the second point, outside of special conditions of individual growth, we find the answer in the law of value. When the demand for a given commodity falls, it signifies that the labour incorporated in that commodity has fallen in social necessity. Hence each article contains less value; therefore falls in price. This is true of labour-power as of any other commodity.

The tendency is for wealth to increase, through the increase in the productivity of labour, and for its opportunity of investment as profit bearing capital to diminish. Hence there is an over-abundance of labour power. The labour expended on the individual labour power falls in social necessity. As a consequence, labour power falls in value. And it falls to the point where the mass of those who find a master at all, obtain a price such as lowers their standard of living.

The surplus labour power on the market is not wheat which can be left to rot on American wheat fields. Labour power exists only as living human beings. These must be fed. The bourgeoisie "is unfit to rule, because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting

him sink into such a state that it has to feed him instead of being fed by him." (*Communist Manifesto*, page 29.)

The above-named conditions sow a spirit of rebellion, of antagonism towards the exploiter. And the struggle for more of society's wealth grows in bitterness.

But the proletariat cannot limit itself to more wages, etc., if its revolution is to succeed. The expropriators must be expropriated. Hence, the proletariat must capture the powers of state.

And here we come to the third condition. Outside of the reaction of men's minds directly to the conditions of the struggle, this cannot be answered any other way than by: What more practical function has the revolutionary party of the proletariat at this time, than that of spreading information and an understanding of what the struggle is all about, among their comrades in slavery.

The conditions above described and

necessary to a political revolution, come into being in different countries at different stages of technical development due to differing historical backgrounds and differing relations one country bears to others. The only rule I have for determining when the time for the seizure of power is ripe is: "Prepare and watch the times."

In Russia, the break in the capitalist forms has taken place first. However, the "new higher relations of production" cannot develop until labour becomes more highly productive, until Russia acquires a higher technique.

For years, in various industries, the more industrially advanced countries have been ripe for the initiation of a Communist relationship in production. But the organization and understanding of their proletariat was not such as could hope to successfully cope with the particular form of their common problem, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

AMONG THE BOOKS

The British Labour Movement, by G. D. H. Cole. *The Development of Capitalism*, by M. H. Dobb. *Finance*, by E. Burns. *English Economic History*, by G. D. H. Cole. Price, Sixpence each. Labour Research Dept., 162, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1.

ANYONE who has conducted an Economics or a History class knows how difficult it used to be to get a handy little outline of the subject which could be handed, with confidence, to students to enable them to extend their own reading. The writer used to give one or two special lectures to his students on the best books on these subjects. At long last the problem has been solved—at least, a decent beginning has been made towards solving it. The Labour Research Department—which daily proves its indispensable usefulness to the whole Labour movement in a thousand and one ways—has recently issued a series of splendid little handbooks which specifically deal with subjects generally taken up by classes and study circles. These little volumes do not pretend to compete in any way with the more ambitious series of text-books which are now being published by the Plebs League. The two series are as necessary as they are complementary. The amount of splendid and useful work that is being put into publications dealing exclusively with the educational phase of

the Socialist movement makes one realise the lamentable weakness and shortcomings of the purely agitational side.

With becoming modesty the little handbooks of the Labour Research Department have been called the Syallus Series. But they are more than a mere list of books or lecture headings. They are splendidly got up and are written in a style which combines simplicity with brevity. So far four of these books have appeared and we are promised two more—*Biology*, by C. P. Dutt, and *Economic Geography*, by J. F. Horrabin.

English Economic History and *The British Labour Movement* have been very well done by G. D. H. Cole. The two brochures on Economics have been done by M. H. Dobb and Emile Burns. Dobb's *The Development of Capitalism* is altogether a splendid outline; we need not say much about this young economist who has proved his merit and who is well known to readers of the COMMUNIST REVIEW. Perhaps the most difficult subject to write up, in a brief form, was that of *Finance*, which has been

successfully analysed and written in time when our sentimental Labour a manner remarkable for its ease of Parliamentary classes were able to sneer style and absence of difficult or at educational classes is now past. technical language. Had some of our prominent Labour

The publication of these outline leaders been compelled to study books is a sure indication that the elementary economics they never trade union and Labour movement is could have advocated such things as now waking up to the fact that increased production under capital-Economics and Industrial History ism or War indemnities within classes are an important, albeit imperialism. neglected, part of their work. The

W. P.

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EDITOR :: WM. PAUL

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REVIEW OF THE MONTH

THE BETRAYAL

NEVER, since 1914, has Europe shown such signs of war madness as has been displayed during the past two months. We, the Communists, expect nothing but war under capitalism; it is one of the inevitable symptoms of its decay. We have vainly appealed to the Labour movement to recognise this, and to organise a united workers' front to combat it. But no; our complacent Labour leaders, led by the professional middle-class career-mongers of the I.L.P., have refused to join together with the Communists to resist international imperialism. They are deliberately carrying out, step by step, the identical policy, practised by Henderson, Thomas, and Havelock Wilson, against Germany at the opening stages of bloody 1914. These heroes of the recruiting platform, who fight all their enemies with their mouths, were valiant opponents of imperialism in 1914. By imperialism they meant *German* imperialism, and helped, by their skin-saving recruiting thunder, to organise the British masses for war. Many of the best proletarian fighters in the rank and file of the I.L.P. were rightly indignant at the jingoistic and charlatan tactics of these tub-thumping war maniacs. And although our I.L.P. pacifists were too intent upon denouncing the Labour renegades to notice the subtle antics of their own leader, Mr. J. R. MacDonald, on the militarist slack-wire, they did at least make a whole-hearted denunciation of the 1914-18 war. So effectively did these rank and filers protest that many simple-minded wealthy pacifists, particularly Quakers, thought it their duty to finance the I.L.P. as a bona-fide anti-war party. The events of the Ruhr invasion demonstrate that not only have the I.L.P. leaders betrayed the international masses; they have equally misled their wealthy pacifist friends. For, following in the footsteps of Havelock Wilson and Henderson and Thomas, the middle-class I.L.P. leaders are now denouncing imperialism—*French* imperialism. Let us emphasise that, from the standpoint of the international working class, a British labour leader is equally a knave, whether he attacks the war policy of France or of Germany. In either case he is deliberately playing the game of British capitalism—which is to create an ultra-nationalist psychology among

the masses as one of the necessary conditions for recruiting them for a future war. Is there any essential difference between a Havelock Wilson denouncing Germany in 1914 and a J. Ramsay MacDonald or Philip Snowden "going for" France in 1923? If there is any difference it is this: since 1914 we have learnt by experiences, bought with human lives, that our duty in the British battalion of the international proletarian army is to fight, by every and any means, the most alert and unscrupulous group of imperialists history has ever known—the British capitalist class.

Mr. R. C. Wallhead, of the I.L.P., the brave gentleman who fluttered from constituency to constituency, up and down the country, on the lookout for a safe seat in Parliament, has declared that the whole international socialist movement is opposed to the French imperialists. As becomes a leader of the Two and a Half International, it is characteristic of this individual to overlook the most elementary facts. He is not aware, we suppose, that on January 10th, the Foreign Committee of the Belgium Chamber was led by Vandervelde in an enthusiastic speech *approving* of the Ruhr invasion, and he is not aware, we suppose, that every one of the prominent leaders of the Belgium Social Democratic Party declared in favour of the action of France. And this is the person who castigates the Communist International because it insists upon discipline.

Once there was a time when the I.L.P. had a high opinion of Karl Liebknecht. When he was tried, as a German Socialist, for fighting the *imperialists in his own country*, he declared:—

"If the German Socialists, for instance, were to combat the English Government and the English Socialists the German Government, it would be a farce or something worse. He who does not attack the enemy, imperialism, represented by those who stand opposed to him face to face, but attacks those from whom he is far away and who are not within his shooting range, and that even with the help and approbation of his own government, is no Socialist, but a miserable hack of the ruling class. Such a policy is not class war, but its opposite—inciting to war."

These brave words, rising from the grave of the heroic and martyred anti-militarist, seem as though Liebknecht's spirit had returned, but for an instant, to denounce the villainous anti-French machinations of the MacDonalds and Snowdens. Let these people give a lead against imperialism by starting at Downing Street. They dare not: They are afraid to attack the imperialists "who are within their own range" because that demands something more than resonant periods and parliamentary wind-baggery. It means, what it has meant to Marcel Cachin, and the many Communists in France who *did* fight the imperialists within their range—it means imprisonment and perhaps worse. In the scathing words of Liebknecht, the official policy of the I.L.P. on imperialism is identical with what he denounced as the hack work of the ruling class and as an incitement to war.

WM. PAUL.

THE PARTY ORGAN : What it can do for the Movement

BY C. M. ROEBUCK

[The appearance of the "Workers' Weekly" marks the beginning of a new epoch in Labour journalism. The Communist Party has at last broken away from the traditional weekly Labour newspaper and has now produced an organ which makes a direct appeal to the masses upon the problems and struggles of their everyday life. The following article, among other things, gives a splendid history of the famous "Pravda," the organ of the Russian Communist Party, which is the greatest working class paper in the world.]

ONE of the most important decisions ever made by the Party in this country was to accept the report of the Party Commission and to change the general nature of the weekly organ. There can be no doubt that most of the material which used to appear in the *Communist* was too theoretical for a weekly mass organ. All articles which discuss theory and details of policy ought, of course, to appear in the COMMUNIST REVIEW.

The Commission dwelt briefly on the question of an internal party organ, but did not clearly explain what must be its functions. Its most important task is that of acquainting the members at large with what is being done by the various special bodies and groups of the party. The importance of this is absolutely imperative for a highly centralised and disciplined movement like ours in order that the members may have that universality of outlook which should characterise all Communist organisations. To-day the experience of every local worker, the complaint which is constantly raised amongst local workers that they do not know what the rest of the party is doing, shows the needs for an internal organ. And the largest Communist Parties of to-day—the Russian and the German—have just this kind of internal organ to record just this kind of news.

The Commission pointed out, as all must admit quite rightly, that the *Communist* should not be "a budget of articles on the political, international, or economic situation" (we might add "a weekly family journal for the orthodox Communist household"), but a live reporter and interpreter of the working class life and struggle. But the example which the Commission gave was most unfortunate. It contrasts the editor (wrongly) saying he must have an article on Reparations "because the newspapers are full of it," with the editor (rightly) sending a reporter to the meeting of the London Trades Council to do a stinging story on anti-communist manoeuvres there. The inference will be that international news is what is wrong, home news is what is right. Yet this is absolutely untrue, and probably only the haste with which the report was compiled prevented a better statement of the case. Is there another issue which is closer to the workers to-day than that of Reparations? In this case the editor *must* put in an article on Repara-

tions, precisely because the bourgeois press, which the majority of the workers read, is full of it. On the other hand, there is no need for him to put in articles on the Dempsey-Carpentier fight, or C. H. Norman's case against Bottomley, merely because these two subjects are prominent in the bourgeois press. Obviously the line of demarcation proposed by the Commission was not the right one. The right one is, and can only be: "Are working class interests directly involved?" This will enable us to separate the right foreign news from the wrong, and the right home news from the wrong.

There are other points arising in connection with the make-up, the question of distribution, etc. These, however, are both minor in themselves and dependent directly upon the much larger point to which I now come, and which is the subject of the present article. I mean the question of the contents of a Communist paper for the masses, and in particular the question of workers' letters.

* . . * . . *

On the question of workers' letters, and of the part they play in the life of a Communist mass organ, we have much to learn, as in most other points of revolutionary practice, from the past history of the Bolshevik Party. Fortunately we have available a compendium of the Russian Party's experiences in the form of a jubilee number of *Pravda* for May 5th, 1922, which contains a number of articles by all the most prominent and experienced party workers, illuminating the difficulties and triumphs with which they met. From this number I make the following extracts. The name before each extract is that of the author of the article cited:

M. OLMINSKY says:—

"In December, 1910, the joint party leaders (Bolshevik and Menshevik) succeeded in creating a legal weekly, '*Zvezda*.' It closed the next summer, as the editorial board was partly arrested, and partly dispersed. In the autumn the paper fell almost entirely into the hands of the Bolsheviks, and changed its character: it rapidly began to come nearer to the working masses. . . .

"The abundance of workers' letters 'just hit the mark,' as the workers say; and it only stimulated the desire of the workers to create their own daily paper. '*Zvezda*' decided to assist this by a press agitation, and opened a subscription.

"Subscriptions came in, but not too quickly. Just at this time, however, took place the massacre on the Lena goldfields, which roused the whole Russian proletariat. A sharp increase in revolutionary fervour expressed itself, amongst other things, in an enormous influx of subscriptions to the paper. Factories, works, and separate groups of workers gave, each man his mite: the whole ran into thousands of roubles—the more valuable that these roubles bound the future paper to the working class-mass by a firm moral tie.

"On April 22, 1912, appeared the first daily paper in Russia published by, not for, the workers—'*Pravda*.' The workers awaited it with such eagerness that, from the first number, although the price was 2 kopeks ($\frac{1}{50}$), it began to pay its way. The editorial committee consisted of Poletayev, Pokrovsky, and Molotov. . . . Contributors were Bonchbruyevich and his wife, and, most of all, Lenin and Zinoviev, living abroad, but giving the paper a firm line of policy. And the body of the paper was filled with living and vigorous matter by the working mass itself.

