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THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

A Monthly Organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain

Editorial and Publishing Offices: 16 King Street, Covent Garden, W. C. 2

EDITOR: THOS. BELL

BUSINESS MANAGER: A. H. HAWKINS

Volume 5

JANUARY 1925

Number 9

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Notice to Contributors, &c. M.S.S. and letters relating thereto should be addressed to Editor, COMMUNIST REVIEW, 16, King Street, W. C. 2.

Subscription Rates. HOME—Single copies, 6 months, 3s. 9d. postpaid. One year 7s. 0d. postpaid. ABROAD—Single copies 6 months 3s. 9d. One year 7s. 0d. postpaid. Home and Abroad—Bundle orders, 12 copies for 4s. 6d. postpaid, sale or return.

All business communications to Manager, 16 King Street, London, W.C.2

THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

Editor: THOS. BELL

THE EDITORIAL VIEW

This month marks the first anniversary of the death of Lenin, the great master-strategist of the social revolution, and founder of the Communist International. It is no doubt a keen disappointment to the bourgeoisie, and certainly to their Socialist lackeys, to find the proletarian government in Soviet Russia still firm as a rock. It was expected—so accustomed is the bourgeois mind to the great man theory—that the removal of Lenin would end (for the bourgeoisie) the hated proletarian rule in Russia. Their hopes have not been realised. Indeed the reverse has actually happened. The Republic is stronger to-day than it was even a year ago. Within practically a few weeks of the great leader's death over 200,000 of the best proletarian elements in Russia flocked to the Communist standard, steeled by the loss of their beloved "Ilyitch" and to prove to the world that the Russian revolution was not a mere hole-and-corner conspiracy, but a great social revolutionary movement, which had liberated millions from the clutching hand of Czarist tyranny and terror.

It has been the custom to blame the Bolsheviks and particularly Leninism, for the ruin and chaos in Russia caused by the imperialist and the civil war prior to 1917, and then to say "Communism has been a failure!" This attitude of mind, where it is not deliberate bourgeois propaganda, is all wrong. To judge Leninism properly as applied to Russia, we have to start from the conditions that obtained when the Communist Party took power. These are now too well-known to be repeated here. It is sufficient to mention the more outstanding problems such as the corrupt and incompetent bureaucracy, the broken industrial and transport system, the famine conditions and landhunger amongst an illiterate and terrorised peasantry, to realise the job the Leninists had to tackle. The achievements of the Russian Communists are to be judged from *the progress made since the taking of power*. And here we can let the *official* Trades Union Congress delegation speak from first-hand information, and as the most recent non-partisan witnesses to the facts.

The delegation has published a summary of its conclusions pending a full report. In this statement, it is declared that there has been an enormous improvement since 1920 in the process of economic restoration and that the financial stability is more secure than expected and compares favourably with the general European standard. As to the industrial conditions, the delegates were deeply impressed with the organising and administrative capacity and *the enthusiasm of the workers*. Social conditions such as housing, the elimination of illiteracy and the development of all kinds of educational activity; workers' clubs, sports and rest houses, freedom of religious belief, are rapidly improving. This is the testimony of a delegation not one of which is a member of the Communist Party. It is thus with genuine pride and sincerity that we in Great Britain go forward to the task of winning the majority of the working class to the standard of Leninism, and dealing with *our* bourgeoisie in the same revolutionary manner as the Russian Bolsheviks did with theirs in 1917.

* * * * *

From January the 15th to the 21st the 51 Communist Parties within the Communist International will conduct a week's campaign on the basis of the Bolshevism of Lenin, and the anti-militarism of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg of glorious memory. Everywhere our parties will explain to the hundreds of thousands of workers now becoming disillusioned by the "pacifist" cant and "democratic" nonsense of the leaders of the Second International, the meaning of Leninism, and contrast its successes in Soviet Russia with the miserable failures of MacDonaldism in Great Britain, Germany, Poland, the Baltic States and wherever MacDonaldism has been applied. Not the least important feature of this anniversary will be the more thorough Leninising of every section of our International Party, and the concentrated educational campaign amongst Party members to the slogan of "*every Party member a conscious Leninist.*"

* * * * *

The return of the Trades Congress delegation from Soviet Russia opens the third round in the fight for International Trade Union Unity. The first round opened with the decision taken at the Hull Congress to continue the negotiations between Amsterdam and Moscow, and to back that up by sending a strong delegation to converse with the Russian Trade Unions. The conversations with the Russian unions formed the second round, and marked a further step in advance, judging from the preliminary reports and speeches of the delegates, who, without exception, have been strong in their praise of what they have seen and heard

in the much maligned Workers' Republic. The return of the delegation thus opens the third round. In this round, there is going to be a stiffer fight than many think. Not only is the delegation faced with a powerful capitalist press barrage, but it is an open secret that the bureaucrats of Eccleston Square are gnashing their teeth and alarmed at the unanimity with which the delegation has been praising the efforts of the Russian workers in their reconstruction of the war-swept and devastated land of one-time Czarism.

To have such a responsible delegation giving the lie to the Labour Party mandarins at the very time when they are attacking the Communist Party as "worse enemies to the workers than the Conservatives," is very disconcerting, the more so, since the Executive of the Labour Party is compelled to leave in abeyance the decision of the London Conference to exclude the Communists from the Party and the trade unions.

Messrs. Purcell, Bromley, Tillett, Bramley, etc., have a serious responsibility to the whole working class movement now that they are back in England. We are willing to make allowance for differences in geographical circumstances.

It is a tremendous experience to feel the warm glow of enthusiasm of workers building a new world, and then, after passing through the great red archway that leads back into the frigid and chilling atmosphere of soul-killing capitalism, to meet with enemies lurking everywhere. But the delegation must have the courage of their convictions. They may lose the friendship of the Labour mandarins. They will gain the enthusiastic support of the thousands of forward militants now rallying to the Minority Movements that are springing up everywhere, and who stand for International Trade Union Unity, but only if they will be strong.

* * * * *

The British working class movement stands at the cross roads. The nine months experience of MacDonaldism in government policy has proven the oft-repeated declaration of the Communist Party that the present party leadership was turning the workers party into a machine for serving capitalism.

Our "leftists" so far, have shown themselves to be still held in leading-strings by MacDonald. If they wish to really fight capitalism it is clear that they must choose different ground. The compact majority of the Tories and Liberals—backed by the "constitutionalism" of the opposition front bench—renders all the pleadings and declamations against the evils of capitalism ridiculous. Labour's best fighting ground is not at present in parliament. If Mr. Wheatly and his "left-wing" friends would

translate their class war verbiage into rousing the masses to *action*, they would render better service to the class struggle against capitalism. In assisting to rouse the masses to action from outside parliament, *and that in the teeth of opposition from MacDonald, Thomas, Clynes and Henderson*, we would have a better earnest of the sincerity of their declarations for a class war policy.

At present, by their failure to formulate a clear political lead against MacDonaldism, our "left-wingers" are parties to the policy that is making of the Labour Party a third capitalist party. If the Labour Party is to be rescued from its present Liberal policy and made a genuine class party as originally intended by its early pioneers, all sentimentality for personalities and party associations of those who pride themselves on being "left-wingers" must be cut out. Failure to strike the right road now means the perpetuation and strengthening of imperialism.

The Communist Party alone has had the courage to go against the stream. We are fighting and will continue to fight capitalism and its lackeys, neither daunted nor dismayed by the misrepresentation and abuse of the Press, Labour Party or otherwise. We see in the growth of our international Communist Party, and in the demand for international trade union unity a new orientation of the masses. We expect strong opposition from the capitalist parties, we are not surprised that Messrs. Henderson, Clynes, Thomas, MacDonald, etc., should be more vitriolic than their masters. We, however, are firm in our faith that only a mass Communist Party can lead the workers to the final struggle against the capitalist imperialists. That we are getting larger and larger masses behind us is significantly patent. We need only refer to the failure of the Labour Party executive to carry out the resolution of the London Conference to exclude the Communists from the Party and the unions. The future is with the Communist Party because there is no alternative.



Where is Labour's Opposition?

AFTER the ignominious collapse of the Labour Government and the miserable display of the Labour Party leaders in the General Election, a cry went up in the I.L.P. especially, for the recovery of Labour's Socialist soul. This vain hope that the Labour Party and its I.L.P. leadership could separate its "opposition" policy from its deeds as a government, has been ruthlessly shattered in the first days of the new Parliament. Labour opposition was reduced to an "amen" chorus. The Tory government proceeded to talk down to the Labour leaders in tones of arrogance unsurpassed for many years. Throughout the whole session there was not the slightest evidence of a real opposition.

Mr. MacDonald pledged himself to "continuity." Mr. Snowden congratulated Winston Churchill (arch-enemy of everything Labour) on his return to Parliament, and told him he was not strong enough in dealing with the question of Inter-Allied Debts, but "he wished him well." Mr. Wheatley watered down his challenge to a desire to see houses built, and described the whole business as "the red-cross work" of the class war. Guaranteed profits for the rings on a fifteen years' contract, with dilution of labour for the building workers chloroformed into social pacifism, may be "red cross work," but it is a pretty serious business when 500,000 workers are put into hospital for 15 years, and assured that the class war is no concern of theirs.

Hardly a member of the Labour Party contradicted the principles of the Tories. In almost every case it was only a question of degree in capitalist politics, never the fundamental challenge to the whole policy of the government. It is obvious that the Labour leadership has now definitely become a wing of the bourgeoisie. Even the so-called "left" of the Labour Party does not know where it is. In view of all this, and the coming attack upon wages and labour organisations, it is high time that every worker took stock of the developments now taking place.

THE IMPERIALIST PLAN.

The King's speech outlined the plans of British Imperialism. Its pronouncements on Russia, South America, the Far East, Singapore, Inter-Allied Debts, Imperial preference; its action to Egypt and to the Geneva protocol; its attitude to the

Housing question, which was a bold declaration that the government's only concern was to raise an economic barrier against the development of conscious class war forces; its hope of reduced income tax, its efforts to create the appearance of real economic recovery by means of an extensive replacement scheme—all dovetailed into each other as part and parcel of a thorough revival of imperialist plans, intensifying the struggle for world power.

Three other important facts are thoroughly established in this plan. First, Soviet Russia is to be isolated as much as possible and only to be admitted into the orbit of world trade under the pressure of circumstances. Second, that we are in for a period of intense competition without revolution interferes in Europe. Third, the working class in this country is to provide the means of competition through an attack on the wages, either by inflation of the currency, or by a direct onslaught on the trade unions, while the colonial people are to be more completely subjugated.

This plan of campaign has not just tumbled upon the scene, but has been steadily maturing ever since Mr. Baldwin stepped into the shoes of Bonar Law in 1922, when the latter shattered the Coalition Government. The death of the coalition was a definite set back to the industrialists of Britain and a triumph for finance capital. It marked, also, practically the end of the first big capitalist offensive against the workers. But it was far from being the end of the difficulties of British capitalism. Unemployment still raged on an unprecedented scale. Capitalist economy was in a bad way, whilst the pressure of American Imperialism was making itself felt in no uncertain manner. British Imperialism was becoming supremely conscious of the fact that it was playing second fiddle in world affairs, and unless it could pull itself together it would go lower down the scale.

But any efforts at recovery could only be made under the shadow of American friendship and help. Hence the funding of the American debt, the concessions of the Washington Conference, the co-operation of Britain and America in the Dawes Plan which dominates the European situation to-day. Upon this plan British capitalism builds her hopes of gathering strength to re-assert herself as *the* world power. It may be a vain hope, but there it is. But to give effect to the plan, it needed popular acceptance, a consolidation of the dominant capitalist party, and a fresh offensive against the working class. The scheme has been adopted. The Conservative Party has been re-organised. The ground is prepared for the new offensive against the working class. The effect of this process upon the parties throughout this period

is as astounding as the ease with which the capitalist traders have carried it through.