"With the appearance of '*Pravda*' there ceased the appeals for subscriptions. But when black days returned, the masses responded no less actively than at the time of the Lena massacre. . . .

"The Party Historical Commission has managed to find in the

archives of the Department of Police a letter written to Lenin at the time by one of the members of the editorial committee. I quote it in full:—

“August 14, 1913. Our paper seems to be on its last legs, in its death agony, as you might say: but we are keeping our spirits up, and are not thinking of giving in yet. It is confiscated daily, but still circulates amongst the Petrograd proletariat in 21,000 or more copies. No. 10 (not confiscated) sold out in 30,000 copies. No. 11 in 35,000. The circulation is not falling, at any rate, and only confiscations have brought it down almost by half. As for losses, they are very great: but subscriptions are very great too. Never yet has a labour paper met with such sympathy and material support as now. Money and greetings pour upon us literally as if from a horn of plenty: there are days on which in two or three hours we get 240-300 roubles in subscriptions. While I am writing these lines to you money is constantly being brought in. Such an attitude naturally gives us courage and readiness to fight at all costs. The workers have become so accustomed, they have so grown into the paper, that it has become an immediate and essential requirement, and for them to lose it would be equivalent to suicide.”

STALIN writes:—

“The difference between ‘*Pravda*’ and ‘*Zvezda*’ was that the audience of ‘*Pravda*,’ unlike that of ‘*Zvezda*,’ was not the foremost workers, but the wide masses of the working class. ‘*Pravda*’ had to assist the advanced workers in rallying round the party banner those wide masses of the Russian working class which had awakened to the new struggle, but were politically backward. . . . ‘We desire,’ wrote ‘*Pravda*’ in its very first number, ‘that the workers should not merely limit themselves to sympathy, but take an active part in carrying on our paper. Let not the workers say that they are not “used” to writing; working class writers don’t fall ready-baked from the sky, but only work themselves up by their practice. Courage is all that is required.’

“‘*Pravda*’ saw the light at a period of the development of our party when the ‘underground’ was entirely in the hands of the Bolsheviks (the Mensheviks fled thence), while the legal forms of organisation, the Duma group, the press, the sick benefit societies, the workers’ insurance societies, the trade unions—were not yet won from the Mensheviks. It was a period of resolute struggle of the Bolsheviks to drive the Mensheviks out of the legal forms of organisation of the working class. The watchword of ‘withdrawing from posts’ of the Mensheviks was the most popular cry of the Labour movement. . . . Without the conquering of the legal organisations, the party could not under these political conditions have reached out its tentacles to the general masses and rallied them round its banner: it would have been torn away from the masses, and would have been transformed into a narrow circle, stewing in its own juice.

“In the centre of this struggle for the mass working-class party stood ‘*Pravda*.’ It was not merely a paper summing up the successes of the Bolsheviks in winning the legal labour organisations: it was at the same time an organising centre, uniting those organisations around the underground councils of the party, and leading the working-class movement to one definite end. As early as 1902, in his ‘What is to be done?’ Comrade Lenin wrote that a well-run national fighting paper must be not merely a collective agitator, but also a collective organiser. It was just this that ‘*Pravda*’ became, during the period of the struggle with the Mensheviks for the preservation of the underground party and the conquest of the legal working-class organisations.”

ZINOVIEV, President of the Communist International, states:—

“The ‘*Pravda*,’ from the first days of its existence, as is known, was written, at least half of it, by the Petrograd workers. In this connection it is most interesting to compare ‘*Pravda*’ with the Bolshevik

papers of the 1905 period. Look, for example, at '*Novaya Zhim*,' which was published in Petrograd in 1905, and compare it with '*Pravda*' of 1912, or still more of 1917. In '*Novaya Zhim*' (1905) we find side by side with Bolshevik writers such litterateurs as M.T., etc.; side by side with articles by Bolshevik leaders, we find long articles and sketches by such pillars of the present bourgeois 'democratic' reaction, as those mentioned. Not so '*Pravda*.' Here we find at once a classic type of purely proletarian paper. . . ."

G. SAFAROV says:—

" '*Pravda*' began its path in the factory and the workshop: in the 'Workers' Life' section. This section was run by workers, purest proletarians from the bench, who learnt the elements of grammar for the first time when writing about the oppression of the boss, the attacks and interference of the police, the difficulty of living conditions. Out of these worker correspondents, later on, grew up the builders of the proletarian state. . . ."

" The 'Workers' Life' section in 1912-1914 was a daily, skilful, faithful and ruthless accusation of all the horrors of capitalist slavery, which is founded on the capacity of workers for 'living on offal'—material, political, and educational.

" The 'Workers' Life' section set the tone for the paper. The facts of the life of the workers were generalised only in the leading articles. . . ."

" The 'Workers' Life' section of our '*Pravda*' beat the gutter rag '*Kopeika*,' which had flooded the working-class quarters. After '*Kopeika*,' we conquered, drove out, and killed the Menshevik '*Luch*' and '*Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta*.' Thanks to the third and fourth pages of our paper, the workers first learnt to read '*Pravda*,' and then to take an interest in its first two pages, in which were printed the leading articles on the fundamental questions of the Labour movement and international affairs. '*Pravda*' lived on the workers' coppers: yet its subscriptions altogether outstripped the Mensheviks' attempt to add some of the workers' kopeks and roubles to their subsidies from liberal pockets. Around the collection of subscriptions for and writing of letters to '*Pravda*' there was spun and woven the texture of our party organisation."

KUZMIN declares:—

" During the last year of '*Pravda*' there were printed 11,114 workers' letters, of which St. Petersburg gave 7,874, and the rest of Russia 3,240. The most frequent type of letter was in connection with strikes. During the first year there were 2,405 such letters, during the last 5,522.

" Thousands of workers participated in the writing of letters: they were often written collectively. . . . It was in this way that the proletarian movement grew around '*Pravda*,' and the idea of Bolshevism seized upon the working masses.

" Questions of the principle and tactics of the working-class movement were dealt with in the following articles (in the second year of '*Pravda*'s' existence only):—

Trade union movement	...	...	...	...	281
Working-class movement in 20 different countries	...	...	...	...	271
Working-class press	...	...	...	...	190
Insurance	...	...	...	...	167
Liberals and Mensheviks	...	...	...	...	107
Labour Welfare	...	...	...	...	99
Freedom of Coalition	...	...	...	...	79
National educational questions	...	...	...	...	76
Social Democratic Duma Group	...	...	...	...	71
Populists and the peasants	...	...	...	...	52
Women's and children's labour	...	...	...	...	49
Co-operation	...	...	...	...	40

Economic questions	....	...	...	...	...	...	38
War	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
Eight hours' day	...	...	...	...	...	...	23
Octobrists	...	...	...	...	...	...	20
Alcoholism	...	...	...	...	...	...	14

In addition, there were printed during this year 593 reports of trade unions, and 169 letters illustrating peasant life.

"It was in this way that '*Pravda*' worked, and in this way that it educated the public opinion of the proletariat. It was in this way that it gave a ready response to all the requirements of the working class, giving a firm, consistently Marxist, decisive and revolutionary fighting policy."

HERTIN, Business Manager, 1912-1914, records:—

"The office used to receive scores of letters, particularly from the country. 'We very much want to see the good old "*Pravda*," but it's no good subscribing by post: they don't hand it over, and take you as well, as likely as not. Couldn't it be done secretly?' And the office despatched this legal paper 'secretly,' in sealed envelopes or parcels, inside other papers, etc.

"It is not out of place to say here that this working-class paper had a fairly substantial circulation in the countryside amongst the peasant, especially during the second year. A special peasants' section was even instituted.

"It can be boldly asserted that throughout the vast expanse of Russia there was not one working-class corner which the paper did not reach, even in one copy, and from which workers' correspondence did not come. While the industrial giants like Ivanovo-Voznesensk, the Donetz, the Ural, Baku, Ekaterinoslav, Briansk, Nikolayev, Riga, etc., received '*Pravda*' in hundreds and thousands of copies. Baku, for example, took 3,000 copies during 1914.

"There was the closest connection between the number of subscriptions and correspondences. It was rare that a correspondent's letter did not bear some such note as: 'When you print something about our factory, send us so many copies extra.' Even in Petrograd the appearance of a letter from this or that works called forth increased retail circulation in the ward concerned. Thus, the Putilov works on such days took up to 3,000 extra copies, the Baltic 1,500, and so on.

"The enormous prestige enjoyed by '*Pravda*,' and the importance of the correspondence from the workshop, may be discerned even from a fact like the following. When a letter appeared from the 'Provodnik' works at Riga, the Petrograd office of the firm immediately wired Riga, and, at the request of the latter, the subservient local authorities nearly always confiscated the issues on arrival, irrespective of whether the central censorship had passed it or not. Nevertheless, here, as always, we turned out to be cleverer and more inventive than the capitalists: on that day an insignificant number were sent as camouflage, while the bulk order went the next day to another address."

MOLOTOV, Secretary, says:—

"From Paris and Prague we daily received a packet of articles from Lenin and Zinoviev. They wrote on the most various theses, the articles reaching us in 3-5 days. Of course, this was most inconvenient for a daily newspaper; but we put up with it, because it was impossible for them to come to Russia. We received so much material from them, so valuable were their guiding articles, that, during the first six months at any rate, it would be difficult to find ten numbers in which there were not several articles or notes by these contributors. . . . The articles themselves were supplemented by letters to the editor. . . . Round the paper there grew up hundreds of new contributors—working men and women from the factories and workshops, shop assistants, lower grades of various Government institutions. Daily there came a pile of workers' letters, often scrawled, and at first not very effective; but the

working-class correspondents did see that, with corrections, '*Pravda*' was always publishing an increasing number of their letters.

"Repressions fell thick and fast upon '*Pravda*' and its staff. Few 'lasted' for more than several months. They were arrested, expelled, etc. But who could calculate how much was undergone by the other contributors—the workers, commercial employees, etc. Many and many a note and letter in '*Pravda*,' although unsigned or not fully signed, involuntarily gave away the correspondent to the boss. And once having reached him, the boss or foreman not only gave free vent to every kind of uncomplimentary expression, but rarely left him in the factory or workshop. All this only bound up '*Pravda*' the more closely with the advanced workers, and through them with the whole working mass."

"We followed the subscription list ever so closely. We knew of what enormous importance this was not only for the paper, but for the party itself. When a subscriber came in from a new factory, we knew that this meant a party nucleus would be organised. Around '*Pravda*,' one worker always gathered a group. '*Pravda*' gave them daily instructions, in the articles on political questions. In the correspondence from factories and works, they had information as to the life and struggle of the workers. They revealed the cankers of capitalist exploitation, and in them every word and example was a living call to solidarity and battle.

"'*Pravda*' received an endless number of greetings from workers and downtrodden employees. Almost with every greeting the worker sent a small sum (tens of roubles, roubles, often kopeks), usually collected amidst a group. Individual subscriptions were more rare. Group, or sometimes workshop, subscriptions were the almost invariable rule. There was a precious and mighty bond with a union of the workers. Strikes in one factory called forth sympathetic strikes in another. Particularly great was '*Pravda*'s' part in the strike movement then developing. Strikes were going on continuously in all all branches of the industry, but particularly in the metal trades. Strikes grew daily in number, in size, in duration. The Mensheviks shouted about 'the strike frenzy,' and accused '*Pravda*' of exciting it. What did '*Pravda*' do?"

"It did not hesitate, at times of intensity in the strike movement, to turn itself into what might be called a strike bulletin. Daily, like war communiqués, '*Pravda*' published reports of the strikes in progress. The strike news was at that time the pulse of the paper. And it was just for this reason that '*Pravda*' was the soul of the struggling workers. . . .

"At that time my office, that of the secretary, was filled with a living torrent of men and events of revolutionary strength and audacity, such as only arise at such moments as the period of '*Pravda*'s' activity.

"Here comes rolling in a builder from a job on the Ligovka, carrying enormous, ragged pieces of wallpaper, on which, in a large irregular hand, in pencil, were described the demands of the striking workers. 'Print it, comrade, so that our lads see it in to-morrow's paper. It must be printed—news from a news sector of the strike front.

"Here, again, are three metal workers from 'Siemens and Halske,' where for two months a strike has been going on that is watched and supported by the whole of the Petrograd proletariat. On the spot this 'Big Three,' well known to me for their daily visits to the actual strike centre, discusses the strategy and tactics of the strike in half-whispers on one side. They will soon draw up a short note, explaining what should be our policy and what the Siemens workers can hope for. We discuss every step with them. 'To-morrow it has got to be in the paper,' they say firmly. 'All right, comrade, it shall be done.' And we know that to-morrow, at the strike meeting on the harbour, '*Pravda*' will be eagerly read by thousands of workers.

"Or here is a new contributor, shyly handing in a short note about

a foreman hated by all the men in the shop. He asks us to look through it, make the necessary corrections, and publish. He asks, could his name be kept out of it. We consent. He goes away, and I know he will come again and yet again. And others follow. . . ."

Similar evidence, and not less interesting, is given us in another article by Comrade Olminsky, who is one of the oldest members of the Russian Party. In a review of the "*Zvezda*" and "*Pravda*" period of the Party (1911 to 1914), he writes:—

"Outsiders used to express their astonishment at the mass of communications, and talked about the extremely wide network of reporting organised by '*Pravda*.' They simply could not believe that '*Pravda*' had no organisation of reporters, and that all communications were written by the workers themselves. . . ."

Evidence of the enthusiasm and the attention with which workers followed the progress of their paper is afforded us by the mass of greetings which used to come to the editorial offices, both on the occasion of the first anniversary and at other times. Here for example is a letter from a group of workers of the Nikolaiev railway:—

"We send you our greetings, dear paper, that you have lived a year, and we hope you will never leave our path. . . . We greet all the workers of your apparatus, whose light points out the path for the development of the workers' class-consciousness. '*Pravda*' has done so much work during one year, that no book-keeper can total it up. . . ."

"The workers gather round '*Pravda*' like bees round a hive; it has gathered many of them together under its banner, and has armed them with knowledge."

"What has '*Pravda*' given us? It has lit in the workers' hearts the sparks which some workers allowed to go out. Now it has lit up the bright path for us, along which all class-conscious workers should go."

"We have been receiving our dear '*Pravda*' only three months. This is a very short time, but we have found more in it than in any other papers during the last three years. We see the life and struggle of our comrades for a piece of bread: we see the sacrifices made by the working-class to improve its position. '*Pravda*' supports our spirits, and helps us to make our own sacrifices more easily."

The lesson of the Russian and other working-class movements in respect of the party press was summed up for us in the organisation resolution of the Third World Congress of the Communist International. I remind comrades of the essential passages, as many will not have the theses conveniently at hand:—

"39. . . . All that goes on in the Communist nucleus of the factory, all that is noteworthy from the social or economic point of view, from an accident at work to a factory meeting, from rudeness to the workers to the business report of the undertaking, should be communicated to the paper at the earliest possible opportunity. The groups in the trade unions must collect and send to the paper all important decisions and measures of the meetings and secretaries of their unions, as well as information characterising the activity of our enemies. The life of a meeting, life in the street, gives a careful party worker an opportunity of observing and critically appraising various details, the utilisation of which in the paper will clearly establish, even in the eyes of the indifferent workers, our connection with the requirements of real life.

"The editorial committee must regard with particular affection and devotion these communications about the workers' life and organisation in order either, by printing them as short notes,

to impart to the paper a feature of closeness to life and co-operation in its every need, or, by illustrating Communist theory with these practical examples, to adopt the best methods of making the great ideas of Communism accessible to the widest masses of the workers. As far as possible, the editorial committee must at the most convenient times willingly enter into conversation with workers who visit the office, listen to their desires and complaints evolved by their difficult conditions, carefully note them down, and make use of these notes to enliven the paper.

"In capitalist society, of course, none of our papers can become a completely Communist labour *community*. But even under extremely difficult conditions the organisation of a revolutionary working-class paper on these lines is possible. This is proved by the example of 'Pravda' the paper of the Russian comrades, in 1912 and 1913. It represented in reality an extremely active organisation of revolutionary class-conscious workers in the most important centres of the Russian Empire. These comrades collectively edited, published, and circulated the paper, most of them, naturally, helping it out financially from their wages. The paper, on the other hand, gave them what they wanted, what was required at the time in their movement and what even to-day is of value to them in their work and daily struggle. Such a paper could, in truth, become for the members of the Party, and for many other revolutionary workers, 'their own paper.'"

* * * * *

The moral, I venture to think, is clear and convincing. Is it as clear from the section on the "character and contents of the main party organ," of the Commission's report (pages 30 to 32)?

Unfortunately, it is not. After the insufficiently clear definition of what is meant by "a newspaper of the working class," which has already been touched upon earlier in this article, the report proceeds to emphasise only the importance of "regular communications from the workers' front." The workers' front includes, *without distinction of relative importance*, "the big industrial centres, the principal works in the country, the important unions, etc." From this it naturally follows that special emphasis is laid upon the forming of groups of reporters, in addition to the regular correspondents of the paper at the points named.

What is said about the workers' letters? It is said that "reference is often made to them in the communications of the International concerning the press"; it states that these letters were a leading feature of *Pravda*, "and helped to make it a paper of the workers"; it says that "the value of such a section for our paper is obvious," adding the qualification that "it is necessary to recognise that a weekly with a limited space cannot do the same as a daily would"; and the paragraph ends with a statement that every encouragement must be given to workers to write to the paper, in order to build up some living connection with the daily life of the workers.

Before passing on to detailed points of make-up, the report explains that the paper is not only the best agitator of the party, but also the best organiser, in giving the lead on every possible occasion both to the party membership and to the masses outside.

That is all. Is mine a fair summary? A glance at the pages referred to will convince the reader that it is. Is the lesson drawn adequately? No one who keeps in mind the accumulation of evidence earlier in this article can say that it is. What is its fundamental defect? It is that workers' letters are treated as one category—important, but not more—of all news from the workers' front, instead of being the *fundamental* category. Other communications—from unions, trades councils, co-operatives, demonstrations, etc.—in the absence of workshop letters become not only disjointed, but in practice meaningless and ineffective. The relative importance is not allotted: and that spoils the whole effect.

Reference is not "often made" to workers' letters, in the communications of the International relative to the press: those communications *insist* on this feature as the essential characteristic of the workers' press. These letters did not "help" *Pravda* to become a paper of the workers: it was only such a paper because of their presence. To speak of "the value for our paper" of this section is putting the cart before the horse: our paper has value because it is the only place where the workers can write their letters and share their daily sorrows and difficulties with their comrades: just as our party has value only because it is the only party where the workers can find a programme which will achieve their emancipation. Again, it is quite true—arithmetically—that a weekly has not the same space to devote that a daily has. But the proportion can, and must be the same—quite half of the paper. What a monthly and weekly organ can do in this line, and the almost miraculous effect it has on the proletarian character of a paper, can be seen by comparing the issues of *All Power* (the R.I.L.U. monthly organ) or by a glance at *The Worker* during the years 1918-1920.

Approach the problem in another way. What is the position of our party to-day? Despite the terrifying pictures drawn by the *Morning Post* and the British Empire Union, we in the party know to our cost, and do not conceal it (because we are not afraid), that our party numbers only some thousands of members, of whom perhaps half are "active," *i.e.*, propagandists, agitators, organisers, literature-sellers, writers, etc. The party has not a great many more members than those organisations which were represented at the first and second unity congresses in August, 1920, and January, 1921. I do not say that their psychology is not different: the clarifying work of the international congresses on the one hand, and the attacks of the capitalist class and their hangers-on in the labour movement on the other, have welded our members spiritually into a homogeneous and determined whole. But that is all. *Objectively*, the make-up of the party has not changed appreciably: it has not yet struck root in the masses. The Commission's report has opened our eyes to the necessity of organising our members as fractions or nuclei within all existing forms of the labour movement; but this does not increase their number. And their number must be increased, because there is a certain minimum of quantity necessary before you can get the minimum of quality. We have some members active in the trade unions, less in the trades councils, and very few in the workshops. To get adherents in the trades councils we must get at the trade unions; to get adherents in the trade unions, since our nuclei are still infinitesimal in number, we must go to the masses which are organised in the trade unions. But for that purpose it is no use going to the trade

union branches—or, rather, it will not help much. The masses do not attend branch meetings. We shall find them where they are to be found daily—at the “point of production”: the workshop, pit, depot, stores, or office. This applies to our agitation, our propaganda, our organisation: in all these forms of activity the sure bed-rock upon which the Communist Party must rest, in comparison with all other spheres of action are only superstructure—and changing superstructure at that—are the workshops.

How can we extend our influence in the workshops? By means of the *Workers' Weekly*: by making it interesting to those in the workshops: by reflecting in it the daily life of the workshops: by building it up, in short, around letters from the workshops, because they constitute the first link in the chain, the first link that we must take hold of and hold on to with all our might, knowing that only in that way we shall arrive at what we desire. Let anyone examine any campaign which the party has undertaken during the last two years in the trade unions, the trades councils, or the political labour movement, whether it was for increasing the sale of the *Communist*, for creating a “minority movement” against reactionary leaders, for setting the trades councils on their feet, for promoting affiliation of the party to the Labour Party: to what were our constant failures traceable, and directly traceable? To our weakness at the bottom, the primary organic cell of the working-class—the workshops.

If there is anything our own experience, that of the Russian Party, that of the International, teaches us, it is to grasp one thing at a time, the thing which is the most burning question of the moment, and to grasp it with all our might. Such a problem is the one of striking root in the workshops: and the way to deal with it is beyond question through our paper. Workers' letters will give us *circulation*: circulation will develop our influence for *agitation*: agitation will, almost before we know it, give us *organisation*: and organisation is the point at which we can begin our direct *propaganda* for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

* * * * *

In conclusion, it is perhaps hardly necessary to repeat that this article is intended, not as a criticism of the report of the Party Commission, but to supplement and deepen the lessons which that report only superficially indicated.

The reader will understand, therefore, why I am deliberately writing it at the moment of the appearance of the first number of the *Workers' Weekly*, the new party mass organ, under the editorship of the Chairman of the Party Commission. The reason is obvious. Our editor, like, let us hope, all other Communists, is a logical and persistent man: he will do his best to apply in real life the principles indicated in the report for which he was jointly responsible. As I think those principles too formal and rigid, I do my bit to redress the balance by placing supplementary considerations at the disposal of the party membership. If the members show their agreement with me by flooding the Editorial Board of the *Workers' Weekly* with letters from the workshops, and by stimulating non-party workers to write, I suppose the editor's satisfaction will only be equalled by mine. If, on the other hand, the first few numbers of the *Workers' Weekly* show that the masses have taken matters into their own hands, and have settled the question independently of the editor, myself, or the other members of the party—well, my satisfaction will only be equalled by that of the editor's.

Communism and the Co-operative Societies

BY KARL BITTEL

Translated by P. Lavin

THE Second International uses the co-operative societies for its own party purposes. As it sees its task in agitation for reformism and in incitements against Communism, and engages practically in social treachery, it carries on this practice in the co-operatives as a matter of course. It may be said that reformist Socialists have not such a strong point of support in any other working-class organisation as in the co-operative stores, either in an agitational or material respect. The more their commanding position in the trade unions is shaken the more readily they move into the co-operative fortresses and the more firmly they build their positions there. It must be added that the reformists, through the co-operatives, and especially through the cunningly-planned "political neutrality" that is observed there, exercise a great influence upon the masses who are indifferent to politics and to trade unionism, and more particularly upon working women. They influence the masses, too, by a powerful press which, in Germany for example, carries on a malicious anti-Bolshevik campaign, and they create a rosy ideology which fosters the illusion that the position of the working class can be improved and that we can gradually evolve into Socialism without the capture of power by the proletariat.

These facts were sufficient to cause the Third International to pay the closest attention to the co-operative movement. To this was added the rich experience gained during the dictatorship of the proletariat in Soviet Russia when the counter-revolutionary co-operative bureaucracy played a very dangerous rôle. Then there was the theoretical knowledge of the vital part played by the co-operatives on the conquest of power, and finally, the practical experience that in the work of Socialist construction, control of the co-operatives and acquaintance with the complicated functions of trade are altogether decisive. At Moscow, therefore, on July 10th, 1921, the third world congress adopted "Theses on the Work of Communists in the Co-operatives," which cleared up the co-operative problem from the Marxian standpoint. These at last removed the opportunist confusion which had done its pernicious work in the Second International according to the well-known co-operative resolution of Copenhagen in 1910. The Third International said distinctly that Communists had to work by means of fractions in the co-operative societies.

The whole problem of Communism and co-operation was thoroughly discussed with regard to both principle and tactics at the first international conference of Communist co-operators, which took place in Moscow in November, 1922. It was definitely laid down as the result of experience in the several countries for over a year that for us Communists, activity in the co-operatives is part of the party work, in which all comrades of both sexes are bound to participate, and that this co-operative work must be put completely under party discipline.

At the fourth world congress the question again appeared on the agenda, and Comrade Neshterskoff delivered a report on the subject on November 25th, 1922. A resolution on the co-operative question was adopted which declared in the first place that the capitalist offensive was compelling a higher estimate of the co-operative movement. The old theses were therefore confirmed, and upon all Communist organs, particularly press organs, the urgent necessity was enjoined of occupying themselves much more with the co-operative question than they had previously done. The theses conclude with the following words:—

“In the carrying out of these theses the fourth congress draws attention to the following point: All Communist parties must unconditionally enforce the decision that all party members must also be members of consumers' co-operatives and must do Communist work in these organisations.”

Unfortunately it is not without reason that this demand of compulsory membership is repeated, for the decisions of the previous year have been repudiated by many comrades.

“The whole work of Communists in the co-operatives is to be conducted on the basis of the strictest discipline and under the direction of the central committees of the Communist parties.”

This is important in order to get round the antagonisms which may arise between the co-operative experts and the party direction. Without going further into the resolution already mentioned, those points may be cited which determine how far the co-operatives have to participate practically in the economic and political struggles. They treat of direct co-operation in the struggles.

Against increases of taxes, especially indirect taxes, which burden the consumers.

Against a special or particularly oppressive taxation of the co-operatives or of their turnover.

Against rises in prices.

For the demand of the transfer of the complete distribution of articles of prime necessity into the hands of the workers' consumers' co-operatives.

Against militarism, which involves increase of State expenditure, and consequently also of taxes.