PARTY DEVELOPMENTS.

When Mr. Baldwin became the leader of the Conservative Party he made unavailing efforts to bring back into the leadership of the Party its most vigorous leaders who had been dropped with the fall of the Coalition Government, Austen Chamberlain, Lord Birkenhead, etc. These leaders along with Churchill and Lloyd George, saw the development of the Labour movement through class war spectacles and favoured a united front of Liberals and Tories against the oncoming forces of Labour. But the internal rivalry amongst the capitalist class reflecting itself in party rivalries, had broken the united front and driven Lloyd George and Churchill back to the Liberal Party, and Birkenhead and Co. on to the fringe of the Conservative Party. There is no reason to think that these class war warriors of capitalism have at any time changed their views on the fundamental unity of interest of the Liberals and the Tory parties. If there is any doubt about this point then the record of their activities since that date should remove it.

With the 1923 election programme, Mr. Baldwin brought back into the forefront of his party both Birkenhead and Chamberlain. With the same programme Mr. Lloyd George was able to re-establish his footing in the Liberal Party by violently opposing the Conservative programme. He came out as the valiant defender of Free Trade and the revivalist of the Liberal Party. The alignment of Party forces as a consequence became clearer. The Conservative Party had regained internal unity. The Liberal Party had been strengthened numerically, but internally it was a victim to contending factions. But Lloyd George with his customary skill succeeded in adapting himself to the Party and "bored from within." The decision of the Liberal Party against coalition with the Conservatives and in favour of the Labour Government produced the next change in which Churchill took the lead in what really was a move back to the old coalition forces. He sounded the class war note at full blast and stood midway between the Tories and the Liberals for a time. The Conservatives proceeded to make the utmost political capital out of the decision of the Liberal Party in favour of a Labour government, although they had acquiesced in the decision and their leader had really anticipated the situation in his 1923 election decision. All the difficulties involved in playing cat and mouse with the Labour Government fell upon the Liberal Party, and especially that old Manchester school section

within it, led by Asquith. The Conservatives throughout were able to pursue an open avowed opposition where they thought it was necessary. The Liberals were always in a quandary, wondering whether this moment or that issue was favourable to ending the situation. Between the Liberalism of the Labour Government and the frankly class war policy of the Conservatives, the Liberal Party was ever at sixes and sevens and its leaders never knew whether the Party would vote unanimously on any issue or whether it would be hopelessly divided. It was torn between those who thought the Labour Government was pursuing a good Liberal policy, and those whose class instincts feared any encroachments of the Labour forces. It was the Lloyd George elements, reinforced in the Parliamentary group by Sir Alfred Mond, who drove the Liberal Party into the closest association with the Conservatives in the crisis which secured the downfall of the Labour Government. Simultaneously with the crisis, Churchill passed on to the Conservative platform, calling for the united front in chorus with Birkenhead, and the feud between the Liberals and the Conservatives was dropped. So much was this the case that open arrangements were made in the form of a pact between the two parties against the Labour Party. The result was beyond the expectations of the most optimistic Tory. The awkward squad (the Wee Frees) of the Liberal Party is almost swept out of Parliament and what little of the Liberal Party is left is representative of the "National Liberals," surrounding Mr. Lloyd George, having a close affinity with the industrial section of the Tory Party. Whatever difference there may be between Mr. Baldwin and this section of his own party and the National Liberals led by Mr. Lloyd George, the consolidation of the capitalist forces in Parliament has made stupendous progress and the situation presents a more open class war alignment of parties. There is not only a conservative majority over both the other parties, but Mr. Lloyd George has declared that "Labour will get no more of his support."

LABOUR'S TRANSITION.

The placing of a party in a class war situation, however, does not necessarily make that party a class war party.

Every assertion of the Conservatives and the Liberals to the effect that the Labour Party is a class war party has been flatly repudiated by its leaders who have gone to great pains to show that it is a "people's party" and not a class party. If the assertions of its leaders are to be doubted then the deeds of the first Labour Government confirm their words in undebatable fashion.

It is upon its foreign policy, that the Labour Government

staked its first claims and asked to be judged. It is upon its foreign policy that the opposition parties of Conservatism and Liberalism have least to complain. Indeed there is hardly an opposition organ which has not lavished fulsome praise upon it, with the single exception of the Anglo-Russian Treaty, and the opposition to this Treaty arises not from disapproval of the political principles the Labour Government had enunciated in its dealings with the Soviet Government, but because they feared that too great concessions had been wrung from the Labour Government by the forces which Mr. MacDonald hates as viciously as the capitalist parties.

It is no exaggeration to say that the consolidation of the basic party strength of the imperialist forces has been accompanied with a political metamorphosis of the Labour Party which is raising doubts and fears in the ranks of the workers. At the same time it has satisfied the capitalist class that its experiment in giving Labour the responsibilities of office under their supervision was the best guarantee for staving off any class war policy that might be developing within its ranks. It is this fundamental disloyalty to the forces which gave it birth that rules out the Labour Party as the party of class war and even the theoretical possibility contemplated in the vision of Parliament as the arena in which through the operation of two parties the interests of the classes may be merged. A party that has already surrendered to capitalism, in spite of its ostensible declarations aiming at the supersession of capitalism through its development and consent, can hardly represent the forces in opposition to capitalism, and these forces will out, let who will say them nay. We are thus brought to a closer consideration of the effect of capitalist strategy in conjunction with the development of the actual class struggle, upon the Labour Party.

At no time has the politics of the Labour Party been based upon class war principles although the very formation of an independent party of Labour was an affirmation of the class war. It was a product of the struggles of the trade unions dominated by Liberalism, against legal oppression. It was a number of years before the small Socialist parties succeeded in persuading this new movement to set before it the Socialist objective. This meant less than it might have done but for the incubus of Parliamentarism it brought with it. Instead of this being a means to transform the wages struggles into political struggles, it became the means of combating the direct action of the masses and the increasing subordination of the strike weapon to parliamentary expediency. The debate in conference after conference of the Labour movement on the question of direct action versus par-

liamentarism, ended in the victory of the latter, and the nearer the Labour Party came to office the more repressive became the attitude to strike action.

The post war period is witness to the more definite crystallisation of the theories and practice of the Labour Party. The Irish Republican movement was the first to challenge it. Will the Labour movement go further than the Liberal Party, will it stand for an Irish Republic or only for the Liberal demand for Irish Home Rule within the Empire? That was the issue. It made its choice. It echoed the Liberal Party and opposed any break-away from the Empire. When the Governing class began to describe the Empire as a commonwealth of nations it took up the cry, blended it with the Socialist dream of a world commonwealth of nations and began to evolve a theory—through the democratisation of the British Commonwealth of Nations to the Socialist Commonwealth. It gathered from the Versailles Treaty the theme of the League of Nations and treading in the footsteps of Lloyd George and President Wilson, pledged the Labour Party to support this new apparatus of capitalism, to “accept it with all its faults,” as the means through which to work to Socialism by a process of gradualism that would win the consent of capitalism. The trade unionist support was consolidated by the pledge to develop trade unions along British lines in the colonies and the dependencies, thus quietening the doubts and fears which were constantly rising in the minds of the trade unionists as a result of the increasing acquaintance of the unions with the cheap and sweated labour conditions of the East.

The Socialism of the Labour Party became more and more an ethereal spirit the nearer it approached the task of applying its principles as a governing party. Its period of office has done more to strip it of Socialist claims and to consolidate the liberalism of its leadership than all the struggles in its preceding conferences. Especially is this the case with everything that effects its international and imperial policy. For proof, let us compare the leading commitments of the three parties.

THE IMPERIAL LABOUR PARTY.

The Conservative Party supports the Versailles Treaty. So also the Liberal Party. The Labour Party prior to office subscribed to the revision of the Versailles Treaty. Since it came to office its leader rebuked the Party speakers for reference to revision and has fought for the observance of its provisions as loyally as either the Conservatives or the Liberals. The Conservative Party supports the League of Nations though not enthusiastically. It concentrates on the British section of it. The

Liberal Party supports the League of Nations as per Mr. Wilson. The Labour Party supports the League of Nations as per Mr. Wilson. The Conservative Party prepared the way with the assistance of Mr. Pierpont Morgan's General Dawes and the Liberal banker, Mr. McKenna, for the Dawes Report. The Labour Party accepted the Dawes Report, approved of it as a heaven-sent messenger of peace. The Conservative Party demand the preservation and development of the British Empire as a first charge on Britain. The Liberal Party supports the preservation of the Empire with democratic development in the direction of self-governing colonies according to the political advancement of the ruled, the British Government of course to determine when the other fellows are educated. The Labour Party says exactly the same with emphasis, dotting the i's and crossing the t's in the name of its ideals. In actual practice, it resisted the Indians with the same vigour and emphasis as its predecessors. It chose the late Viceroy of India, Lord Chelmsford, whom it had held responsible for the Amritsar massacre in 1920 to enunciate in the Lords debates the emphatic declaration of the Labour Party leader that the Government of India would receive the full support of the Labour Government in the suppression of any revolutionary movement in that country, and that India will have to follow the constitutional line laid down for it in the Montague concessions of the Liberal Party. On the question of Egypt it refused to withdraw troops from that country and insisted in terms which satisfied Conservatives and Liberals alike that Britain would go no farther than it had gone in the matter of Egyptian independence. In all essentials of International and Imperial politics, the Labour Party has established its claim to be four-square with the Conservatives and Liberals, differing from them only in the degree of efficiency as to the manner in which the same fundamental policy is to be carried through. The one exception was the Anglo-Russian Treaty.

Its domestic policy has undergone a similar development. Its far-famed budget was a model of Liberalism. Its dealings with unemployment remedies have one and all been based on Liberal principles if not always approved by the Liberal party. Indeed its whole object during office has been to prove that it could run capitalism better than the Conservatives and the Liberals. Its claims before the country consist not in what it has done to fight capitalism, but in what it has done to preserve it and grant concessions to the workers and the middle class.

The strategy of the ruling class in the midst of these unstable circumstances has thus been well justified. It has succeeded in com-

mitting the Labour Party to its own schemes and involved it in actual responsibility for their development. The Labour Party can no longer repudiate them on the grounds of conflict with its ideals. It must defend them on the basis of its own actions and politics as a government party. Of this fact the Tories have not been slow to remind the backbenchers of the opposition during the recent session.

WHAT NEXT?

That such a development can stop at this point and allow the Labour Party with such an evolution of its politics to subvert the class struggle upon which it has thrived, is out of the question. When Mr. MacDonald was re-elected leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, there were five who voted against, and nearly thirty who abstained from voting. That these represent a discontent is certain. But it is necessary to say to the "left" element that their approach to political questions is exceedingly immature. It is childish of Maxton to limit his interests to his own backyard and refuse to take up the big class issues. It is useless for Wheatley to flirt with the "Plebs" and talk of independent working class education and refuse to challenge the leadership of MacDonald in relation to the whole activity of the Labour Party. It is deplorable that George Lansbury should burst out in condemnation of MacDonald's policy at one moment, and in the next swallow all the obligations of imperialism and refuse to raise his voice in protest against the murderous policy of the Estonian government. It is folly on the part of the so-called "left" to meet in conference after conference and spend its time trying to avoid contamination with the Communist Party; it is equally folly and cowardice on the part of those trade union leaders who praise Lenin and think the Communists good fellows, and yet dare not identify themselves with the Minority Movements now springing up everywhere.

The day has gone by for the production of new left programmes distinct from those that are already proclaimed. The "left" has either to move nearer to the Communist Party, identify itself boldly with the Minority movement, or be part and parcel of the MacDonald machine of imperialism. Until they have made that choice Labour in Parliament is an instrument of Conservatism, and the working class is more than ever betrayed. There is no working class leadership to-day outside the Communist Party. To reject it is to reject the working class. To come nearer to our party is to strengthen the working class and help it nearer to victory.