Against the insane financial policy of the Imperialist States, which causes the collapse of the currency.

Against the Versailles Peace.

Against Fascism, which is raising its head everywhere, and which is inflicting grave injury on the co-operatives.

Against a threatening new war, against intervention, etc.

Through active co-operation in all these questions the proletarian united front will be formed, to which is to be added the support of victims of the capitalist terror, and of striking and locked-out workers.

It is very important that the resolution of the fourth world congress enjoins upon Communists' active participation in purely co-operative work in order “to give to the latter the character which the new conditions and the new tasks of the proletariat demand—the combination of the smaller co-operatives in large associations; the rejection of the principle of dividends, which leads only to the weakening of the co-operatives, and the utilisation of the profits for the strengthening of the co-operative system; the establishment of a special fund from the profits for the support of strikes; pro-

tection of the interests of co-operative employers, etc." It is self-evident that, in addition to this, the struggle against the reformist co-operative tribunals must be carried on with the greatest energy.

It is to be regretted that the discussion at the world congress did not strongly emphasise the importance of co-operative work. It dealt with inessential matters, instead of illustrating by concrete examples the colossal work that has already been accomplished in Russia and Bulgaria, and the success that has already attended the nuclear tactics in Esthonia, Norway and Czecho-Slovakia. Better had it been reported from Germany, France, Italy and the northern countries that encouraging tendencies were to be observed, while in the remaining countries, especially in England, Communist co-operative work was still in a very bad way.

There is no doubt that the co-operative conference, as well as the world congress in Moscow, introduces a new epoch which it is to be hoped will lead to greater results in Western Europe than have hitherto been recorded. But that depends chiefly upon whether, in our own party circles, passive resistance in relation to co-operative work is changed into active participation.

Henry Ford's Methods

BY JOHN T. WINTER

IN his clever analysis of Bourgeois ethics, Paul Lafargue pointed out that if we look beneath the surface of Capitalist morality we shall find that moral qualities are identified with material goods, conduct is judged by the wealth resulting therefrom, the fortune possessor claims the respect of society; in short, the "good" man is the man with the "goods."

Lafargue has also shown that the bourgeoisie are secretly ashamed of their low virtues and have endeavoured to conceal them beneath a cloud of metaphysical platitudes. Lafargue, of course, had not our opportunity of perusing Henry Ford's autobiography.* Mr. Ford hides under no such cloud and exhibits no signs of shame in accepting to the full the ethics of the sovereign idol of Capital, the Property-god. It has not apparently occurred to him that there could be any test of rightness other than the acid one of "Does it pay?" He has his ideals, he is trying to "mould the political, social, industrial and moral mass into a sound and shapely whole," and he is seeking "working designs for all that is right and good and desirable in our life." To this end his factory is "an experimental station to prove a principle. That we do make money is only further proof that we are right. For that is a species of argument that establishes itself without words." This point is insisted upon again and again, the balance sheet is held up as an unanswerable justification for every act and scheme.

One of Mr. Ford's great tenets for success is to set at nought the law that prices fluctuate with supply and demand and to annually reduce the selling price of whatever commodity is being produced regardless of the state of the market. At the end of each year, the price should be cut by an amount which may roughly

* *My Life And Work*. By Henry Ford. (William Heinemann 12s. 6d. net.)

equal the profit on the past year, relying for next year's profit on the decreased cost of production due to the consequent larger quantities that will be demanded. By so doing, Mr. Ford claims that the capitalist while benefiting himself is of greater service to the community. Prices are lower, consumers can buy more goods, business is promoted, more workpeople are employed, money is circulated, trade is healthy. If other capitalists would follow his lead, most of the ills of society, he claims, would disappear and the social problem solve itself.

The price of the Ford car has been reduced by annual instalments (save for two years during the war) from \$950 to \$355, during which time the yearly production has increased from 18,664 to 1,250,000, the number of employees has increased from 1,908 to 55,000, the minimum wage has increased from standard rates to six dollars a day and the hours have been reduced from nine to eight per day. Mr. Ford claims that this system is applicable to any industry and the cycle appears well nigh perfect. One can imagine the high priests of Capitalism chanting it like a magic formula. This is the law of the great profit. A cheaper price begets a greater demand which begets an increased quantity which begets a reduced production cost combined with a greater employment of workpeople which begets a larger disbursement of wages which begets a more prosperous nation which begets a greater purchasing power which combined with the next reduction in price begets an increasingly bigger demand and so on at an always accelerating rate for ever and ever, amen.

It is obvious that the millennium is near at hand. All that appears necessary is a Henry Ford in every industry who will rapidly own that industry from the raw material mines and forests to the means of transporting the finished product. The world will then belong to a handful of industrial giants. Motor cars will be produced by the thousand-million and loaves of bread by the million-million and enormous profits will stamp the system with the hallmark of rightness. But wait, a jarring thought creeps in! Profits are not realised until the product is sold, and who would buy these millions of loaves and motor cars? While profits are abrewing, the workers can only buy back a fraction of the wealth they produce, no matter how cheap the price. From another source* we learn that the wages paid on a Ford selling at 355 dollars are only 75 dollars. If the wages paid one worker or a million workers enables him or them to buy back the commodities made, no profit can result. The handful of industrial giants could hardly be expected to buy several million of everything annually for no other purpose than just to keep the show going and to arrange the system so that the workers *could* buy all they produce would reduce a giant's share to that of a worker.

Mr. Ford's system, if applied universally, would appear to lead to an *impasse* from which Communism would be the only way out.

Mr. Ford's idealism and other statements that he makes are convincing proof that he has not sufficiently studied economies in their relation to society to be a guide in such matters; nevertheless, students of this subject will be interested in his remarks relative to decentralisation, a phase of capitalism around which much discussion has taken place. Various anti-Marxists, from Revisionists

* *Engineering Production*. Nov 30, 1922.

to Anarchists, claim that Marx was in error when he formulated his theory of the concentration of capital. Some hold the view that capitalism will decentralise, while others are content to state that he overrated both the rate and the extent of capitalist concentration. The latter view is even held by many claiming to be Marxists, and one American "authority on Marx" adds that only "fanatical Marxists" will deny this. Interest, therefore, attaches to the views of Henry Ford on this matter, who is reported to be the richest man in the world, the largest individual controller of labour, the sole owner of numerous factories in various parts of the world, his property also includes railways, rivers, canals, coal and iron mines, gas works, farms, schools, hospitals, etc., and who is now negotiating to purchase the Muscle Shoals district in Southern America, which, when developed, will contain the greatest source of hydro-electric energy in the United States, equal, in fact, to one-eighth of the total hydro-electric energy developed in the whole of the United States. It is estimated that in ten years he may in this district alone find employment for 1,000,000 workers.* Mr. Ford states:—

"The belief that an industrial country has to concentrate its industries is not, in my opinion, well founded. That is only a stage in industrial development. As we learn more about manufacturing, . . . parts can be made under the best possible conditions . . . from the manufacturing standpoint. . . . A combination of little plants, each making a single part, will make the whole cheaper than a vast factory would. There are exceptions, as where casting has to be done. In such case, as at River Rouge, we want to combine the making of the metal and the casting of it, and also we want to use all the waste power. This requires a large investment and a considerable force of men in one place. But such combinations are the exception rather than the rule, and there would not be enough seriously to interfere with the process of breaking down the concentration of industry. Industry will decentralise.

"Highly standardised, highly sub-divided industry need no longer become concentrated in large plants with all the inconveniences of transportation and housing that hamper large plants. A thousand or five hundred men ought to be enough in a single factory."

Mr. Ford is not alone in this matter, a similar decentralisation being observable in other highly-developed industries. It is not surprising, therefore, that Marx's theory of concentration should be called in question. It is not a matter of fanatically insisting that Marx could foresee every detail in capitalist development; on the contrary, the point must be admitted of fundamental importance, and its denial would certainly entail a considerable revision of much that Marx wrote.

Before relegating the Marxian theory to the limbo of exploded themes, some caution is demanded because too many cases are on record where the attempt to do this has resulted in the critic—instead of Marx's theory—falling into the pit of oblivion. The first point to elucidate is whether, in using the word "decentralisation," Mr. Ford means exactly the same thing as the anti-Marxists discussed fifty years ago. Obviously he does not. In the first place, it must be emphasised that this modern phase is not decen-

* *Automotive Industries*, August 31, 1922.

tralisation of capital; on the contrary, it is only concurrent with the highest concentration of capital. It is decentralisation of industry, but even then it in no way compares with the theories put forward by anarchists and others that the larger industrial plant would disintegrate into smaller and smaller units. This new development is a rearrangement of the industrial plant unit prior to a higher phase of concentrated social production than has as yet been attempted.

Exactly what is taking place cannot perhaps be better explained than by briefly outlining the routine or progress of the old and new types of industry, laying stress merely on the points of difference.

Taking an old-established engineering firm as a typical example, if the initial stage of its development be examined, it will be found that only a comparatively few machining and fitting operations were at first carried out. In their early days, the Ford Company only made ten per cent. of the car, ninety per cent., therefore, being made by other firms. Marx has been much criticised for his enunciation that capitalists live by killing capitalists; nevertheless, as a firm grows, it not merely turns out a larger quantity of a given commodity, but it makes a larger proportion of that article. It does itself the work which previously it purchased from other firms, and it ends by housing within itself industries quite distinct from the parent root.

As the firm developed, a wood-working department would be added, and they would make their own foundry patterns, etc. Later a smith's shop would be added, later still a foundry, a drop-forging plant, a tinsmith's shop, etc., until finally a huge organisation combining a dozen or more distinct trades would have grown out of the original simple machine shop. This is an example of the concentration of industry, the ideal underlying it being the attempt to completely produce, as far as possible, some complicated commodity. We say as far as possible, because, although the scheme has in some instances been developed to an extraordinary extent, it obviously has its limitations. One cannot hope to include timber forest, iron and coal mines, etc., under a single roof. Geographical conditions have proved a barrier which has not merely balked this development, but has completely diverted its course.

Before tracing the further development of our concentrated industry, it is necessary to consider the factors that have brought about this transformation. In the fierce struggle to dispose of their products, inherent in the competitive system, the capitalists vie with each other in their endeavours to undersell one another, and at the same time to reap the highest possible profit. This results in a continuous attempt to cheapen the cost of production, and several ways of doing this readily suggest themselves to the avaricious capitalist. Reduction in wages, lengthening the hours, speeding up the work, adulterating the product, using inferior materials, shoddy workmanship, etc. Nearly all these result in a deterioration of the product, a fact which may react adversely against the vendor. Now, there is one factor, not included in the above, which, without affecting its quality, cheapens production to an extraordinary extent, and which, curiously enough, has only recently received serious attention. Reference is made to reducing

the labour involved in transporting an article prior to completion in the factory. In the earlier days iron ore was mined and transported as such to the smelters, who produced pig iron. This product was diverted, part being sent to the steel makers, and part to the iron-founders. To both these works, huge quantities of coal are transported from the collieries. The iron-founders produced castings which were sent direct to our factory, while the steel makers produced steel bar, billets, etc. Some of this would also be sent direct to the factory, while a portion would go to the forging mill to be made into drop-forgings, stampings, etc., before being despatched to the factory. Other materials, such as wood, glass, metal alloys, etc., would take an equally circuitous route before reaching the factory.

At Ford's Highland Park factory, 634,375 tons of steel are required in a single year. It is not difficult to realise the economy that would result from reducing the distance that such a quantity of metal had to travel before reaching the factory. Cutting out a journey would represent a substantial saving. Obvious as this is, it is somewhat curious that the elimination of long distance transport was the last to be considered, production engineers first turning their attention to transport within the factory itself. Instead of grouping similar machine tools together, they were arranged according to the product. If a piece had to be turned, milled, drilled and slotted, then a lathe, milling machine, drill and slotter would be adjacently arranged so that the work would only travel a few yards instead of going into four different departments. A saving of transport is a saving of labour, and the idea has been carried to the extreme of altering an operation to save a workman a single step. Here is an example. Fitting the piston on the connecting rod, time 3 mins. 5 secs. Analysing the motions, it was found that four hours in a nine-hour day were spent in walking a few steps backwards and forwards. Rearranging the operations, so that no foot movement was necessary resulted in seven men doing 2,600 in eight hours as against 28 men doing 175 in nine hours.

It was natural that the first factories organised on these lines would rapidly expand. The cheapening of production would not only create a greater demand, increasing the quantity to be produced, but it would convince those responsible that, as they had the secret of doing work cheaper than their competitors, a saving would be effected by, as far as possible, completely manufacturing their product and all other incidental requirements. Hence, therefore, the concentration of industry previously described.

Having, however, reorganised the production in the factory on this basis, and knowing that future improvements could only result in less sensational economies, the production engineer commenced to look outside the factory. There yet remained to analyse the transportation of the raw material into the factory and the transportation of the finished product to the selling centres.

This quickly brought to light the fact that an enormous annual saving would be effected if, for instance, the iron smelting were done at the mouth of the iron mine, and the foundry was transported from the factory and placed alongside the smelting works. One of the latest developments of the Ford Company has been the combination of an iron, steel and blast foundry adjacent to the

mines at River Rouge. This plant is not yet complete, but already nearly 8,000 cylinder castings have been made in one day. The whole process of first casting pig-iron is eliminated, and the metal is never allowed to cool from the first heating of the ore till the cylinder casting is finished. When the plant is in full working order it is estimated that only 12 hours will elapse from the metal being in the earth until it becomes a finished casting.

The Ford coal mines are not far away, and Ford owns the railway that unites the two. The juxtaposition of coal and iron mines are, of course, an enviable economic advantage, and when such conditions occur and the resources are large, capitalist groups will go to any length, including drenching a country with blood, to either gain their control or prevent their falling into the hands of a trade rival—a point that need hardly be emphasised at the moment when the activities of the entire capitalist world are concentrated on the question of who shall control the Lorraine iron mines and the adjacent Ruhr coal mines.

Other sources of raw material attract away from the parent factory various other sections, the wood-working department goes to the forest and so on, it being cheaper to transport the lighter finished product than the heavier bulk from which it was made.

Referring now to transporting the completed commodity, the older method was to completely assemble the finished product in the parent factory. At the Ford works they once packed 1,000 railway freight vans—five or six cars to a van—in one day. It was discovered, however, that it was far cheaper to transport parts only—they occupy so much less space. Only sufficient cars for local needs are assembled at Detroit, and small assembling factories are being built at all important selling centres throughout the world.

Sufficient has now been said to make it quite clear how this new decentralisation of industry is coming into being and what form it will take. It will be observed that there is the same difference between this form of decentralisation and that prophesied by the Revisionists as there is between primitive Communism and the Communism on the threshold of which we now stand. One is behind us and done with, the other lies ahead.

Of the many other interesting points raised by Mr. Ford, we must content ourselves with a brief reference to one only—namely, the question of wages. First of all, Mr. Ford demonstrates beyond all quibble a further enunciation of Marx, which has been more often denied perhaps than any other statement of his, namely that the rise and fall of prices is not dependent upon a rise or fall of wages. That dear prices are a result of high wages and that high prices cannot fall until wages first drop has been a pet theme of most bourgeois economists, yet it is well known that at the Ford factory is produced the cheapest car—namely, the best value for money—in the world, while the workers there are paid the highest wages in the industry. There is no mitigating factor; the design is well carried out, the workmanship excellent, and the material specification is second to no car on the market regardless of price.

Mr. Ford says: "The payment of five dollars a day for an eight-hour day was one of the finest cost-cutting moves we ever made, and the six-dollar day wage is cheaper than the five. How far this will go, we do not know." Perhaps we can give Mr. Ford some idea of the limitations in the wage question. In the first place,

the workers at the Ford factory are speeded up to a strenuous degree, the worker must never rest a moment, otherwise a whole gang of men is disorganised, the work is exceedingly monotonous. In other words, the bait of high wages is necessary to keep the man contentedly at his work while the opportunity occurs of obtaining work at a less strenuous pace. Continuously changing labour is disorganising and seriously affects the efficiency of a factory. Here are some convincing figures. Prior to a considerable increase in wages which came into effect in 1914, it was necessary to hire at the rate of 53,000 hands a year to maintain a force of 14,000 employees. In 1915, only 6,508 new men were taken on, and the majority of these were due to factory expansion. At the old rate and to maintain the present force Mr. Ford admits that they would have to hire at the rate of nearly 200,000 men a year, a well-nigh impossible proposition. Here, then, is the explanation of Ford's high wages. Where will it end? When all industries are reorganised on Ford lines, and the worker has no alternative but to work at such a factory, the need for the bribe of a high wage will have gone. When the day arrives, Ford's competitors will meet him on an equal basis, he will no longer have the economic advantage of a better organised factory, and in the fierce struggle to undersell each other, the wage worker is likely to suffer and his wages to considerably decrease, particularly if he be of the non-union unorganised type so much admired by Mr. Ford.

No, we are afraid that we cannot believe that the millennium would follow the universal adoption of Mr. Ford's methods.

A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT: The Need for a Programme by W. E. Harding

IN the October issue of the *Labour Monthly* the Editor summed up his review of the Southport Trade Union Congress, and his conclusions that "only the political struggle of the working class as a class can unite the workers," in the following words: "The political party of the working class that can unite the workers by its leadership has still to develop. . . Only when a political party of the working class can unite the workers around *the common demands of the political struggle* and so rally around those demands the manifold organisations of the working class, only then and by those means will the unity of the working class be achieved."

In the November issue, on the eve of the political crisis, the Editor emphasised that it was the question of unemployment, with the economic programme that any real solution would involve, which would be the acid test of any Labour Government, and proceeded to point out the rending asunder of the post-war capitalist coalition "by the insoluble problems to be faced." "The capitalist ruling class is presenting a spectacle of confusion and

irresolution under the menacing shadow of the coming era and the new and fateful issues which it brings. Now is the moment and opportunity for the working class . . . to unite all its forces in support of the Labour candidates to defeat the capitalist parties in the hour of their division. A blow struck at the capitalist coalition forces now will mean a blow struck for the working class, not only in this country, but for every country in Europe and the world."

In the December issue, writing at the most intense moment of the General Election, the Editor commented as follows on the election programme of the Labour Party: "The line for the Labour Party was to take a clear stand on the class issue and damn all the capitalist parties. Such a stand would have won an immediate response from the workers. . . . Such was not the line of the official manifesto of the National Labour Party. . . . The Official Election Manifesto was, in the words of one conservative journal, a 'pastoral.' It tried to disguise all working class associations, and to present the Labour Party as a progressive party with a programme of reconstruction, instead as of the challenging party of the working class."

These three passages form a logical and living sequence, in so much as they represent increasingly sharp and definite statements of the same truth, produced by a progressively developing political situation. But at every stage they point the one lesson. What are "the common demands of the political struggle," of which the first passage speaks? What are "the new and fateful issues," which the possible advent of a Labour majority foreshadowed in November? What would have been "a clear stand on the class issue," that "challenge" which the Editor contrasted with "a programme of reconstruction," in December?

These are questions of the utmost importance for the Communist Party. Because—let us make no mistake about it—the Party will attain its leadership and group the masses behind it, *only* in proportion as it can put forward a *positive* programme of action, to drive home the moral of the destructive criticism of its opponents. The time is amply due for a *positive* answer to the questions advanced. The appearance of the first Communist M.P. has signalled it. What kind of an answer it is, we shall see. But just as the Communist M.P. is no longer the old type of M.P., but a herald of transition, so also we shall find that our answer must be a programme of transition. For the masses themselves are in transition.

What programme has the working class before it to-day?

There is the programme of the Labour Party—the election manifesto whose inner meaning and consequences were exposed by the Editor of the *Labour Monthly* in the passage quoted above. Page Arnot, in the same December issue, went over the election programme point by point, and arrived at the same conclusion: "Instead of presenting in crisp unmistakable words exactly what Labour stands for and what it stands against, it gives, in spite of its apparent detail, the impression of a rigmarole of meaningless generalities. . . . Here we have the clue to the tone: it is tuned to reach the ear of the middle class voter." The article ends: "If another world war comes, the responsibility for this present election programme will be heavy on the Labour Party."

And before that time comes it had best reverse its policy: and that quickly."

Obviously this is not the programme the workers are looking for.

The programme of the Independent Labour Party was no better. As could have been expected from the party which in effect decided the general lines of the Labour Party manifesto, its own statement of policy was also vague, indefinite, intangible, and little more than a declaration of general principles, *subjectively* capable of being interpreted in either a petit-bourgeois or Socialist sense, and *objectively*, under existing circumstances, similar in effect to the programme of the Labour Party, i.e., tacit acceptance of the capitalist society, of its conventions and limitations.

This also is not what the suffering, starved, exploited, but revolting masses require.

And this is all the material at our disposal for an answer to the question: "What are the new issues, the common demands of the political struggle, the demands which are a challenge to all the capitalist parties, which would face a Labour Government truly representative of the workers?"

The "six pledges" of our own Party (see the *Communist Daily*), which were the only distinctively working-class note struck throughout the electoral campaign, do not provide an answer to this question. They were intended as a reply to another, quite different demand. Bare inspection is sufficient to show this. Resistance to a *bloc* with any capitalist party: opposition to all war credits: support of the unemployed demands: opposition to all government expenditure on army, navy, or police: resistance to attacks upon the workers' organisations and liberties: opposition to all Government intervention against the workers—these are the watchwords of the Labour movement in opposition, the watchwords of the "United Front": they are not the watchwords of a Workers' Government. A Workers' Government, for example, will *have* to spend money on the army, navy and police; but its business will be to arrange matters in such a way that it will be dealing with a different army, a different police, from the present. A Workers' Government, again, cannot be content with helping the workers to resist attacks upon their liberties: it must lead them in a deliberate onslaught upon capitalist privilege. And so on.

Now at the time of the general election unquestionably the mass of the workers were under the impression that the future of the country lay in their hands, to order and arrange as they pleased. The Conservative and Liberal bourgeoisie based their propaganda upon this very delusion in no small measure. The increase in strength of the Labour Party, and particularly of that section which translated most energetically and sharply the discontent of the masses, shows that the latter were already conscious to a large extent of the truth that salvation lies through their own independent activity.

What was the business of the Party, the advance guard of the workers? To help them, urge them on, emphasising the importance of a clear class stand, pointing out the vast possibilities which lay before the workers if they gained control of the Government and found in their possession all the resources of the State—all the while, of course, clearing away delusions, pointing out the true state of affairs, showing beyond possibility of misunderstanding.

ing that the acquisition of a parliamentary majority by the workers' representatives was only the beginning, and not the end, of a bitter and obstinate struggle. And the very positive programme of measures to be adopted by a Workers' Government in the event of its election, while it would have opened the eyes of the workers to what sort of State action is really and directly intended for their benefit, would have also served as a corrective to their illusions—both by testing the revolutionary calibre of the Labour candidates before the masses, and by suggesting the not very far-fetched conclusions that the capitalists would see King, Parliament and Constitution all in hell before they submitted to such a drastic programme. Thus the programme would serve the ends, not only of agitation, but also of propaganda: not only to rally the workers, but also to clear their heads.

Did the "six points" do this? They did not attempt it. They breathed the psychology of the workers on their defence, not on the offensive. They did not reckon with the circumstances that, despite reductions in wages, increases in hours, and attacks on personal liberty, the workers were about to increase their Parliamentary representation by 100 per cent. or more: in other words, that, temporarily at any rate, the workers had been imbued with new strength and confidence, which it was important to develop, to deepen, to stabilise ideologically, as a preliminary to a move forward materially. The "six points" took for granted that in the immediate contest the workers would not be successful, and sought to unite them for resistance. This was bad tactics, and will remain so at all times when the workers, even momentarily, are psychologically elated, full of fighting spirit and enthusiasm, and only asking for a lead.

Such moments may easily occur again, and thanks to the most varied and different causes. To-day, in the increasingly unstable equilibrium of capitalist society, not merely a Parliamentary election, but a revolution in Germany, an oil dispute in the East, a legal decision on a rent question, a bill on the functions of trade unionism, a strike, a baton charge on the unemployed—any of these *at any moment* may prove the first spark of a flame of working-class revolt, the first impulse of which will be to establish a Workers' Government, long before our Party has acquired sufficient influence to lead the masses into the final struggle for the full dictatorship of the proletariat. If there was any meaning in the Party's demand for affiliation to the Labour Party ever since 1920, it was just this: and this was emphasised in the "Theses on the United Front" adopted just before the election.

It is this situation—a situation which will be hurrying towards us the more the Party is persistent and successful in its own, specifically revolutionary and anti-Constitutional agitation—for which we must find a programme.

We have seen already that the programme we require is one of measures which a Workers' Government, responsible to Parliament according to the formal Constitution, and responsible directly to the workers who are content to stay their hand at this point, according to the objective historical situation, must be prepared to apply immediately. Earlier it was remarked that the programme, to answer the essential requirements of the working class movement, must be one of *transition*. What does this mean?

The answer lies in an analysis of the present stage in the historical process.

Capitalist economy has been shattered by the war. The capitalist political structure has been considerably weakened. Time after time, after nearly fifty years of comparative quiet, the working masses have found themselves engaged in a desperate struggle to retain what they have become accustomed to regard as the primary essentials of life. In this struggle, out of the seemingly chaotic and heterogeneous array of opposing forces, they have found, looming up more and more distinctly, the huge and menacing machine of the State, to which the capitalist class commits all its powers and energies. If the workers on each occasion so far have drawn back, it is for two reasons: lack of organisation, and traditional respect, born of ignorance and fear, for the State, as for something above all classes. The progressive decay of capitalist society, the increasing insolence of the capitalists, the dazzling example of Soviet Russia—these factors, however, help to clear away these obstacles more and more.

One day there must come a moment when degree of organisation and clearness of aim will be sufficient to prompt the working class utterly to destroy the present machine of the capitalist State, and to substitute for it a machine which will answer the requirements of the workers' community. To hasten that day by their propaganda is the definite object of all the class-conscious elements of the working class, united in the Communist Party; and their propaganda is definite and uncompromising accordingly.

But there is another way in which the working class learns—the fundamental way, that of experience: the process of "trial and error." As the workers become bolder, as they become more used to the idea of the capitalist State as their enemy, as they see it more and more closely and distinctly, with all its power and technical perfection—the impulse first arises, and grows stronger and stronger, to seize the machine before them and use it for their own purposes. This is particularly true of highly-industrialised countries like Germany, the United States, and Great Britain, where the workers know what organisation means and what the State can do in the common struggle.