J. T. MURPHY.

The Crisis in Agriculture

IN spite of the optimistic pronouncements of some of the members of the late Labour Government concerning Agriculture, it is impossible for those who are engaged in the industry, and in daily working contact with actual conditions to share those views. There is nothing to indicate that agriculture can escape from its normal state in capitalist economy, that is, acute depression, low prices and low wages. On the contrary, the depressed state of the industry is more likely to become accentuated rather than the reverse. With the extra and post-war burden of finding the interest upon an enormous national debt, a burden which falls most heavily upon the backs of the workers and producers of real wealth, and the 1923 report of the chief medical officer of health of the Board of Education, registering a progressive deterioration in rural child life, it is sheer humbug to pretend that rural conditions are improving. But, alas, such is the way of the Labour reformist who so frequently imagines he sees what he would like to see!

THE VICE OF MONOPOLY.

It should be abundantly clear that agriculture, with its thousands of independent and more or less uneducated producers will never succeed in becoming an effective monopoly, and, while it remains a disorganised industry, as it is, it must inevitably come more and more under the domination of the better organised distributors, the trustified industries, and the banking and financial clique. As long as the industry is subject to the extortions of monopolists, not only on the goods it sells but on the goods it buys there can be no hope for a reasonable standard of life for those engaged in it either small farmers or agricultural labourers. I am convinced that the farmer's claim for fair prices as a preliminary to fair wages, is based upon a true statement of the facts, and while not denying the existence of mean and avaricious types of farmers who have, perhaps, inherited means accumulated during previous wars, and the short periods of high prices thereby occasioned, and who are capitalistically-minded, and mere exploiters of labour, I am sure that the great mass of working tenant farmers are scarcely less exploited than the poorly-paid workers they employ. It is quite probable that farmers have by now been relieved of the gains of the war period, where the

increased profits were invested in new equipment and the adoption of new methods on their farms (those who invested their savings in war loan or actually sold out their farms at inflated values present a different case) the process used being the deflation policy inaugurated by the Cunliffe Commission in March, 1921.

LOW PRICES FOR DAIRY-FARMING.

At the moment, the prices of agricultural commodities are grievously low in comparison with even the low pre-war prices, and the relatively high prices of other commodities. Dairying and pig farming are the usual means of livelihood of the masses of small tenant farmers, and in these two branches of agriculture we find uncertainty and depression. Milk producers have just weathered another storm with unsatisfactory results—prices for 1924 to 1925 being lower than the previous year with costs of production higher—so-called over-production assisting to cause the price of milk to fall, the position being aggravated, of course, by the activities and high profits demanded by the “milk combine” and associations of distributors. Yet in spite of a state of affairs in which the distributors will only pay at a remunerative rate for 90 per cent. of whatever the producer produces, the number of dairy cows is on the increase, and this can only be accounted for by the wholly unprofitable nature of other agricultural commodities. What will be the effect of this increasing production next year it is not difficult to imagine, although at the moment, owing to the peculiarities of the past season, the demand for milk is certainly more brisk.

SLUMP IN PIGS AND SHEEP.

Again, the pig industry is suffering from a severe slump, the artificial saturation point of the consumptive capacity of the masses of consumers having been reached. Prices of pig meat to the producer are now only 33 per cent. above pre-war level, and will, henceforth, remain near the costs of production level with the usual small fluctuations above and below it. Sheep, whose numbers were depleted during the war, have maintained better prices with the result of an increase of one million in their numbers this year. It is only a matter of time, when the numbers are brought to correspond with the demand, and the sheep trade will meet the same fate as the pig trade, although, the regulation of supplies by the colonial governments in the interests of good prices for their producers, will undoubtedly assist the home producer.

WHEAT ACREAGE REDUCED.

Wheat prices are higher than the disastrous level of last year, but still low in comparison even with the low pre-war figure. There being no margin to allow of risks, such as the bad weather of the past summer, the uncertainties as to the possibility of remunerative production reflects itself in a further decrease in the area under arable cultivation, which accounts too, for the abnormally low price of hay, and the relatively high price of wheat and other straw.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

It is difficult to gauge the exact amount of unemployment in agriculture, as there is no unemployment benefit in this industry and rural workers thrown out of work naturally seek the employment which will entitle them to it, yet it is known that *there are 130,000 less men employed in agriculture than in 1919*. Wages vary from 25/- to 38/- according to locality, and the nature of the employment. As I have before-mentioned, it is doubtful if the Wages Boards can do more than bring a few defaulting farmers into line and secure a slight increase in wages, when the small fluctuations of prices justify it.

HOUSING AND GENERAL CONDITIONS.

Rural housing is still a most pressing problem, and will most assuredly become acute, since the building of cottages to be let at a sum within the powers of a farm worker to pay is a problem not likely to be solved by a Conservative Government. On the whole, the general effect of the prevailing conditions in agriculture is an enormous restriction of production, even though a slight increase may be registered. This damping of enterprise and literally, forced tendency to go-slow will most certainly show itself in increasing inefficiency and deterioration as the years go by, and is the parent which in the past has been responsible for the conservative and fatalistic attitude of rural workers.

BALDWIN'S POLICY.

Now what is being proposed for the alleviation of agriculture? The Conservative Party proposes an all-round conference on agriculture and a Royal Commission on food prices. In my opinion this is purely a negative policy for a party which is composed of profiteers and is the bulwark of Big Business. It is true that Mr. Baldwin suggested recently to a startled Party that the State should purchase foodstuffs and market them, and it would certainly be a very remarkable achievement if he could persuade

his colleagues to embark upon such a policy. Such a suggestion might court favour if it could be shown that such action would reduce costs of living, and hence, costs of production to the big industrialists. Politically, of course, the need for consolidating the gains of the recent election would seem to compel some spectacular action, as a purely tactical move, although the gains to the agricultural producers would only be of a temporary and elusive nature at the expense perhaps of certain sections of workers in the industrial towns both in this country and in the colonies.

That a Royal Commission will do much more than the Linlithgow Commission is improbable. We shall get no information upon the effect of the National Debt, of over-capitalised industry, of the past and present financial policy of the banks, or of the machinations of the trusts upon food prices and costs of production. The State purchase of imported foodstuffs, if it were adopted, would only be accomplished in conjunction with the colonial exporters and capitalists to still further exploit the colonial workers and producers. I do not for one moment think that the State purchase of home-grown food would be considered as the discontent among farmers as to prevailing low prices would be directed in that case against the Government, and the Tories have been at no small trouble to dissociate politics from agriculture as more than anything they fear a class-conscious move on the part of agriculturalists similar to the Farmer-Labour movement in America. It is almost impossible to get propaganda of a politico-economic nature into the agricultural press for any length of time, before the firm hand of the censor appears upon the scene. No industry presents more glaring examples of the inefficiency of capitalism, yet probably no industry is less aware of its real position in the capitalist economy, or is more difficult to get at.

FUTILITY OF SUBSIDIES.

It is possible that the Tories may revive the idea of subsidies upon arable land. It will be remembered that the 1923 proposal of Mr. Baldwin was contingent upon money being raised by a limited policy of protective tariffs upon certain articles. The futility of such a policy is apparent when it is seen that the purchasing power of the masses of consumers would be reduced by a sum equivalent to the tariffs or subsidies with a subsequent equivalent contraction of demand for agricultural produce and an inevitable fall of prices. It would be the old game of putting money in the producers' pocket with one hand and taking it out with the other! Protective tariffs upon a general scale for agri-

cultural produce are out of the question, and no one realises this better than the Tories. With the renewed call for cheaper production in order to compete in foreign markets, following upon the Labour Government's adoption of the Dawes Report, they are not in the least likely to increase the costs of living by improving substantially the farmers' or farm workers' position. Their dream seems to be of a self-contained Empire controlled by a financial hegemony in which the workers generally are to be stabilised at a lower possible level of existence, mere producers of surplus values for the selfish enjoyment of a small privileged possessing class. Not a very optimistic picture for those who say there is no class war!

WATCH INFLATION.

There is, perhaps, a remote possibility that the Tory Government may embark upon a mild policy of inflation. Considering the fact that the whole financial policy of this country has since the war been carried out in the interests of finance capital, it is, however, unlikely that any concessions will be made without very great pressure. Mr. McKenna, of the Midland Bank, said recently that "if you are going to further restrict the money in circulation, you will have unemployment with you always; an increase in the volume of trade demands an increase in the volume of money"; while Dr. Lief, of the Westminster Bank, was about the same time urging a further attempt to force the pound up to par! Mild inflation would, of course, temporarily benefit the producers or farmers, and deflation would contract the demand for their goods with a subsequent further fall in prices. The controversy provides, however, an excellent demonstration of the power of these banking gentlemen—the Court of the Bank of England in conjunction with the other large banks—to regulate the lives of the masses of the people, and how the currency policy of the nation is "democratically" controlled by Parliament, as some people fondly imagine. Well may the farmers demand the nationalisation of the banks!

LIBERALS' BANKRUPTCY.

The Liberal Party's agricultural programme, since the party's almost total eclipse, is of not such immediate importance. The proposals for security of tenure for farmers and taxation of land values were most probably a desperate effort at vote-catching. However, valuable though security of tenure may be to the cultivator, it is but playing with the whole question, and the time has gone by for the slow process of the taxation of land

values. Something more drastic is needed if the small farmers and workers are to be emancipated from the thralls of capitalism.

THE LABOUR PARTY'S PROPOSALS.

The Labour Party's proposals are of a different nature, yet don't touch the situation. Mr. MacDonald, the ex-Premier, has been reported as saying that "if all farmers farmed as well as the top 15 per cent. there would be no farming problem," which means that he still considers increased production and reduced costs of production provides a way of salvation within the capitalist system—another illustration of his Liberalism. The old Labour Party agricultural programme stressed this view, and included the nationalisation of the land, councils for agriculture and more workers' control, security of tenure for the farmer and more cottages, and not "tied" ones for the workers, all of which is more or less admirable in its way. But the I.L.P. go further than this. It recognises there is a further problem, so advocates standard prices for agricultural produce, the extension of municipal and co-operative distribution, and the control and limitation of imports. Quite a number of Labour candidates made these proposals part of their platform at the recent election, and it must be said that they show more understanding of the real nature of the farmers' difficulties. Nevertheless, as long as capitalism lasts, such proposals can do no more than stabilise the productivity of the industry, and standard of life of those engaged in it, but at such a low level, as in the case of Denmark, where last year a farm foreman's wages was given as the equivalent of 30/- (British) weekly!

AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM.

The inter-dependence of all industry demands that agriculture cannot be treated apart from the whole economic life of the country, and so inextricably are its problems bound up with those of the uneven distribution of wealth, and of financial and monetary reform, that unless it is treated, not parochially, but as a unit in its proper place in the national industrial organisation and with due consideration of its relative position to all other units, no permanent results of any value can accrue. Whatever may be the future organisation of the industry, in the interests of economical and scientific production there must be a guarantee of a fair return for the labour of all those engaged in a useful productive capacity in it.

With the present organisation of the industry, however, if the actual producer were guaranteed fair prices, based upon

ascertained costs of production there would be almost spontaneously an enormously increased production. The late Mr. Bonar Law apparently recognised this when he said, "it appears that we can have as much farming as we like; it is only a matter of prices." Some authorities even assert that Britain could support her own population, and I agree, though I think there is no necessity or ultimate advantage to be gained by attempting to supply the whole of our staple foodstuffs. But, the corollary to guaranteed prices must of necessity be an enormously increased purchasing power of the masses of consumers. Something quite contrary to the policy and intentions of the present Tory government who are preparing a new attack upon the wages of the working class as a whole. An enormously increased purchasing power of the masses, however, is incompatible with the whole capitalist basis of modern industry, including agriculture, and certainly impossible until, at least there is a drastic reform in our financial and banking arrangements, by a co-ordinated industrial system, and a scientifically stabilised currency which will enable the utmost possible production to be carried on, and the absorption of that increased production to take place by, and for the benefit of every member of the community. With such a sound basis, all such proposals as the nationalisation of the land, the extension of credit facilities by the full use of the social credit, the promotion of schemes for encouraging the growth of sugar beet; of co-operative distribution and ultimately co-operative production will be welcomed by the workers in the agricultural industry, because of the obvious advantages to be gained therefrom. But the full benefit of any such schemes cannot and never will be reaped until the power of financial and monetary cliques has been broken once and for all. The ignoring of this central problem by capitalist and labour politician alike is the reason why hitherto all such efforts have proved abortive, and incapable of emancipating the rural worker, whether he be farmer or farm labourer.

SOCIALISE THE LAND.

And now perhaps, the reader will see the relevance of the Communist Party's advocacy of the nationalisation of banks, the full use of the social credit and state control of foreign trade, to the problem of agriculture. The immediate suspension of interest on all holdings of the National Debt over £5,000, a capital levy on fortunes over that amount would make possible the realisation of a national minimum of £4 per week; this would in itself enormously increase the consuming power of the masses.

The problem of agriculture is not now one of production, but of obtaining the widest and most uniform consumption of its products; to release the enormous possibilities for increasing production which modern science has opened up, and to get that increased production to the consumer who wants it.

In agriculture as in every other industry, the real problem is how to find a market for what is produced. To talk of increased production when fields are either not cultivated or, if cultivated, allowed to rot because it doesn't pay to plant, or to raise for sale, is impracticable, where it is not deliberate vote-catching. It is our capitalist economy which dominates agriculture like every industry. The problems of agriculture are inseparable from capitalism, and not until the land is completely socialised and taken out of the hands of monopolists can the working farmers and the agricultural labourers get a secure living, and a reasonable working day.

When Kárl Marx remarked that the whole fabric of capitalism was based upon the subjection of agriculture, he showed that he clearly recognised its position in the capitalist economy. Unfortunately the insidious and century-old propaganda of the capitalist class has had its effect upon the industrial workers, and even upon those who profess to be Socialists and this fact is not yet generally recognised. But there are signs that this state of affairs is changing, and that at some future date a Workers' and Peasants' Party may become a reality in this country.

E. BATTEN.



What Should be Done?

[Our regular readers will remember the brilliant articles written by our deceased comrade, D. Ivon Jones, on the early struggles of the Communist Party of Russia. We had arranged with Comrade Jones to contribute a series of articles with a view to popularising the fundamentals of Leninism, but, unfortunately, ill-health and a premature death cut short our plans.

During Comrade MacManus' recent stay in Moscow, as executive member of the Comintern, he found among some papers belonging to Comrade Jones, the following translation of the preface to the 1922 edition of "What Should be Done?" We think there is no more appropriate occasion than the present month, which marks the first anniversary of Comrade Lenin's death, to reproduce the views of Lenin himself upon the important questions of revolutionary theory and practice.

It should be noted that the passages here cited in the 1922 preface are but extracts from the lengthy preface which Lenin wrote to the first edition of his collected works entitled "For Twelve Years." Let us hope that we shall be privileged at an early date to read the complete collected writings of our great revolutionary thinker, teacher and master.—Editor.]

LENIN'S pamphlet "What Should be Done?" written in the beginning of 1902, played a prominent part in the history of Russian revolutionary Social-Democracy. The plan of an organisation of "professional revolutionaries," worked out in this brochure, was the means for the consolidation of our party and the establishing in its ranks of that firm revolutionary discipline and unity which made it the controlling party of the Great Russian Revolution and of the Communist International to which it gave birth. Many of the ideas on which "What Should be Done?" was based preserve their significance to the present day. If the Russian Communist Party emerged triumphant from all the storms of the revolution and of the civil war, if it struggles successfully with the waves of petty bourgeois flood, pressing against the barrier of "War Communism," and threatening to overwhelm it; if it was able to risk the slippery slope of retreat of the so-called "new economic policy," it was able to venture on this tactic of manoeuvring and tacking only because, counting in its ranks over half a million militants, it was able to unite them in one mighty whole. The process of this unification began in the very first years of the century and was perfected by means of that very organisation of "professional revolutionaries" which Lenin elaborated in his brochure: "What Should be Done?"

The younger members of the Party should know the history of their organisation and its traditions. From these, from the history of the struggle against opportunist and anarchistic errors

they may best of all learn to think dialectically and become capable of independent orientation. The present edition of "What Should be Done?" is intended for Party schools and Young Communists. The text of it is taken from the collection of his works which Lenin issued in 1907, under the title "For Twelve Years," with all the omissions which the author considered necessary at that time, throwing out a number of polemical passages of no interest now which could only make reading more difficult for the present day reader.

FROM 1898 TO 1902.

The lengthy preface which Lenin wrote to the first edition of his collected works, "For Twelve Years," contains the following passages relating to the present brochure, which conducts the reader into the historical environment in which it was written :—

"The brochure 'What Should be Done?' was published abroad in the early part of 1902. It is occupied with a criticism of the right wing, not on the literary plane any longer, but within the Social-Democratic organisation itself. The first congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party was held in 1898. The emigrant 'Union of Russian Social-Democrats' became the party organisation abroad, including the 'Group of the Emancipation of Labour.' But the central institutions of the Party were broken up by the police and could not be re-established. **The Party was not actually a unity; it remained an idea, a guide only.** The attractions of the strike movement and the economic struggle engendered at that time a special form of Social-Democratic opportunism, that of so-called 'economism.' When the 'Iskra' group at the end of 1900 began its activities abroad, a scission on this question was already a fact, Plekhanov in the spring of 1900 quitted the emigration 'Union of Russian Social-Democrats' and formed a separate organisation, 'The Social-Democrat.'

"Formally, 'Iskra' began its work independently of both fractions, but really in alliance with Plekhanov against the 'Union.' An attempt to unite the two (congress of the 'Union' and the 'Social-Democrat' at Zurich in June, 1901) did not succeed. The brochure 'What Should be Done?' systematically explains the cause of the divergence and the character of the 'Iskra' tactic and organisational activity.

The brochure "What Should be Done?" is frequently referred to by the present opponents of the Bolsheviks, namely, the Mensheviks, and also by writers in the bourgeois Liberal camp (the Cadets, the "nondescripts" of the newspaper "Comrade," etc.). I reproduce it, therefore, with very slight abridge-

ment, leaving out only details of organisational relations and some unimportant polemical remarks. For the substance of the contents it is necessary to draw the attention of the present-day reader to the following :

“The fundamental mistake which is made by those who at the present time contend against “What Should be Done?” consists of completely wrenching the brochure from its historical connections, from a definite phase of the Party’s development which it has long ago outlived. Palpably labouring under this error we have, for example, Parvus (not to speak of a multitude of Mensheviks) writing years after the appearance of the brochure, about its erroneous or exaggerated ideas on the organisation of professional revolutionaries.”

To make such a statement at the present time is to make oneself appear ridiculous, as if its authors desired to shut their eyes to a whole phase in the development of our party, to those conquests which in their time cost struggle and which have now long ago become permanent and have done their good work.

To argue at the present time about “Iskra’s” exaggeration (in 1901 and 1902) of the idea of an organisation of professional revolutionaries, this is just as if, *after* the Russian-Japanese war, people accused the Japanese of having exaggerated Russia’s military forces, of exaggerating the pre-war preparations to combat these forces. It was necessary for the Japanese to mobilise all its forces against the maximum possible Russian forces, in order to gain the victory. Unfortunately, many judge of our party without being acquainted with issues, not perceiving that *now* the idea of an organisation of professional revolutionaries has completely won out. And this victory of the idea had been impossible without placing it in the very forefront at that time, without “exaggeration” it would have been impossible to convince those who hindered the realisation of the idea.

THE POLICY OF “ISKRA.”

“What Should be Done?” is a condensation of the “Iskra” tactic, of the “Iskra” organisation policy of 1901 and 1902. Precisely a condensation, no more and no less. Whoever takes the trouble to acquaint himself with the pages of “Iskra” of 1901 and 1902 will undoubtedly convince himself of this fact. And whoever judges of this “condensation” without knowing anything of “Iskra’s” struggle against the all-prevailing “economism” of that time, and without understanding that struggle, is simply talking to the wind. “Iskra” strove for the formation of an organisation of professional revolutionaries, and strove with

especial energy in the years 1901-2, fought with the then dominating "economism," finally *established* this organisation in 1903, held it together in spite of the subsequent split of the "Iskraites," in spite of the shocks of the period of storm and assault, held it throughout the Russian revolution, maintained and preserved it from 1901-2 to the year 1907.

And now,* when the struggle for this organisation is long ago won, when the seed is sown, the crop ripened and gathered, —there appear people who announce the "exaggeration of the idea of an organisation of professional revolutionaries." Isn't this really absurd?

Take the whole of the pre-revolution period and the first two and a half years of the revolution (1905-07) as a whole. Compare our Social-Democratic party during this time with other parties in relation to its solidity, degree of organisation, unbroken continuity. It cannot but be recognised that in this respect the superiority of our party over *all* the others, over the Cadets and the social-revolutionaries, is unquestioned. The Social-Democratic Party worked out a program before the revolution, accepted by all Social-Democrats, and whatever changes were made, it was never divided on account of the program. The Social-Democratic party, in spite of scission, from 1903 to 1907 (formerly from 1905 to 1906) gave the public the greatest amount of information as to its internal affairs (minutes of congresses, the second general congress, Third Bolshevik, and the Fourth or Stockholm general congress). The Social-Democratic Party in spite of scission, in advance of all other parties utilised the temporary ray of political freedom in order to bring into being an ideal democratically constituted open organisation, with an elective system, and representation at Congresses according to the number of organised members in the Party. This does not exist as yet, either in the Social-Revolutionary or in the Cadet Party, an almost legal, and the best organised of all bourgeois parties, commanding immeasurably greater financial resources than we do, more elbow room in the use of the press, and the possibility of working in the open. And the elections to the Second Duma in which all parties participated, did they not show clearly that the organisational compactness of our party and of our fraction in the Duma was greater than that of all the other parties?

THE PROFESSIONAL REVOLUTIONARIES.

The question arises, who then realised, who hammered into our Party this high degree of solidity, permanence and firmness?

* That is 1907, when these lines were written.

This was done by the organisation of professional revolutionaries, formed principally by "Iskra." To whomsoever knows well the history of our Party, lived through and participated in its formation, it is only necessary to look at the composition of any fraction, say of the London Congress, in order to be convinced of it, in order to see at once that foundation core of the party membership which more diligently than any nurtured up the Party into adolescence. Of course, the fundamental condition for this success was the fact that the working class, the flower of which formed the Social-Democracy, distinguishes itself from all other classes in capitalist society by the greatest capacity for organisation (by virtue of objective economic causes). Without this condition, the organisation of professional revolutionaries would have been a mere hobby, an adventure, an empty catchword, and the brochure "What Should be Done?" repeatedly emphasises that only in regard to a "really revolutionary and spontaneously uprising class" does the organisation advocated by it have any meaning. But the objectively maximum capacity of the proletariat to unite as a class is brought into realisation by living persons, is realised by no other means than that of definite forms of organisation. And no other organisation except that of "Iskra" could have in our historical condition formed such a Social-Democratic Labour Party as that which we now have. The professional revolutionary accomplished his task in the history of Russian proletarian Socialism. And no power is now capable of nullifying its results, which have long ago brought us out of the narrow limits of the "groups" of 1902-1905; and no belated laments about the "exaggeration" of this militant task by those who at that time only by combat could be brought to a correct approach to such tasks, can affect the significance of all that has now been won.