It is this stage in the process, as is generally agreed in the Communist International, that has taken the form in Great Britain of the attempt of the workers to secure control of the State by the return to power of the Labour Party. To hasten the development and outliving of this stage, there is general agreement that the Labour Party must be assisted to power. If the election programme of the Labour Party is not such as to assist it to come to power *as a working class Government*, the programme must be recast accordingly, and the Left Wing must be a pioneer in this as in all other working class matters.

For the process will not stop there. The workers must sooner or later learn that the task they attempted through the constitutional Labour Party is hopeless. It is impossible to utilise the capitalist State machine in the interest of the working class: this will be shown by practical experience—"trial and error." The workers will turn to another solution: that can only be the Communist solution—a proletarian State apparatus, concentrating all the fulness of power in the hands of the working class.

But only on one condition. If the Communists have remained mute and passive during the period of "trial and error," or have merely and mechanically insisted on their own general programme, without concern for the present business of the working class, the latter will not seek for guidance at their hands. History does not work so mechanically. The Party must have been at hand throughout, suggesting all the time the right direction in which the workers must move, if its voice is to be listened to.

Here is a seeming contradiction. All Communists believe and urge that the working class must build its own State, and that the capitalist State machinery cannot be used to achieve emancipation. On the other hand, the workers are passing through a stage in which they believe precisely this to be possible, and are acting on this belief. How is this contradiction to be dealt with?

In the only possible way, the dialectical way of history—by application in real life ("trial and error"). The workers must try to use the capitalist State for their own purposes. They must be encouraged to make the experiment as soon as possible. They must be assisted to do so by the production of our own concrete suggestions, or "programme." *But every suggestion must be of such a nature that its very application and failure must reveal, and not obscure, the right way, the Communist way—the way of proletarian dictatorship.* In other words, the programme must be, not the "minimum programme," or half-way-house beloved of the Second International before and since the war, but a programme of *transition*—transitional in its essence, in its very application, in the Marxian meaning of the word, providing its own contradiction.

The programme of a Workers' Government must be an answer to all the questions that arise before a Workers' Government on the morrow of its access to power. Consequently, like the programme of any government, which must defend its territory, protect and develop its economic life, and maintain public order, the programme naturally falls into three parts—foreign policy, political measures, social and economic policy.

How must the details be determined? A simple way suggests itself—so simple as to be almost mechanical, yet profoundly true to life. If we look through the files of the *Daily Herald* for a month, and the principal Labour and Socialist weeklies, we shall find a number of topics dealt with which are of interest to the working class. They are dealt with differently, according to the journal we are inspecting: but practically all the same topics occur in each: and they are susceptible of classification under just the three suggested. Here is a list, which is not intended to be exhaustive, but will serve as an illustration: reparations, Soviet Russia, the subject nations of the British Empire, the exploited peoples of the East, disarmament; the House of Lords, the Foreign Office, the military machine, the police apparatus, the educational system; unemployment, nationalisation of industries, nationalisation of land, hours and wages, public finance. No matter how a Workers' Government comes to power, whatever the immediate issue—industrial or political—which has ensured the victory, these problems, and others such as these, will be an immediate concern.

How shall a Workers' Government grapple with them? The right path has been shown us by Poplar in Great Britain, and by the German Communist Party's campaign for a Workers' Govern-

ment, particularly in Saxony. The dominant principles must be: contempt for all the traditions of the capitalist constitutional machine; consideration for the interests of the workers as a class, and of the workers alone; and a constant attempt to make the workers themselves participate in the work of government, familiarising them with the idea that the governmental machine exists for them, and for them alone, and must be utilised to the utmost. The pledge which the Communist Party in Saxony has been endeavouring to secure from the United Social Democratic Party has been the preliminary discussion of all legislation in the factory committees. In Britain, the watchword might well be altered, at present, to extended conferences of trades councils with workshop delegates.

But, still further, the workers must be familiarised with the apparatus of power itself, and no part must be allowed to escape their constant scrutiny. In the economic sphere, this principle has long been the war cry of the Left Wing of the Labour movement: nor would many, even moderate men, of the Right venture to-day to suggest nationalisation of the heavy industries, or of the land, without at least some show of workers' control. On the question of unemployment, a Workers' Government would tear the veil from the holy of holies of the capitalist machine—the finances of industry—and, by setting up plenipotentiary Control Commissions in each industry, would both try the experiment of "Constitutional" action for what it was worth and would prepare the way for the full expropriation of the expropriators which constitutes the objective of the Communist Party. The application of the same method to the purely political apparatus has received less attention. But can there be any proposal more revolutionary in its effect, while answering the everyday and pressing needs of the moment, than a provision that a Workers' Government shall immediately invite a Commission of the Trade Union Congress to inspect the secret files of the Foreign Office, and another to do the same for the agent provocateur files of the Home Office? Or that delegates or "commissaries" from the trades councils of the several military areas into which these islands are divided shall be attached to all divisional staffs, to check the movement of troops and the capitalist preparations for industrial disputes?

These are a few of the more striking instances: but a systematic application of the basic principles already cited to each of the problems in turn will yield the same fruitful results. The sum-total will be a programme representing a genuine effort to deal with class problems in a class fashion, by striking at the root. Every day we find those class problems duly outlined in the *Herald*: which, however, instead of answering them, tails off into those same vague, slipshod generalities of which the Labour Party election programme was composed. And these will be solutions which will fire the imagination and arouse the enthusiasm of the workers, because they represent a genuine effort to utilise the capitalist machine in the direction the workers desire, by striking out into an independent line recognisable a thousand miles off as the line of the working class.

A programme worked out in this way will represent an effort, and the only genuine effort: but it will not succeed in the long run. We all know that, whatever hardship the organised capi-

talist class will put up with, there must come a moment when it will prefer to fight sooner than be drained any more of its life-blood. The outcome of that fight, we know well, can be only the establishment of undivided working class rule without concealment, through a working class apparatus of government. Consequently, the Communist Party cannot for a moment allow the watchword of a Workers' Government, or of its fighting programme, to obscure its own specific watchwords, and its own programme, which it shares with its fellow-members of the Communist International, defining its world-outlook and the measures to be applied on the morrow of the establishment of proletarian dictatorship. Any programme for a Workers' Government must have its purpose, its function, and its limitations clearly set forth in its preamble; and must find a brief explanation in the general programme of the Party.

Again, the transitional programme must develop and vary with the progress of the battle. It is always to be distinguished from those burning questions, alluded to earlier, on which a fighting Communist Party may propose a united front to all other working class organisations (for the purpose of resistance to capitalist aggression and of bringing about the downfall of a capitalist government). Such questions may change from month to month, or even from week to week, should contact be once established. The programme for a Workers' Government may be calculated for further ahead: the fundamental social evils of capitalism are more stable than the line of conduct of its individual spokesmen. During the international discussion on this subject in recent months, as long a period as two or three years has been suggested. At all events, the details might well be revised annually at the Party Congress, to eliminate what was unnecessary or alter what required bringing up to date: while the existence of the Party Council makes it possible, if necessary, to reduce the period of revision to six months.

The central aim to be kept in mind—one may be forgiven for repeating—is to indicate a drastic, honest, working class way out of the impasse, utilising the machinery left us by capitalism for the purpose, and at every step making the workers more and more accustomed to the idea that the State exists for them, to be used like any other implement in their struggle against exploitation.

From that stage, when the implement of Simon de Montfort, Henry VIII., Oliver Cromwell, Pitt and Gladstone breaks at last like a toy in the hands of a class with tasks greater than burdened all of these, it will be a natural transition to the idea that the workers must have a machine and a social order all their own.

I anticipate a possible objection: the Party has not got its own programme yet, and cannot break off into a search for a transitional programme. My reply is this. First, the Party programme is under international discussion just now, and anything we produce can only be regarded as a draft. Therefore, while individual Party members will only be doing their duty if they write draft programmes or programme articles for Party discussion or for the Programme Commission of the International, the Party as a whole is not called upon at this stage to make a decision. Secondly, circumstances simply do not permit us to postpone the

question of a transitional programme. There is an exact parallel between this question and the question of the transitional or "fighting" programmes which are being worked out just now—at last—in each industry by the Party union nuclei and the R.I.L.U. minority groups. At this very moment I have before me the Executive Committee's new manifesto in connection with the Ruhr crisis: it calls for international working class action, and ends with a demand for the setting up of workers' governments in Europe—that is to say, in Britain (our comrades abroad can look after their own). Presumably Soviet Governments are not intended: objectively the time is not yet ripe for them. But an international and effective protest strike might very well throw the door open once more for "Official Labour." Shall we be satisfied with that, and rest on our oars: and be greeted, in consequence, with a Liberal-Labour coalition? Or shall we, by opening the eyes of the workers to what a Workers' Government must mean in its minimum expression, make it impossible for such a coalition to take place, and make possible a positive step forward to the victory of the proletarian revolution?

GEORGIA: A "Free" and Social-Democratic Republic

BY G. ALLEN HUTT

In the following scathing exposure of the hypocritical policy adopted by prominent I.L.P.ers in their malicious campaign against Soviet Russia, our contributor draws all his evidence from anti-Bolshevik sources. It is also interesting to note that while the Georgian social democrats were seeking the aid of British arms to help them to realise their imperialist schemes that Mr. J. R. MacDonald made frenzied overtures to the British Foreign Office and advised it to help the Georgian Government to organise a Trans-Caucasian Federation. He said, regarding this, "Our policy in the Near East is written on the map if we could but read it." (NATION, Oct. 16/20). The full significance of these words is made much clearer now that we understand what the social-democrats of Georgia wanted.—

ED. OF COMMUNIST REVIEW.

THE Berlin Conference of the Three Internationals, in April of last year, appears in retrospect to have been largely a series of heartrending wails from the delegates of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals over the fate of Georgia—poor little independent Georgia, democratic and Socialist, wishful to live at peace with all the world, and yet, alas! brutally subjugated by the invading armies of "Bolshevist Imperialism." Otto Bauer could even go so far as to say that "whenever the proletariat now raises a protest against the violent deeds of imperialism it is met with a scornful reference to Georgia." Again and again the "tragic" point was emphasised, that in the case of Georgia both parties concerned were "proletarian and Socialist."

Now it is undoubtedly of vital importance to the working masses that these points should be perfectly clear and incontrovertible. What are the real facts about this Social-Democratic State whose fall has called forth such bitter lamentations from the Right and the Centre, and has so conveniently furnished them with a new ground for forming a United Front with the bourgeoisie against the Communist International and the Russian Workers' Republic? Is there any truth at all in the amiable tea-table chatter of Madame Snowden¹ or the ponderously naive enthusiasm of Kautsky?² Did this wholly ideal and romantic Georgia ever exist—this truly gallant little State, with its charming people, its democratic joys, its pure and undefined Socialist spirit, its passionate yearnings for internationalism? These questions I want to try and answer, as I tried to do in a previous article in the COMMUNIST REVIEW, by going to the other side for facts. For the present I am not concerned with the all-important point as to the connection of Georgia with the Russian Counter-Revolution: that has been dealt with by Trotsky in his magnificent *Between Red and White*,³ and by Shaphir in his well-documented study *Secrets of Menshevik Georgia*.⁴ Neither do I propose to take such a revealing document as Djugelli's *Diary* and condemn the ex-governors of Georgia out of their own mouths: such a piece of crude polemic would, no doubt, revolt the sensitive feelings of the Second International. I am going to base this article on two books, both by persons of unimpeachable anti-Bolshevik reputation. The first book is by one Dr. J. Loris-Melicof, entitled *The Russian Revolution and the New Trans-Caucasian Republics*.⁵ Dr. Loris-Melicof was sent by the French Government on a special mission to South Russia and Trans-Caucasia in 1919. He was not a blind reactionary, and, indeed, his outlook would appear to be of a broad and liberal character—which made him incidentally all the more fervent in his opposition to Bolshevism. Also, the fact that he was by birth a Russian rendered him a more acute witness of events than those who, like Kautsky, had to confess their "lack of knowledge of the Georgian and Russian languages."

The other book I shall chiefly draw upon is one by C. E. Bechhofer, called *In Denikin's Russia*,⁶ being a travel diary of 1919-20, when Mr. Bechhofer spent many months in the Caucasus and South Russia. Mr. Bechhofer once collaborated with Mr. Maurice Reckitt in a book on Guild Socialism: he is a vehement, at times rabid, anti-Bolshevik. However, he was well acquainted with Georgia years before it ever came to the notice of the Second International, having spent some time there in 1915, while pursuing his studies in the Russian language. These are the witnesses; now to the indictment.

Georgia, then, as Dr. Loris-Melicof points out with a wealth of historical detail, was essentially a country still in a semi-feudal stage of development, when the Russian Revolution overtook it. The Russian conquest of the country in the XIXth. Century had provoked a nationalist movement among the nobility—particularly the small nobility, the Georgian *intelligentsia*. Nationalism directed its forces against Russian officialdom and Tsarism, but it became more and more drawn into a bitter conflict with Armenian capitalism. The Armenian bourgeoisie had by far the major por-

¹ *A Political Pilgrim in Europe.*

² *Georgia: a Social-Democratic Peasant Republic.*

³ C.P.G.B., 2/-.