I referred just now to the "narrow limits" of the groups at the time of the old "Iskra" (from the end of 1903, after No. 51 "Iskra" verted to Menshevism and announced: "between the new and the old 'Iskra' there lies an abyss"—Trotsky's words in the brochure, approved by the Menshevik editorial board of "Iskra"). Regarding this "group" period, it is necessary to give the present-day reader a few words of explanation. In the brochure, "What Should be Done?" the reader will see evidences of the violent, sometimes angry, destructive conflicts among the *emigrant groups*. Undoubtedly these conflicts had their unattractive features. Undoubtedly also, this struggle among groups represents the infancy, the immaturity of the workers' movement in any given country. And undoubtedly, the present-

day leaders of the Labour movement in Russia should break with many traditions of the group period, and forget, throw off the group life and group quarrels, in order to fulfil the task of Social-Democracy in the present period with increased vigour. Only the enlarging of the Party by new *proletarian elements* can in the conditions of open mass activity, rid us of these heritages of the past and those legacies of the group period that do not answer the needs of the present. And the transition to the democratic organisation of a workers' party, announced by the Bolsheviks in "Novaya Zhizn" in November, 1905, as soon as conditions for open political action were established—this change over was already in substance, an irrevocable break with all that had been outgrown from the old group system.

THE EMIGRANT GROUPS.

Yes, "with all that had been outgrown," for it is not enough to condemn the group system, it is necessary to understand its significance under the peculiar conditions of the past period. In its time the group or circle was necessary and played a positive part. In a country of absolutism—generally in those conditions which had been constituted by the whole history of the *Russian* revolutionary movement in particular, a Socialist Labour Party could not develop otherwise than from initial groups. Groups, that is, small, exclusive circles, nearly always founded on personal friendship, were a necessary stage in the development of Socialism and the Labour movement in Russia. As this movement grew, it became necessary to unite these groups to establish firm connections between them, and assure continuity of existence. It was not possible to solve this task, without establishing a firm base of operations beyond the reach of absolutism, that is, abroad. The emigrant groups arose, therefore out of necessity. Among them there was no organisational bond, over them there was not the authority of a Party in Russia; they inevitably differed from one another in their outlook as to the fundamental needs of the movement, that is, in their understanding of the problem how exactly should the base of operations be formed and in what direction should it aid the work of general party construction. Under such conditions conflict between these groups was inevitable. Now, looking back, we can easily see which group was really capable of fulfilling the functions of a base of operations. But at that time, when the groups began to function, no one could decide this offhand; only struggle could decide the dispute. Parvus, it will be remembered, reproved, after the event, the first "Iskra" for destructive group conflicts, and, in

retrospect, advised a conciliatory policy. But it is easy to do this after the event, and it, moreover, betrays ignorance of the conditions then obtaining. To begin with, there existed no criterion of the strength and *seriousness* of this or that group. There was much that was inflated which is now forgotten, but at the time tried to prove its right to exist by struggle. In the second place, the differences between groups consisted of how to *direct* the work, which was yet new. I remarked at that time (in "What Should be Done?") that the differences might appear small, but in actual practice had enormous significance, because at the beginning of the new work, in the beginning of the Social-Democratic movement, the defining of the general character of this work and of this movement would tell upon the propaganda agitation and organisation in the most vital manner. All subsequent disputes among Social-Democrats turned on questions of how to direct the political activity of a workers' party in this or that particular event. But at that time it was a question of defining the most general foundations and root problems of any kind of Social-Democratic policy in general.

The groups did their work, and now, of course, have been outgrown. But they have been outgrown because, and only because, the group conflicts in the sharpest possible manner put forward the corner-stone problems of Social-Democracy, solved them in an uncompromising revolutionary spirit, and thus laid the firm foundations for extensive Party activity.

THEORY OF SPONTANEITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS.

Of the secondary questions raised in the literature connected with "What Should be Done?" I will refer only to the following two: Plekhanov in "Iskra" of 1904, soon after the appearance of the brochure "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backwards," announced a difference of principle with me on the question of spontaneity and consciousness. I did not reply to this declaration (except for a note in the Geneva newspaper "Forward") nor to the numerous repetitions on this theme in Menshevik literature. I did not reply because Plekhanov's criticism was a palpable case of empty quibbling, based on phrases wrested from their context, on isolated expressions which I had not very aptly or quite accurately framed, while ignoring the general content and the whole spirit of the brochure. "What Should be Done?" appeared in March, 1902. The draft of the Party programme (by Plekhanov, with amendments to it by the "Iskra" editors) was printed in June or July, of 1902. The relations of the spontaneous movement to the conscious was formulated in this draft

to the full satisfaction of the "Iskra" editorial committee, the dispute on the program between Plekhanov and myself in the editorial committee went, not on this question, but on the question of the extinction of petty production by large industry, I desiring a more definite formula than that of Plekhanov's; and on the question of the various points of view of the proletariat or the labouring classes in general, in which I insisted on a more confined definition of the purely proletarian character of the Party.

Consequently there could not have been any suggestion of a difference of principle between the draft program and "What Should be Done?" on this question. At the second Congress (August, 1903) Martinov, then an Economist, began to argue against our point of view on the spontaneous and conscious, as expressed in the program. All the "Iskraites" opposed Martinov, as I emphasised in the pamphlet "One Step Forward, etc." It is clear from this that the difference of principle lay between the "Iskraites" and the "Economists," who attacked what was general both in "What Should be Done?" and the draft programme. It never occurred to me to specially include any formula from "What Should be Done?" into the form of a program as it were, fixing a special principle. On the contrary, I used the expression, much quoted afterwards, about bending the stick. I said that in "What Should be Done?" the stick bent by the Economists is straightened out (see minutes of Second Congress, 1903, issued Geneva, 1904) and precisely because we straighten out the bent rod, our rod will always be the straighter.

The meaning of this expression is clear! "What Should be Done?" polemically straightens out Economism, and to judge the brochure outside of this task is incorrect. I note that Plekhanov's article against "What Should be Done?" is *not* reprinted in the new "Iskra's" publication of collected articles "For Two Years," and for that reason I do not now deal with Plekhanov's arguments, but merely give the gist of the matter for the present-day reader, who will meet with references to the question in many Menshevik productions.

ECONOMIC STRUGGLE AND TRADE UNIONS.

The second observation I wish to make is with regard to the question of the economic struggle, and of the trade unions. Not infrequently my views on this question are distorted in the press. It is necessary to emphasise, therefore, that a considerable part of "What Should be Done?" is occupied with the enormous importance of the economic struggle and of the trade unions. In

particular, I expressed myself at that time *for the neutrality* of the trade unions. Since then I have not expressed myself otherwise, notwithstanding the many affirmations of my opponents to the contrary. Only the London Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress forced me to come to the conclusion that the neutrality of the trade unions is not defensible in principle. The closest approach of the unions to the Party—that is the only true principle. Strive to link up the unions with the Party—that should be our policy, carrying it out persistently and insistently in all our propaganda, agitation and organisational activity, without chasing after simple “recognition” and without driving those with differing views out of the trade unions.

YOUR CLASS AND PARTY NEED YOU.

There are some who, sympathising with, and appreciating the Communist position, will call themselves Communist without realising that the first duty of a Communist is to become a member of the Communist Party.

Therefore, **DO YOUR DUTY,**

JOIN THE COMMUNIST PARTY NOW

APPLICATION FORM.

I wish to be a member of the Communist Party. Please put me in touch with local membership.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Fill in this form and give it to the comrade who sold you this *Review*, or to *Local Secretary*

Or to Albert Inkpin, Secretary, Communist Party, 16, King Street, London, W.C.2.

The Solomonics of Saint Bernard Shaw

IT was late in November when it happened. An English November is depressing enough even to a native. To an elderly Irish gentleman of literary proclivities—with a passion for politics—it is apt to be more than trying. And when that Irish gentleman has for years been drilled by his admirers into regarding himself as an Instructor-General of the Universe, naturally enough the effect of a physical fog which he can do nothing to dissipate is to drive him to look round for something resembling a mental fog upon which he can vent his cultured and cultivated spleen.

Thus it came to be that late in the November of 1924, Bernard Shaw, Patron Saint of the Fabian Society, Great Grey God of every gallery flapper from Golder's Green to the Goldhawk Road, turned aside from the task of instructing God Almighty how to run the universe in order to cast a few pearls of Solomonic wisdom before the Governing Executive of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics—not necessarily for the greater glory of Shaw, but certainly for the admonition and reproof of one, Gregory Zinoviev.

ZINOVIEV.

This Zinoviev played a great part (by proxy) and without intending it, in the late General Election in Britain. The results of that election were by no means satisfactory, either to Shaw, his acolytes or the congregation of his faithful ones. Somebody had to be blamed and—there was Zinoviev all ready to hand.

Zinoviev, too, is the President of the Communist International. As the British Labour Party had just been defeated by a Tory Party, whose election slogan was "Down with Communism"—(in anticipation of whose slogan the said Labour Party had decided—much to the Tories' comfort—to cast all Communists out of their ranks) it was necessary that Shaw in his capacity of Protecting Providence to the British Labour Party should save their diminished faces by smacking Zinoviev (and through him the Communists), good and hard. It might not hurt Zinoviev; it would not make the slightest difference to the Communists. But it would tickle the Tories and salve the sores of the ex-Cabinet Ministers and Under-Secretaries who after a

brief session in the sunlight felt their relegation to the chill of Opposition as a keen personal injury. And it would do all that while leaving the Great Saint Bernard still able to rear his snowy head as the great peak of Revolution dominating the political flats of British Socialism.

SHAW AND REVOLUTION.

This latter consideration was much more important than might be supposed. It is one of the dear old gentleman's pet vanities to regard himself as the Very Devil (in political controversy). And truth to tell, there is much more sound revolutionary thinking concealed in his works than would seem possible to his admirers, or prove comfortable to his party were they in the habit of taking these works seriously. Happily for them—and provokingly for Shaw—they treat these things as only "Fanny's little Play," and gorge joyously upon the deliberate flap-doodle into which they are inserted like plums in a pudding.

The whole thing is a tragi-comedy only to be appreciated by Irishmen with a grasp of Marxism.

Shaw as an Irish gentleman—without means to support his gentility—came to London in the early 80's. All the Irish in him made him hate and despise alike the humbug of bourgeois Liberalism and the supineness of the British proletariat. In Ireland as a Protestant gentleman, he had been suckled from birth in a superior contempt for Fenian romantics. In England he was revolted to hear his family opinions on the lips of the "God-damned English Gentlemen," who automatically classed him as a "Fenian" because he was Irish. His soul cried out for vengeance and he joined "the Socialists" to get it.

Thus he obtained his practical contact with the British proletariat—from the elevation of the rostrum (starting with the orange-box and in time mounting to the Albert Hall). Their ingrained respectability and respectfulness revolted him still further. He wanted them to tear the bourgeoisie limb from limb—they took him seriously and began docilely to make preparations in the good old Fenian way. His inculcated contempt for Fenian methods rose up within him, and he poured forth his scorn. The proletarians dutifully laughed with him and agreed with him—and asked what was his alternative.

In principle he knew there was only one—the steady, patient unromantic preparation for a proletarian mass uprising. But at that time he was not prepared for anything so indefinitely protracted. He wanted something *now*; vengeance on the "gentlemen" who had cast him out for combining intellectual superiority

with impecuniosity—vengeance on a society which had given him cultivated tastes without means for their satisfaction. The proletariat were only prepared to do what they were bid. As he was not prepared to lead a part-Chartist, part-Blanquist, part-Fenian insurrection (nor sure even if he were willing that he would be accepted as a leader) Shaw abandoned all hope of the proletariat and turned his genius elsewhere.

And then came his Great Thought. Why not revenge himself on all his foes at once?—the English gentleman whom he despised as English and hated as snobs—the proletarians whom he despised for their sentimental and subservient respectfulness—the middle class whom he laughed at as subservient, sentimental, English, and snobbish all at once.

After all it was this middle class that consumed the bulk of such literary and musical output as there was. He was gifted with talents alike for music and literature—in the ordinary course of making a living this was the class whose tastes he must study. Why not bring his pigs to this market?

It was thus and no otherwise that George Bernard Shaw set up in Business as the Marx of the Middle Class.

FABIANISM.

It is common to treat the Fabian Society as a characteristic piece of British middle class stupidity. It is nothing of the sort. It is a rich and rollicking Irish fantasy. Only an ex-Fenian with an insight in Marx could have elaborated a jest so priceless.

It took its title from the old Roman general who won his campaigns by biding his time, and putting off the day of battle until circumstances were such as to assure him victory. Its title therefore, carried within itself the suggestion of a great and glorious victory in the end, combined with a comforting assurance that the battle would not take place for some time to come.

All the middle class intellectuals within reach who, like Shaw, recognised themselves as unrecognised geniuses whom a brutal bourgeoisie scantily grudged bread-and-cheese, rose to the call. Sure of their skins—the day of Revolution being tacitly postponed to the Greek Kalends—they proceeded to assault the bourgeoisie with tracts!

The Social-Democratic “literature” of the period consisted of little else than exercises in proletarian piety, written by middle class men in a fever of exaltation over the virtues of the poor, and the vices of the rich. Fragments left floating from the wreck of mid-century neo-Jacobinism, oddments from Mazzini, and misconstrued and mangled extracts from Marx, all stewed up to—

gether in the juice of traditional English Evangelicalism made the matter of what passed for Social-Democracy in Britain in the days when the Fabian society was born.

Social-Democracy in Britain at that date was not a political method: it was a religious system with a political programme tacked on as an accessory. And a religious system bearing every mark of its Protestant Evangelical origin. Its central object of faith was a "Day of Judgment" in the shape of a Social-Democratic Revolution which was (like the Second Coming of Christ) to come "like a thief in the night." In that Day of Wrath the bourgeois goats would be separated from the Social-Democratic sheep and cast into outer darkness; whereupon would ensue a new heaven and a new earth. To prepare for that great Day, it was necessary to become "converted to" and to hold the true Social-Democratic faith (which, whomsoever should not hold without doubt he would perish everlastingly). And to preserve the faith it was necessary to recite all the formulæ with the correct emphasis, to wear the right shade of red tie, the correct "class conscious" sombrero, and quote with or without understanding, the first nine chapters of Marx's "Capital." It was a pious exercise (but not necessary to salvation) to repeat in spirit and with as much truth as was convenient, there is no God but Marx and H. M. Hyndman is his prophet." It was not at all necessary to read Marx—as for understanding him, Prophet Hyndman had done all that.

Against all this the Fabian tracts appeared as things of portent. They were sober, rational and documented with relevant facts. They demonstrated the worthlessness of Capitalism and advocated Socialism. A generation to whose guilty conscience the S.D.F. had appeared like Marat emerging from the tomb to glut his ire upon thirty million relatives of Charlot Corday turned with a gasp of amazement to meet this wonder-thing, Socialism advocated with sense and sanity. The Fabian Society has lived on the reputation of that thrill ever since.

SHAW'S PET JOKE.

It was necessary to its original scheme that the Fabian Society should, while being "as wise as serpents," make itself appear as much as possible "as harmless as doves." But it was also necessary that it should do something—if only to maintain the sale of its tracts. To the section of the proletariat that had no taste for evangelical orgies, the Fabian Society appeared as a deliverer from nightmare Hyndmania. Somewhat to its consternation, the Fabian Society found itself elected *nem. con.* to the post

of leadership. As the Society's tacit bond of union was a conviction of the need for delaying the battle this was embarrassing. They had neither the numbers nor the machinery at their disposal to keep an insurgent proletariat properly under control. For their own sakes a machine had to be found.

Luckily just at this moment a member of the Society made a discovery. Wandering by chance into a meeting of the local Liberal Association, he found it possible to move resolutions and get them carried for the Agenda of the Conference of the National Liberal Association. At once the thought came—why not steal the machine of the Liberal Party and thus obtain the means of keeping the Proletariat under restraint?

The idea caught on, and thus was born the Fabian policy of permeation—the “slow, wise Fabian smile” which marks an appreciation of the jest of harnessing proletarian energies to Liberal achievements. When at a later date the ineradicable malice of the Proletariat found vent in the formation of the *Independent Labour Party*, and later of the Labour Representation Committee (now the Labour Party), the Fabian Society was sufficiently accustomed to “nuclei work” to repeat the manoeuvre each time, with success magnified by proficiency born of experience and by the greater tractibility of the material.

But the permeation policy had its vulnerable side—as the birth of the I.L.P. proved. The demonstration of the villainies of capitalism had its readiest audience among the more enlightened proletarians, and the more they were convinced, the less ready they were to delay the battle. Here Hyndman scored: and to the slogan of “class war,” the S.D.F. charged to the assault upon the permeation policy.

Something had to be done about it; and here the genius of Bernard Shaw rose to its zenith.

He knew (what few knew) that Hyndmanism was no more Marxism than Marxism was Mormonism. And he knew also that the faithful followers of Hyndman were as far removed from Marx as they were devoted to their prophet. To vindicate Marx against Hyndman would have been no more than a private and personal satisfaction. It would have destroyed the Fabian Society and its permeation policy, along with Hyndman, and put Shaw for ever outside the cultivated middle class public, who alone could buy his manufactures.

Far more politically and personally advantageous was it to treat Hyndman as Marx, and in bashing Hyndman to pieces pretend that it was Marx he was tumbling into ruin. It had besides, the irresistible merit of being a screaming joke if you were

only in the secret. All the Irish devil in him rose up and danced as Shaw sailed into Hyndman to the tune of "Old Grandfather Marx." When he was able to palm off a quotation from Marx as his own argument to prove that Marx was a "back number," and so trap Hyndman into ferociously assaulting a Marxian argument in the name of Marx, Shaw's joy knew no bounds. He has never stopped laughing since, and now that the situation between the Social-Democrats and the Communists somewhat parallels the old confrontation of Fabian and Social-Democrats, he cannot resist the temptation to try to pull Zinoviev's leg in the way he managed to pull Hyndman's.

MARXISM IN EXCELCIS.

But, alas for Shaw, both he and the world are grown older. He is not so nimble as he was, and a theoretical spar between Socialist leaders is no longer a family matter. The world has grown grey with the exhalations of capitalism in its death throes. Even the Fabian Society can no longer believe in its ability permanently to "delay the battle." Lapse of time has given to its hands for leadership a Labour Party whose membership is counted in millions. And every day those millions clamour louder to be led.

Can Shaw lead them back to the Liberal Party? Can he even think of it?

There before his eyes, if ever he ventures into the House of Commons, and casts a glance into the corner where sits Ali Baba George, with his hungry forty, is the concrete verdict of history upon the Fabian policy of permeation—the five million votes for the Labour Party in the teeth of Tory screams and MacDonalдите sneers against Communism are equally a concrete vindication of the foresight of Marx.

Nay worse! He cannot make his joke about the supersession of Marx by himself and Sidney Webb without addressing it, not to a handful of semi-literate cockney proletarians in a London cellar—but to the Marxist masters of the Kremlin, rulers of one-sixth part of the habitable globe.

The sense of difficulty is on him. He feels that just as his hair has no longer the blaze of battle, but has blanched with time, and its transformation, so quite other and differently equipped opponents stand before him. Surely only old age made him bid for the support of Wells?—the Wells whom once he made rings round? Surely the powers of the Old Devil have decayed when he can contrast "Capital" with the "Outlines of History"—'tis like saying that four o'clock is a great advance upon four pounds of butter. Surely weakness could no further go than in trying to

make a case against Zinoviev by quoting (at this date!)—the Constitution of the Communist International?

THE FABIAN SOLOMON.

Truly is it written you cannot teach an old dog new tricks. Fixed in Shaw's mind is the General Election, and the name of Zinoviev. But for that election and the "Zinoviev letter" the Royal Family itself might have been "permeated" by now. The chance of the middle class leading a tame proletariat into a Garden City New Jerusalem dwindled from the moment that the Labour Party was forced to fight on working class issues, such as the Russian Treaty, the Loan to Russia, and the Campbell Case. The Zinoviev "bombshell" did not shake the proletariat—but it smashed utterly the foundations of Fabian domination of the Labour Party.

This to Shaw, means an end to a delightful dream. And like every dreamer, he clings to the illusion to the last. From the point of view of "British" Socialism (Fabian-cum-I.L.P. brand), there ought never to have been a proletarian revolution in Russia. It is, therefore, necessary for "British" Socialists to prove to themselves that no such thing happened. It is a sign of their bankruptcy that nobody else will tackle the job but the Old Man of the Party—Bernard Shaw. And a proof of his embarrassment that he has nothing to add to his old squib that Marx "became obsolete" the day Shaw was born—beyond the trite petit bourgeois moan against "taking orders from Moscow."

There is only one thing certain—Shaw's faith was wrecked at the last election. He seeks his revenge upon Zinoviev; but it is really a Solomonic protest against the whole cosmic scheme for evolving in a way unpredicted by G. B. Shaw. Yet a little while and he will—saying "All is Vanity"—abandon the universe to its fate, and leave the proletariat to clean up the mess which persists in growing despite barriers of Fabian tracts, piled to keep it back.

And wherever the proletariat take in hand the solution of their own destiny—whatever their immediate slogan—Marx lives and triumphs.

T. A. JACKSON

The Italian Crisis

IN what does the crisis of Fascism consist? People say that to understand it you must first define the essence of Fascism, but the fact is, that there does not exist an essence of Fascism in Fascism itself: the essence of Fascism appeared in 1922 and 1923 from a given system of relations of existing forces in Italian society. To-day this system is profoundly changed and the "essence" has correspondingly evaporated. The characteristic achievement of Fascism is that it succeeded in constituting a mass organisation of the petite bourgeoisie. This is the first time in history that that has been done. The originality of Fascism consists in having found an adequate form of organisation for a social class that has always been incapable of connection with a unifying idea. This form of organisation is the army in the field. Thus, the militia is the pivot of the Nationalist Fascist Party: you cannot dissolve the militia without dissolving too the whole Fascist Party. There is no Fascist Party making quantity into quality; there is no mechanism of political selection of a class or a rank. There is only a mechanical aggregation, undifferentiated, and incapable of differentiation from the point of view of intellectual and political capacity, which only lives because it has acquired in the civil war a very strong *esprit de corps*, roughly identified with national feeling. Outside the plane of military organisation Fascism has not given and cannot give anything, and even on this plane, what it can give is very relative.

Put together by circumstances like this, Fascism cannot follow out any of its theoretical promises. Fascism to-day says it wishes to conquer the State, and at the same time it says it wishes to become a mainly rural phenomenon. How the two affirmations can be reconciled it is difficult to see. To conquer the State you must be in a position to support the dominating class in functions which have an essential importance for the government of society. In Italy, as in all capitalist countries, to conquer the State means above all to conquer industry, it means, to have the capacity to dominate the capitalists in the government of the productive forces of the country. This can be done by the working class, it cannot be done by the petite bourgeoisie, which has no essential function on the productive field and in industry—as an industrial category—exercises rather a police function than a productive one. It could only conquer the State by allying it-

self with the working class and accepting the working class' programme—a Soviet system instead of Parliament in State organisation, Communism and not capitalism in the organisation of national and international economy.

The formula "conquest of the State" is void of meaning in the mouths of the Fascists, or merely means the invention of an electoral machine which will give the parliamentary majority to the Fascists always and at all costs. The fact is, that all the Fascist ideology is a toy for the Balilla. It is a dilettante improvisation which, in the past, in favourable circumstances, could fool the herd, but to-day becomes ridiculous even to the Fascists. The only active part of Fascism that remains is the military *esprit de corps* tightened by the danger of an unleashing of popular vengeance. The political crisis of the petite bourgeois, the passing of the vast majority of that class beneath the banner of the Opposition, the failure of the general measures pronounced by the Fascist heads, can notably reduce Fascism's military efficiency, but they cannot destroy it.