⁴ C.P.G.B., 1/6.

⁵ Paris, 1920.

⁶ London, Collins, 1921.

tion of the commercial capital of Georgia in its hands, and its influence continually increased. "This," says Dr. Loris-Melicof, "is the profound cause of the Armeno-Georgian conflict. The Georgian nationalists believed that the appearance of this Armenian bourgeoisie was a national calamity and their discontent was based on this argument: the Armenians are foreigners who have cornered our capital." (p. 91). He further points out that a famous Georgian nationalist, Tchavtchavdze, "founded a Land Bank to safeguard the properties of the Georgian feudal nobility, and to avoid the buying-up of such properties by Armenian capitalists." (p. 90). Opposed to the various brands of nationalism was the Georgian Social-Democratic Party—with the accent on the Democratic, perhaps: a Party whose basis was to be sought in the discontent and land-hunger of the Georgian peasant masses, and their struggle with a numerous and privileged nobility. N. Jordania, the most distinguished Georgian Social-Democrat, used to conduct a fierce campaign against the Georgian nationalists and landed proprietors, arguing that the Armenian capitalists were historically more advanced and, therefore, preferable. The Social-Democrats had no truck with the separatist or federalist notions of the nationalists. When the March Revolution took place in Russia the Georgians did not claim independence: even as late as December 3rd, 1917, Jordania could say, "As a part of Russia we keep standing on an All-Russian platform." But when it became evident that the Bolshevik seizure of power really meant "All Power to the Soviets," and that the "democratic" Constituent Assembly was simply irrelevant, a different tune was heard. The Trans-Caucasian members of the Assembly, with Tcheidze and Tseretelli at their head, established on February 23rd, 1918, a "Seim" or Diet for administering the country's affairs. An armistice was concluded with the Turks—and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk soon followed; this the Seim refused to recognise, but could offer no effective resistance to the occupation by the Turks of Batum and other districts under the terms of the Treaty. In late May the Seim decomposed, and three States emerged—Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan: but the Seim had accomplished one important work; on March 7, a Land Law had been decreed, by which, in Dr. Loris-Melicof's words, "the peasants became small landed proprietors, and the revolution was thus effected amongst them." He goes on to say that Jordania, Tseretelli and the rest, found themselves, after the passing of the Land Law, with two alternatives before them: either they could hold firmly to their Socialist programme, or they could go back on their whole past record and associate themselves with the nationalist movement. This latter prospect "was more seductive, and they moved to the Right, while affirming the temporary necessity of concluding a provisional Turco-German pact. However this may be, *the separatist nationalism of the Georgian nobility came out victorious from this crisis.*" (p. 93—my italics*). So the Social-Democrats had quite simply sold out to the nationalists. In an illuminating paragraph Dr. Loris-Melicof sums up the situation—"The agrarian Revolution being completed, the peasants had become proprietors. The Social-Democracy could not represent the party of the workers, because an industrial proletariat does not exist in Georgia. One

* And so through this article—all italics mine.

must recognise that the Social-Democrats struggled against the nationalism of the Georgian nobility, and that formerly they took up the defence of Armenian capitalists rather than that of foreigners or Georgian landed proprietors, who were in no sense producers, and who exploited the peasant to assure their existence as parasites. *When the peasants became petite bourgeois, the Social-Democrats ceased to be Social-Democrats. They have been conquered by the nationalism of the petite bourgeoisie, of which the representative was not Noé Jordania, but Tchenkelli, to whom Jordania said one day, "Are you a member of a political party or do you belong to a gang of adventurers?"* (p. 137).

This, then, was the position of "Social-Democracy" in Georgia when that country emerged as an independent State from the ruins of the short-lived Seim. The declaration of independence itself signified, above all, a separation from Russia: henceforth Georgia will go rigidly down the path of separatism. "By accepting the protectorate of Germany or any other western country, *she wishes to reconquer her hegemony in Trans-Caucasia as a Christian nation, with her ancient frontiers, and to take as formerly the Armenians under her benevolent protectorate. She would stop these latter in their attempts to invade Georgia and would limit their desires for national autonomy.*" (p. 133). Shades of the "freedom of small nations"! Could anything be more quintessentially imperialistic—the "hegemony" of Trans-Caucasia, "benevolent protectorate," "limiting desires for national autonomy"! Immediately on declaring its independence this priceless young State managed to get taken in tow by the first big imperialist power to hand—Germany. This step the Social-Democrats approved, as mentioned above. "Georgian politics," says Mr. Bechhofer, "now took on a pro-German cast. A German Mission appeared at Tiflis, and a Georgian mission went to Berlin. Georgia . . . acknowledged the Brest-Litovsk Treaty as conditions of a German alliance. One of the clauses of the secret German-Georgian agreement was that the Turks should not be allowed to enter Tiflis" (pp. 10-11). It is a little breath-taking, in view of this, to find the Georgian Parliament proclaiming to the Allies in the spring of 1920, that "luckily for Georgia, the victory of the Allies annulled the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Georgia did not participate in this treaty; on the contrary, it fought on the side of the Allies and was *practically* the ally of the Entente" (p. 11). The deliciousness of this "practically" can only be realised when the remark of Von Kress, head of the German Military Mission in the Trans-Caucasus, is borne in mind: he said bluntly in the autumn of 1918, just before the Armeno-Georgian struggle, "Germany, *as an ally*, has engaged itself to support the Georgian claims" (p. 11).

However, the collapse of Germany was at hand: and under the Armistice terms British troops occupied the Trans-Caucasus. The Turks and Germans left, after some parleying. "With the withdrawal of the Turks, the Transcaucasian republics began their existence as really independent States. Every race, nation, tribe, and clan had been clamouring, intriguing, and fighting to assert its independence and humble the pretensions of its neighbours and rivals. And, since the Caucasus is as full of little people as cheese is of mites, the result was a most unholy state of confusion." (Bechhofer, p. 13). I quoted above the remark of Dr. Loris-Melicof

to the effect that the antipathy between Georgians and Armenians was fundamentally economic in character: it was quite simply a class struggle—the Georgian aristocracy versus the Armenian bourgeoisie. It is interesting to note the figures given by Dr. Loris-Melicof:—

<i>Georgian nobility</i>	... 70,972	(5.26% of Population)
<i>bourgeoisie</i>	... 47,768	(3.54% ,, ,,)
<i>Armenian nobility</i>	... 9,318	(0.83% ,, ,,)
<i>bourgeoisie</i>	... 123,213	(11.02% ,, ,,)

(p. 135)

Note further that though the peasants had become small proprietors their attitude was passive, they exercised "no decisive or active influence on the current of national and political life" (Ibid. p. 135). So the nationalist nobility, backed as we have seen by the "Social-Democrats," had things all their own way. In fact, the Social-Democratic government simply acted as the spear-head of the decadent nobility in their attack on the Armenian bourgeoisie. "The representatives of Georgian public opinion [i.e. the Social-Democratic government], regarding this dissolution of the dominant class of feudal nobility [by mortgaging and selling out, &c.] as a national evil, declared war on all the agents of the development of industry and of capital" (p. 136). "The attitude taken up by the Social-Democratic government towards the Armenians, while Armenia was enclosed in the province of Erivan and surrounded by Turkish troops, was indeed regrettable. They made off with all the money left by the Russian State, nearly two *milliards*, and only gave twenty millions to Armenia. They took possession of all the railways and declared a tariff war on their neighbours. At this moment to be an Armenian was considered as a crime" (pp. 137-8). It is nothing to do with the matter, whether the Armenians were saints or sinners: the glaring fact before us is the behaviour of the "Social-Democratic" government of Georgia. Dr. Loris-Melicof goes on to observe that "the governors of Georgia . . . said that the moment had come to create Great Georgia, the Georgia which existed before the Russian conquest and even before the Turkish occupation in the XVIIIth. Century" (p. 128): in support of these pretensions all sorts of allegedly "historical" rights and precedents were exhumed—"But what does it matter! All means are good to realise Great Georgia. . . . How could the Armenians pretend to possess these territories, when they did not belong to them? This is the reasoning and the mentality of nationalists, of imperialists. More particularly as they felt themselves strong in the support lent by Germany to Georgia" (pp. 139-140). The German support was succeeded, as we have already seen, by British occupation; and Georgia was single-handed in the comic opera war with Armenia which continued till December, 1918, after preliminary fighting dating from late October (when German bayonets could still be counted on). Only Allied intervention, says Bechhofer, prevented the Armenians taking Tiflis.

For the British were now in Batum. "After the departure of the German troops from Trans-Caucasia, England replaced Germany. . . . At the same time, the question of the recognition of the independence of Georgia passed from the hands of the Central Empires to the hands of the Allied Powers. At the beginning *openly hostile to the Allies*, the Georgians came little

by little to have good relations with them, above all with England. They believed at this moment that the independent existence of the Caucasian Republics *was very valuable for the English, as against Russia, for their communications with India.*" (Loris-Melicof, p. 156). Happy Georgia! When unavoidably cut loose from German imperialism, to be able so easily to hitch herself on to British imperialism; and still to be ready, if need be, to change once more her "protector." Loris-Melicof makes it perfectly clear that British "protection" was by no means accepted as a permanent institution—"It could easily be displaced in favour of another State, like France, for instance, in the interests of Georgian independence required it" (p. 156).

What, in view of all this, can one think of Madame Snowden, when she writes that, on the ground of "strict neutrality," Georgia "had refused help from both the English and the Germans, the one eager to employ anybody against the Bolsheviks, the other ready to engage anybody against the Allies" (*Political Pilgrim*, p. 213). Is any further proof of her utter ignorance of Georgian affairs needed?*

Let us examine in some detail a concrete example of Georgian chauvinism: let us take what Mr. Bechhofer calls the "wild propaganda" that was being conducted for the cession of Batum ("internationalised" under Allied control) to Georgia. The Georgian claims were: (1) Batum was "historically and culturally" a part of Georgia; (2) the inhabitants of Batum were yearning for union with Georgia; (3) the possession of Batum was vital to the existence of Georgia. To these claims Bechhofer replies: (1) "Batum had never been of the slightest importance until the Russians took it from Turkey forty years ago, so that it is difficult to see how it could be, as the Georgian newspapers averred, the 'cultural centre' of Georgia" (p. 42); (2) This claim was based on the statements of two suspicious characters, Mehmed Bek and Djemal Pasha, who were supplied with money from Tiflis, and ran a "spoof" organisation called the "Georgian Mohammedan Council"; the real feeling of the very mixed Batum population being dead against the Georgians, as a carefully conducted investigation by Mr. Bechhofer showed. More particularly were the Georgian Mohammedans—the Adjarians—violently of the opinion that the Tiflis Georgians were "no good" (pp. 42-3, 244-5). Loris-Melicof also stresses the opposition of the Adjarians to the Georgians (pp. 141-2); (3) It is quite evident that Batum was much more vital to the existence of Armenia and Azerbaijan, being indeed their only open port on the Black Sea. "To hand over the port to the Georgians, in the hope that they would not interfere with their neighbours' use of it, was a suggestion that raised only a smile from observers, and a protest from the other States. *The Georgian Government was deliberately, and almost without concealment, endeavouring to secure the hegemony of the Transcaucasus by occupying all its ports*" (pp. 43-4). It appears that the Georgians even went so far as to countenance train robberies in the Batum Province, "because they could be used as arguments for the cession of Batum to Georgia, 'since the British are unable to keep order.' Such is the level of the behaviour of small democratic governments" (p. 44). Yet when the British were on the verge of evacuating Batum in early 1920, the Georgian government was so horribly

* "*Georgia: 'Free and Social-Democratic.'*"

frightened at the prospect of what might happen if they lost their "protectors," that they had secretly appealed for the cancellation of the order for evacuation: and the British remained. Of course, the ultra-chauvinists were furious; and the government forthwith connived at the invasion of Batum Province by Georgian troops! When the British demanded withdrawal, "the Georgian Government promptly fell on its back and raised its paws helplessly in the air. It could not possibly withdraw the troops, it pleaded, though it was most willing to, because the effect of this withdrawal might well be such a political crisis, in view of the fervent public opinion in Georgia about Batum, as would lead to the resignation of the Georgian Government *and its probable succession by a Bolshevik administration*" (p. 239). Note this carefully: in March, 1920, one year before Georgia became Soviet Georgia, the Social-Democratic Georgian Government *admitted*, in a communication with British authorities, *that the political condition of the country was such that a Soviet Revolution was a probability*. What now about the whines of "overthrown by external force alone"?

Still over this Batum business, an illuminating instance of the discreditable character of Georgian politics is furnished by the affair of Mr. Oliver Wardrop, British Commissioner in Tiflis. This gentleman, as both Dr. Loris-Melicof and Mr. Bechhofer emphasise, was notoriously pro-Georgian. The Georgians took advantage of this extreme sympathy Mr. Wardrop had for them to publish false reports in the Tiflis papers of an interview a delegation had with Mr. Wardrop on the subject of the allegedly unanimous national desire for the possession of Batum. Mr. Wardrop's remarks on this occasion were misrepresented to the extent of sheer invention: and a letter of protest and denial from him was only inserted after a week's delay. Mr. Bechhofer observes that "the Georgians were taking advantage of his known sympathy with them to indulge in what was equivalent to political blackmail. The fact that so old and tried a friend of the Georgians found it necessary to administer this rap on the knuckles [the letter of denial was couched in the strongest terms] was an additional proof of the quality of Georgian politics. . . . I am positive that he did not leave Georgia as well disposed to the Georgian Government as when he entered the country for the first time after its declaration of political independence" (pp. 249-250).

Now let us hear what our authorities have to say about the "free and democratic" internal regime of Georgia. There was, in the first place, persecution of non-Georgian minorities. Dr. Loris-Melicof mentions two such minorities—the Abkhazians and the Ossetians, "who were too few to resist the Georgian demands; Abkhazia, despite perpetual protests and rumbling discontent, was included in the Georgian dominion as an autonomous unit. The Ossetians, who inhabit the district of Gori [between Tiflis and Kutais] . . . were put down by force of arms after vain attempts at resistance" (p. 142). It was the suppression of the Ossetians which inspired the chief of the National or People's Guard, Djugelli, to write the most Neronian passages in his Diary, an astounding document quoted by Trotsky. Bechhofer describes Djugelli as a "fire-eater" and "a man of vain and fiery mind"—which remarks fully bear out the quotations Trotsky gives. Brigands of this sort were used by the Georgian Social-Democrats to keep down any troublesome people in the name of freedom!

Risings were not few: and after a particularly severe series Mr. Bechhofer sought information from Ramashvilli—then War Minister, Minister of the Interior, and Minister of Education. This worthy Social-Democrat delivered himself as follows—the risings “were . . . entirely due to Bolshevik propaganda from Moscow . . . the outbreak had been manned almost entirely by criminals and deserters, led by Russian and Chinese Bolsheviks; the peasants took no part in the rising whatever. The trouble had now been satisfactorily liquidated . . . some thirty leaders of the rising had already been shot” (p. 55). Says Mr. Bechhofer, “I had good reason, however, to suppose that these statements were in many respects inaccurate. In the first place, a member of the Georgian Government, passing through Batum, had informed the British there that, *far from the peasants having taken no part in the risings, these were much more of the nature of popular demonstrations against the Government than pro-Bolshevik movements*; conscription was unpopular, and the peasants also complained that the large estates ought to have been distributed freely among them, instead of their being forced to buy them” (p. 56). At this same interview Bechhofer learned that “altogether during the past year several hundred Bolsheviks and their supporters had been executed”—and he appends this footnote to Ramashvilli’s statement, “M. Ramashvilli doubtless thought that this would go down well with English papers. Curiously enough, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, passing through Georgia about ten months later, has stated (of course, on information received from the Georgian Government) that no ‘reprisals’ have been resorted to against the Bolsheviks. ‘*The Georgian Government, he added, ‘remained firm, playing the long suit of liberty. It won.’ (Nation, October 16, 1920). Lists of ‘Bolsheviks’ executed . . . appeared in the Tiflis papers in November, 1919*” (p. 55, note). And what does the Leader of His Majesty’s Opposition say to that?

Even in computing the population of Georgia, and the numbers of Georgians, the Georgian Government showed its chauvinism. Mr. Bechhofer and Dr. Loris-Melicof give substantially the same figures—about 1,750,000, including Georgian Mohammedans. Yet “M. Ghambashidze, a well-known Georgian propagandist diplomat, gave the population of Georgia in 1919 (*The Mineral Resources of Georgia*, p. 6) as four millions. M. Gegechkori told me in December, 1919, that the population was 2½ millions. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who was in Georgia for a short while in the autumn of 1920, announced ingenuously (in the *Nation*, October 16, 1920), that ‘Georgia is a small nation with rich traditions. It has 4,000,000 people, and a fine public spirit.’ *The whole of Mr. Macdonald’s article is a farrago of unchecked Georgian propagandist assertions, many of them patently absurd*” (Bechhofer, p. 53, note). Yet it is for this “farrago” that the Second International is so chary about forming a United Front with the Comintern!

The Georgian bureaucracy was numerous, relative for instance to the Armenian: Loris-Melicof gives 13,860 Georgians and 4,660 Armenians (p. 135). Bechhofer gives a biting account of the petty tyrannies and childishness of this bureaucracy: “the Georgians, as an independent State, have been nothing if not childish. *Had I not the evidence of my senses, I could not have believed that this people could be so spoiled by a few months of ‘independ-*

dence'; every day I saw them yielding more and more to the shrieking propaganda of the Tiflis Chauvinists, until at last, to the extent of their opportunities, they were much more Prussian than the Prussians" (p. 45).

I will not bother to poke fun at the Georgian Army, which Loris-Melicof describes as simply a parade turn-out, and Bechhofer as not a serious fighting force. Neither will I stress the ridiculous passion for making Georgian the official language on all possible occasions—and incidentally dismissing workers and officials of other races in favour of Georgians. Nor even will I do more than mention the "vindictive persecution of the Russians in Georgia, by way of emphasising the highly disputable asseveration of Georgian ultra-patriots that Georgia was persecuted by the Russians in pre-Revolutionary days (Ibid. pp. 41-2). A much more important matter, which Bechhofer emphasises, is the question as to how far Georgian independence was a completely artificial thing.

Bechhofer points out that the Georgian claim that, since they had managed to exist as an "independent" State for two years, they were justified in saying that they really could maintain their independence, was entirely hollow. Only by their unscrupulous diplomacy, and by the support, tacit or otherwise, of other Powers, did the Georgians maintain their independence. "But for German intervention, the Turks would long before have overrun Georgia. But for Denikin and the other anti-Bolshevist leaders in the north, the Bolshevik armies could have swept through Georgia whenever they wished. But for British intervention, the Armenian troops . . . would, perhaps, have occupied Tiflis . . ." (Bechhofer, p. 52). M. Gegechkori, the Georgian Foreign Minister, remarked ingenuously to Bechhofer, "At the present moment, it is true, we are faced with a financial crisis and a food crisis; but if any Western nation would help us to get rid of these two things, our State mechanism would work satisfactorily" (pp. 51-2). "M. Gegechkori," Mr. Bechhofer continues, "had admitted that Georgia could not stand alone financially or economically; and he practically admitted that this was true in the political and military spheres also. For, he said, *England would have to maintain by her authority whatever settlement was arrived at for the Transcaucasus*" (pp. 53-4). O blessed "independence"—depending on the power of British imperialism!

To cut off Georgia from Russia was simply going dead against all economic and cultural ties. "Georgia has always been dependent upon supplies of food from the South Russian steppes. She cannot feed herself. Her resources, mineral and otherwise, are insufficient to balance her needs in the way of food and other imports" (p. 53, note). The rise of the "Mountain Republic" (a government of the Caucasian mountain tribes "was due originally to the desire of the Georgian Government to create a buffer State between Georgia and Russia, in the hope of being able in this manner to fend off the inevitable reunion of these two countries" (p. 252). The fabric of Georgian independence was so crazy that when the Bolsheviks took Baku, towards the end of April, 1920, the wretched Georgian "statesmen" ran hither and thither, intriguing desperately with anybody and everybody, hoping "that, by masterly hocus-pocus, they would succeed in compromising so many extra-Caucasian Powers into guaranteeing Georgian independence that these would always be bound to support it" (p. 317).

But "Russia had regained her influence at Baku without a struggle. The bluff of Transcaucasian 'independence' had been called" (Ibid.). Mr. Bechhofer summed the matter up when, writing in late 1920, he said that to Russia "it seems to be inevitable that Batum and Tiflis must return, in the wake of Baku. *The ties with Russia, cultural and economic, are so strong in the Caucasus that no amount of planning and intriguing can overcome them*" (p. 324).

I hope I have shown by this time just about how "free" and "independent" Georgia was: and I want to close with a quotation from Mr. Bechhofer on the character of its "Social-Democracy." Describing his arrival at Tiflis, he says—"A 'Social-Democratic' Government was in power, all the members of which, so one of them told me, were journalists, with one exception, a lawyer. The Social-Democratic Party—Menshevik fraction—had 105 seats out of 130 in the Georgian Parliament. Theirs was in many ways a curious Social-Democracy. The Red Flag flew over all Government buildings and official motor-cars; and gentlemen who in other countries would be suspected of ultra-bourgeois leanings, proudly called themselves convinced and lifelong Socialists. The Bolshevik fraction of the Social-Democratic party had been declared illegal. I asked one of the Georgian Ministers why his Government called itself 'Social-Democratic.' He replied, with a shrug of the shoulders, 'One must call oneself something'" (p. 48). Is there any need to comment on, or draw the moral from, this paragraph? The only feeling one has is that the Second International have been victims of about the biggest hoax in history: and yet the truth is that the ease with which they allowed themselves to be hoaxed has revealed to the working class for all time the petty bourgeois "democratic" ideology of these so-called Socialists, these "leaders" of the working-class who have, in spirit at any rate, sold out to the bourgeoisie these many years.

Quite apart from party polemics, it seems to me, as a historian by profession, that the objective judgment of history will bear out to the full Trotsky's biting denunciations of Georgian "Social-Democracy," and the phrase used in the Georgian workers' manifesto—"the miserable and odious rule of Menshevik pseudo-democracy." I do not know whether the Second International are still as bothered about Georgia as they were: it is not so long ago that their attitude almost led one to suppose that when they died "Georgia" would be written on their hearts. I have no interest in what is written on their hearts, so long as they die soon: but on their tombstone ought to be engraved in letters a foot long the remark of another anti-Bolshevik (though rather better-informed as to Georgia)—"The Free and Independent Social-Democratic State of Georgia" will always remain in my memory as a classic example of an imperialist 'small nation.' Both in territory-snatching outside and bureaucratic tyranny inside, its chauvinism knew no bounds" (Bechhofer, p. 14).

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AMONG THE BOOKS

La Russie Nouvelle. By Edouard Herriot, 302 pp. 8 Frs. J. Ferenczi & Fils, Paris.

STUDENTS of the bibliography of the Russian Revolution will find an interesting account of Soviet Russia, as depicted by an honest bourgeois in *La Russie Nouvelle*, a compact little work written by the Mayor of Lyon after his recent visit to Russia. The writing of the manuscript in the train on the homeward journey, and publication of the book within a month of his return almost emulates our prolific Mr. Wells. But Mons. Herriot's book is far more valuable than that of the author of *Tono Bungay*. It is based on a seriously applied study of facts and figures, and although in many instances superficial—as indeed must be all impressions of a lightning visit to a new world—shows a remarkably sensible appreciation of the main ideas of the Soviet Regime as compared with the hazy conceptions of most respectable liberal politicians of the Herriot category.

Mons. Herriot from the first shows a proper understanding of the ability and sincerity of the Soviet leaders, and throughout the book discloses a conscientious attempt to draw the necessary parallels between Marxism and modern Bolshevism. But here he is a comparative failure, for in spite of an evident acquaintance with Marxian economics as related to production, the Mayor of Lyon being mentally and morally unable to adopt his thinking to the Class Struggle of the XXth Century, vents forth a host of contradictory conceptions and obvious anachronisms.

As long as Mons. Herriot keeps to economics he is more or less tolerable, but as soon as he gets on to international politics his nationalism surges up within him. He can never forgive the Bolsheviks for Brest-Litovsk, but is broad-minded enough to describe and comment on Kamenoff's and Trotsky's explanations of the separate peace. Mons. Herriot asserts with grave dignity that it was Plekhanov who really taught Russia Marxism and Democracy (save the mark!) but he remained faithful to Russia and to the Allies." It is very evident from Mons. Herriot's book that he sincerely desires a resumption of relations between France and Russia, but he also advocates general reconciliation with western Europe, and denies the assertion that the non-ratification of the Urquhart Treaty

was due to his activities at Moscow. In the small scope of his book Mons. Herriot manages to describe a great deal. Beginning with social aspects of the present régime, he leads up to the New Economic Policy, and fairly accurately indicates how Russia's internal commerce and industry work and the development of foreign trade under "Nep." His information is based on interviews with Krassin, Bogdanov, etc., and figures supplied by them. However, like most people who only half understand Communists—whether Conservatives, Republicans, Radicals or Socialists—he fails to grasp the materialist conception of "Nep," and optimistically imagines that the possibility of Communism exists no longer, and that Lenin has had the good sense to realise that Capitalism must be re-established, and the "good old times" resurrected. It is strange that although Mons. Herriot reproduces in full Lenin's letter to the Vth All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions, he discloses a very hazy conception of the New Economic Policy. Dealing with labour conditions, the Mayor of Lyon becomes childish. He tries to prove by masses of statistics that owing to the Russian workers getting less wages than in 1913, Communism has failed. It would be just as sensible to argue that as the French Army gets more rations than in 1916, Poincaré has become a Bolshevik! He forgets or ignores that in spite of an inevitable slump in economic prosperity resulting in temporary wage reductions, and that the industrial and political control of the country remain in the hands of the Proletarian masses.

Mons. Herriot gives very interesting and able descriptions of the School, the Church, the Red Army and the fight with the famine, and recounts an illuminating interview with Trotsky. In conclusion, one might say that this book contributes to the small but useful collection of publications, including those like Brailsford's, C. R. Buxton's, etc., which might be classed as a Bibliography of Soviet Russia by those of the Bourgeoisie who are honest. In any case, the difference between Herriot's book and the intellectual strumpetry of a Mrs. Snowden, adequately marks the gulf between the mentality of a sincere Radical and an I.L.P. charlatan.

E.V.

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