The organisation of the anti-Fascist democratic forces draws its main power from the existence of the Parliamentary Committee of the Oppositionists which has succeeded in imposing a sort of discipline on a whole octave of parties from the Maximalists to the Populars. That Maximalists and Populars obey the same discipline and work for the same programme is the most characteristic trait of the situation. This fact makes slow and laborious the development of events, and determines the tactics of the mass of the Oppositionists—a tactic of waiting, of slow entangling manoeuvres and of patient attrition of all the positions of the Fascist Government. The Maximalists, by joining the Committee and accepting common discipline, guarantee the passivity of the proletariat. They assure the bourgeoisie, which is still hesitating between Fascism and democracy, that independent action by the working class will not be possible at least until much later, when the new government will be constituted and strengthened and in a position to crush any insurrection of masses disillusioned both with Fascism and democratic anti-Fascism. The presence of the Populars guarantees them against an intermediate Fascist-Popular solution like that of October, 1922, which would have been very probable—because the Vatican demanded it—in the event of the Maximalists leaving the bloc and allying themselves with us.

The chief aim of the intermediate parties (reformists and constitutionalists) assisted by the Populars, has become at the present moment merely this: to keep the two extremes in the same

body. The servile spirit of the Maximalists has cast them for the part of a clown in the comedy, they have agreed to count in the Opposition for no more than the Party of Peasants or the groups of "Liberal Revolution."

The heaviest forces are brought to the Oppositionists by the Populars and the Reformists who have a big following in town and country. The influence of these two parties is aided by Amendola's constitutionalists, who bring to the bloc the adhesion of large sections of the army, of the ex-soldiers and of the court. The division of the labour of agitation is made among the various parties according to their tradition and social task. The constitutionalists, since the tactics of the bloc aim at isolating Fascism, have the political direction of the movement. The Populars conduct the moral campaign on the ground of the trial and its connection with the Fascist regime, and with the corruption and crime that flourishes behind the Government. The Reformists take up both these attitudes and make themselves small and sweet to get forgiveness for their demagogic past, to make people believe that they are redeemed and precisely the same as Deputy Amendola and Senator Albertini.

The compact attitude of the Opposition has secured notable successes. It is without question a success to have provoked the crisis of the "Heraldic Supporters," that is to say, to have obliged the Liberals to differentiate themselves actively from Fascism, and make conditions to it. This has had, and will have in the future, effect in the ranks of Fascism itself, and has created a division between the Fascist Party and the central ex-soldiers organisation, but it has also displaced further to the right the centre point of the bloc of the Opposition, and so accentuated the conservative character of anti-Fascism. The Maximalists have not suspected this, and are prepared to act as the rank and file, not only of Amendola and Albertini, but even of Salandra and Cadorna.

How will this dualism of power end? Will there be a compromise between Fascism and the Opposition? If a compromise is impossible, shall we have an armed struggle?

We cannot exclude a compromise altogether, although it is very improbable. The crisis that the country is suffering under is not a superficial phenomenon which can be healed by small measures and expedients, it is the historic crisis of Italian capitalist society whose economic system shows itself insufficient for the needs of the population. All relations are exasperated and huge masses of the people are expecting something very different from a tiny compromise. If this were to happen, it would signify the suicide of the great democratic parties. An armed insurrection

with more radical aims would at once become the next question in national life. Fascism, by the nature of its organisation, cannot permit of collaborators with an equal share in direction, it only wants slaves on a chain. There can be no representative Assembly in the Fascist regime, every assembly becomes at once a bivouac of squadrons or the anti-chamber of a brothel for inebriate subalterns. The daily news, therefore, only tells of a sequence of political episodes which indicate the dissolution of the Fascist system, the slow but inexorable detaching from the Fascist system of all its outlying forces. Then will there be an armed clash? A struggle on a grand scale will be avoided both by the Oppositionists and Fascists. There will be the opposite phenomenon to that of October, 1922. Then, the march on Rome was a theatrical dance marking a molecular change by which the real forces of the bourgeois state (army, judiciary, police, press Vatican, freemasonry, Court, etc.) passed to the side of Fascism. If Fascism tries to resist, it will be worn out in a long civil war in which the proletariat and the peasants must take part. The Opposition and Fascism do not want, and will avoid systematically, engaging in a fundamental struggle. Fascism will rather try to keep a basis for an armed organisation which can be put in the field as soon as a new revolutionary wave appears. And this would be far from displeasing to Amendola or Albertini or even to Turati or Treves.

The drama will be played on a fixed date, and in all probability is arranged for the day of the re-opening of the Chamber. For the militarist dance of October, 1922, will be substituted a more musical democratic dance. If the Oppositionists do not enter Parliament, and the Fascists, as they say they will, call together the majority as a Fascist Constituent Assembly, we shall have a meeting of the Oppositionists and an apparent struggle between the two Assembles.

It is still possible that the solution will take place in Parliament House itself, into which the Oppositionists would enter in the very probable case of a split in the Majority, which would put the government of Mussolini in a clear minority. In that case we should have the formation of a provisional government of generals, senators and ex-presidents of the Council, the dissolution of the Chamber, and martial law.

What should be the actual political attitude and tactic of our Party in the present situation? The situation is "democratic" because the great working masses are disorganised, dispersed and scattered in the mass of the people, and so whatever can be the immediate result of the crisis, we can only anticipate an improve-

ment in the political position of the working class and not a victorious struggle by it for power. The essential task of our Party consists in the conquest of the majority of the working class. The phase that we are passing through is not one of direct struggle for power, but a preparatory phase of transition to the struggle for power, a phase, in brief, of agitation, propaganda and organization. This naturally, does not exclude the possibility of bloody struggles, and our Party must be prepared to meet them, but even these struggles must be seen as part of the picture of transition, as a means of propaganda and agitation for the conquest of the majority. If there exist in our Party groups and tendencies, which, from fanaticism, wish to force the situation, it is our duty to struggle against them in the name of the whole Party, and the vital and permanent interests of the Italian revolution. The Matteotti crisis has given us many warnings on this point, it has told us that the masses, after three years of terror and oppression, have become very prudent and will not make a stride longer than their legs. This prudence calls itself "reformism," "Maximalism," or "Opposition bloc."

It is doomed to disappear, and that before long, but, all the same, it does exist, and can only be overcome if we, on every occasion and at every moment, as we go on, do not lose touch with the mass of the working class.

The terrain on which the crisis will develop will continue to be the trial for the murder of Matteotti. We shall have some acutely dramatic incidents in the future when they publish the three documents of Finzi, of Fillipelli and Rossi and the highest personalities in the regime are struck by the popular wrath. All the real forces of the State, and in particular, the armed forces, over which the debate has already begun, will have to line up definitely on one side or the other and force the solution already agreed on and outlined.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI



Communism in Parliament

Saklatvala demands right of Party to be heard, and denounces "Continuity of Policy."

[Our comrade, Saklatvala, being the only Communist Party member in the House of Commons, and denied the Labour Party whips, is compelled to face the united opposition of all the Parties when time is being allocated for the discussion of particular business. Saklatvala is demanding the right to speak in the name of the Communist Party, and the advanced elements within the Labour movement, as well as of the struggling peoples in the colonies, and as representing a separate political opinion in opposition to that of MacDonaldisism of Liberalism or Toryism.

In this fight, Saklatvala is up against the *parliamentary machine*. We have read *brave* words and listened to *strong* speeches from many of the backbenchers in the Labour Party. Party loyalty or machinery may prevent them from saying the same things on the floor of the House of Commons, but there is certainly no excuse for withholding support to the one Communist member in the House upon this claim *that the right of pronouncements in the name of the Communist Party, upon any or all questions be accorded Saklatvala, Communist Member for N. Battersea.*

The following speech was made by Comrade Saklatvala a quarter of an hour before the House rose on Wednesday, 17th December.—Editor.]

Mr. SAKLATVALA: I have to explain to the House the reason for which I have to stand up now more or less in connection with the Amendment, that stood in my name, to the Address. Though I may have to put forward a new point of view arising out of a new situation, I do not for a moment want the House to understand that it is in any spirit of wanton interruption or dragging of the proceedings at this time of the night. It may seem rather out of proportion for an individual to stand up and say he represents a party which claims to put forward its views, but I appeal to the House to realise the position. We have heard about the great fondness this House has for its traditions, and I can well understand that it would take some time to adjust itself to some new feature that arises here.

I represent a proper, well-organised, well-formed and rather too loudly acknowledged political party in this country now. I am not one of those international Socialists who take offence at having friends in Moscow, Berlin or Delhi. As a member of the International Communist Party, I submit that our movement does extend from Moscow to Battersea, and much beyond that. It is as well organised a party as any other party in the State, with its machinery, its Press, and its branches all over the country. I would point out to hon. and right. hon. Gentlemen opposite—I do not know whether it was merely put on

or whether it was their sincere belief—that right up to the last Election they were saying that our party was the vital tail that was wagging the whole of the Labour dog. We do not count by numbers, but what we lack in numbers we make up in solid importance. Our friends of the Liberal Party only succeeded in returning to the House one Member for every seven-and-a-half candidates, whereas our party succeeded in returning one Member out of seven candidates.

Considering the change that is going on, and considering the rightful place that the Communist Party is taking in the Parliaments all over Europe, this House might now grant to us our justifiable claims, and put us in the time-table. I do not for a moment claim that our party should have a whole day, or a couple of days, allotted, but surely, now, the House can begin to allot to us, say, an hour, when other parties can have a full day to themselves. I have looked over the Debates for the last four or five days, and it seems to me that our Party would be the only one that would stand in real difference without getting mixed up at times. We find it very difficult to find a line of strong demarcation.

The last time that I was a Member of the House, our friends of the Labour Party were fighting tooth and nail against the very scheming wording of the Amendment of the Rent Restrictions Act, which was likely to endanger its existence. Yesterday, we heard from the same Labour Party that the Rent Restrictions Act was standing, and will stand, in the way of building new houses. We have heard during the last few days of the Debate many points of agreement between the Tory party and the administrators of the Labour Party, and we have seen very few points of strong disagreement. We have seen in to-night's Debate the party believing in Protection pointing out instance after instance where the parties believing in Free Trade were indulging in Protection and almost asking for it at times when it suited them.

We have heard to-night even the example quoted about the Capital Levy having disappeared, and looking at it all, I submit that it is for the good of this nation and not for its harm that one party should stand up boldly to say that it always says what it believes in, and believes in what it is prepared to say, and to act up to it. We represent that section of the working class that does not believe in continuity of policy. We represent a section of the working class that does not believe in saying at one time that your employers are your enemies, that individual capitalism is the source of all your evils, and yet that we should sit down

with them makes friends and form a joint club so that these evils may disappear from time to time.

With regard to the wording of my Amendment, I remember that when I was in the House in 1922, the first King's Speech I heard was read and debated. My hon. Friend the Member for Westhoughton was reported to have said this :

" I was proud to come to the House because I did not during the War send any young boy to his doom, and the Labour Party, I feel sure, will echo every word when I say that their advent to this House, if it means anything at all, means goodwill among all the peoples of the earth. I am glad to learn that the people of India rejoice because our numbers are growing, and the people of Egypt feel better towards this country because they know that the Labour Party means international goodwill."

I offer no comment, but I suppose everyone is agreed that, foolish as the Indians may be, and wicked as the Egyptians may be, I do not believe that to-day they entertain that belief which was attributed to them last year.

With regard to the Amendment of which I have given notice, I submit that it is based upon the teachings and doctrines preached to the working classes from one end of Great Britain to the other for the last 30 years. **We are still telling the working classes that their struggle is a class struggle, that their emancipation lies in the complete extinction of the individual ownership system, and that their only salvation in international affairs is not based upon Imperialism and protective tariffs, and armies, bombs and insolent letters to Zaghul Pasha, saying, " My soldiers and bayonets will remain where they are, but still we are pacifists," or telling the people of India, " My ordinances shall rule you, but still we are the party of goodwill," and telling everybody, " We believe in a certain philosophy of life, but we do not practise it when it is a question of the democratic Parliament of the British Empire."**

In this respect I submit to the House that the things I would have placed before it would not have been in any hostile spirit, but would have been presented to this House and the country at large as the viewpoint which will have to be accepted some day or other as the only sane and honest view of life.

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW



GERMAN ELECTIONS.

A TEST OF THE C.P.

(By a Correspondent.)

The elections on Dec. 7th prove that the German bourgeoisie has failed to defeat the C.P., and thereby shake the confidence of the masses in our Party.

The reformists say that persecution and terror bring increased numbers of sympathisers to a party; of course, this is hypocrisy. The arrest of a few leaders will as a whole aid the movement. The application of mass terror in a country where 20,000 workers have been killed in civil war moves hardly anybody outside the ranks of the party adherents. But the arrest of thousands of the most active Party workers weakens the connections of the party with the masses, makes propaganda in many districts extremely difficult, and tends to frighten all those who waver. The effect of the terror on the party itself, of course, a different one. At such times it is very difficult to increase the membership, but the individual members will become more steeled. It is at such times that the party as a whole gets its education for the work of the revolution.

Defeats for revolutionary parties in elections are nothing new. The Bolsheviks in Russia suffered such setbacks, so did the C.P.'s of Bulgaria and Poland. Part of the loss of our votes can be attributed directly to this course. Another reason is the tremendous campaign of the bourgeois parties (amongst which we always include the Social-Democratic Party) trying to work up illusions amongst the workers about the Dawes Plan.

The third reason is still to seek in the weakness of our own party. After the failure of last year, the Party lived through the most severe crisis in its history.

Besides millions of workers who left the trade unions, the Communists themselves were divided on the question whether to work within the existing unions or to form new organisations. The new Executive, elected at the Frankfurt congress and the Executive of the C.I. started at once on a big, "back to the Union" campaign amongst the members of the party. Every party member is now compelled to join the union. Those who are not members by Feb. 1st, 1925, will be expelled from the party. This work is being carried through with great energy. Nevertheless, the lost position cannot so quickly be regained, especially when there is still a certain reluctance against work in the unions among many good revolutionaries which has to be overcome.

These weaknesses are fully recognised by the Party leadership. All the efforts of the whole Party after the elections are turned towards the work in the trade unions, making the basis of this work the fight for unity, shorter hours and higher wages.

For the information of our readers we give below the figures of votes polled by our party in relation to those polled by the Social-Democratic Party. (The figures in parenthesis are those of the election on May 4th, 1924. The most important industrial districts are in capital letters.)

In Germany there are 35 electoral districts.

	Communist Votes		Socialist Votes	
1. East Prussia	80,539	(118,188)	228,244	(156,124)
2. BERLIN	214,138	(225,082)	362,377	(238,666)
3. Potsdam II.	103,429	(114,974)	239,491	(157,746)
4. " I.	109,141	(131,456)	273,346	(182,277)
5. Frankfurt a/o	36,484	(55,958)	233,203	(164,136)
6. Pommerania	52,365	(77,664)	221,514	(169,579)
7. Breslau (Silesia)	29,352	(59,594)	305,714	(234,375)
8. Lidgnitz (Silesia)	19,874	(36,560)	197,592	(167,158)
9. OPPELN (Upper Silesia)	65,746	(930,306)	36,238	(26,306)
10. Magdeburg	46,336	(88,160)	351,878	(279,674)
11. HALLE-MERSEBURG	163,193	(183,881)	134,568	(110,971)
12. THURGINGIA	145,773	(173,434)	314,864	(249,038)
13. Schleswig-Holstein	51,758	(76,985)	231,987	(187,021)
14. Weser-Ems (Bremen)	31,125	(51,277)	173,578	(137,472)
15. East Hanover	22,315	(39,864)	141,244	(107,486)
16. South Hanover	44,387	(83,218)	339,552	(304,481)
17. NORTH WESTPHALIA	68,418	(102,725)	237,366	(189,496)
18. SOUTH WESTPHALIA	155,390	(279,296)	317,410	(205,430)
19. Hessen-Nassau	63,911	(111,491)	373,692	(302,886)
20. Cologne	79,459	(128,155)	139,488	(91,785)
21. Coblenz	22,988	(33,354)	59,670	(47,652)
22. EAST DUSSELDORF	209,183	(241,254)	153,690	(110,031)
23. WEST DUSSELDORF	95,594	(142,217)	107,161	(73,184)
24. Upper Bavaria	69,192	(83,496)	205,676	(127,973)
25. Lower Bavaria	23,960	(31,786)	71,268	(41,669)
26. Franken	45,041	(67,581)	317,439	(258,175)
27. Palatinate	34,917	(49,749)	115,247	(85,756)
28. DRESDEN (Saxony)	64,682	(80,925)	371,538	(334,615)
29. LEIPZIG (Saxony)	91,041	(109,646)	258,304	(211,834)
30. CHEMNITZ (Saxony)	138,746	(182,532)	305,942	(251,335)
31. Wuerttembergia	96,167	(138,988)	240,821	(192,161)
32. Badenia	64,923	(95,564)	198,504	(142,801)
33. Hessen-Darmstadt	33,698	(57,079)	222,892	(181,364)
34. HAMBURG	90,242	(114,365)	203,353	(173,587)
35. Mecklenburg	26,378	(48,569)	147,766	(120,125)

Total vote for Reichstag :

C.P. : 2,698,033—45 seats (62).

Total vote for Prussian Diet :

C.P. : 1,752,000—47 seats. (27).

S.P. : 7,859,726—131 seats (100).

(Last election, 1920) :

S.P. : 4,522,000—116 seats. (136).

The 1920 election to the Prussian Diet was fought after the forming of the "United Com. Party," consisting of Spartakus-Bund and Left Independent Social-Democrats. Then the C.P. polled about one million votes in Prussia. This has been increased 75 per cent.; besides this our party organisation to-day is of a more efficient character.

The result shows, that in the main industrial areas, in spite of heavy losses, we are stronger or nearly as strong as the Social-Democracy. There are, however, still big masses of workers in Rhineland—Westphalia

and Silesia who give their votes to the Catholic Centre Party. Judging by the result in Westphalia we must also realise that over 100,000 workers of the heavy industries went back to the Social-Democrats.

The election proves that the C.P. has a great inner strength, that millions of workers in the most important industrial districts are for the revolution. These millions form a strong basis from which we shall continue our work of rallying the decisive forces of the Proletariat of Germany.

THE ELECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES.

With a great sweep the big capitalists mustered behind them the millions in the elections in support of their programme. Their candidate, Coolidge, on the Republican ticket, polled 13,303,118 votes, as against

7,916,172 for Davis on the Democratic ticket, and 3,847,959 for La Follett on the Progressive ticket. This gives the candidates' electoral votes as follows: Coolidge 382, Davis 136, La Follette 13. To be elected

Coolidge required 233. The Republicans have gained a solid control of the Lower House, which will be made up as follows: Republicans 246, Democrats 183, Farmer-Labourites 3, Socialists 2. In the Senate the Republican control is doubtful. They have 55 votes as against 40 for the Democrats, and 1 for the Farmer-Labourites. The Republican Senate majority is a shaky one, however, as La Follette, Norris, Brookhart, Ladd, Frazier, while nominally classed as Republicans, cannot be depended upon to support the full programme of Coolidge.

The surprise of the election was the comparatively small vote cast for La Follette. His campaign managers made the most exaggerated claims before the election. Many of his leading supporters maintained that he would be elected. Wm. H. Johnston, head of the Conference for Progressive Political Action, declared that he would poll 20,000,000 votes. The least that was expected was that he would carry enough states to give him a sufficient electoral vote to prevent Coolidge having a majority. This would have thrown the election into Congress and would have certainly defeated Coolidge. Even the big capitalist press were deluded as to La Follette's strength. Almost without exception they declared that he was the man Coolidge had to beat. But as it was, La Follette carried only his own state, Wisconsin. In the industrial east he ran third, polling on an average only 10 per cent. of the vote, as against 20 per cent. for Davis and 70 per cent. for Coolidge. In the agricultural west, however, La Follette developed greater strength. In nine of the principal Western states, he polled 34 per cent. of the total vote, as against 11 per cent. for Davis and 55 per cent. for Coolidge. The agricultural south, as usual, went solid for the Democratic candidate.

As I write the vote cast for the Workers' Party is as yet unascertainable. In all likelihood, however, it will be quite small. Various reasons contribute to this. In the first place, the masses of unskilled foreign-born workers in the basic industries, the ones to whom the Workers' Party makes its strongest appeal, are to a considerable extent without the right to vote. In addition the La Follette movement made an especial appeal to the more advanced sections

of the working class, hence it cut heavily into those elements that otherwise could have been expected to support the Workers' Party. And finally, the Workers' Party vote, as officially returned eventually, will be greatly reduced by the fact that Ku Klux Klan, Knights of Columbus, and other reactionary capitalistic elements controlling the election machinery, will not count the vote of the Communists. Even La Follette in spite of his elaborate organisation, has been robbed out of a million or more votes in this fashion. Such vote stealing is typical in American elections, and can be depended upon to operate in full force against Communists. The Central Executive Committee estimates the total national Communist vote cast to be approximately 100,000, although it is doubtful if the official reports will show more than 35,000 for presidential candidates. The Party is carrying on an elaborate investigation in its 1,400 branches to determine as closely as possible the actual vote cast.

W.Z.F.

THE CRISIS OF BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY IN ESTHONIA.

By O. R.

Bourgeois Esthonia is faced with a catastrophe, and the present rulers, after vain attempts to escape from the economic *cul de sac*, and to arrest the approaching catastrophe, are beginning to lose their heads.

At the end of 1923, scandalous revelations began to come to light as to the "Land League Party," which consists of stockbrokers with Pjats at their head, and of landowners, and, at that time, a ruling power. Speculation with forged shares of the Russian Baltic works and of the cellulose factories belonging to the industrial group of this party, and the abuse of office and of the influence of the Minister for Commerce and Industry for purposes of personal speculation exposed this minister and forced him to resign.

But all this was only a beginning. It soon transpired that the gold reserve, to the value of 15 millions, was almost entirely disposed of, as the Pjats Government had far too liberally put loans for unreliable undertakings at the disposal of its

partisans. It became evident that the loans issued had been used for purposes of speculation and by no means for the restoration of industry, which was passing through a severe crisis. The Russian Baltic works, the industrial enterprises "Ilmarine," "Dwigatelj," etc., which had received loans and subsidies to the value of millions, concerned themselves with the breaking up of machinery and the sale of old iron and spare parts of technical equipment to foreign countries, instead of with the development of production.

The flow of revenue into the treasury decreased and the reserves of gold and currencies which still remain were absorbed in covering the balance of trade. The failure of the harvest in the previous year had a devastating effect. The imports, chiefly of cereals and foodstuffs, increased. The unfavourable trade balance amounted in 1923, to 3,621,323,680 Estonian marks or 18,005,618 gold roubles. In the first half of 1924 it amounted to 4,500,000 gold roubles.

Under strong pressure on the part of the other bourgeois parties, Pjats resigned. The economic crisis which it had been possible up to then to conceal from the outside world, now became manifest to its full extent: works were closed, large undertakings ceased work for want of credit; unemployment increased, the number of unemployed exceeded 15,000, the mark showed a tendency to fall. The new Government which consisted of central parties carried on an economic policy which was no more decided than the previous one.

The Finance Minister Strandman, a member of the Labour Party, raised the import duty on cereals by 275 per cent. and on articles of necessity by 200 to 300 per cent. The prices of foodstuffs consequently rose by about 100 per cent. The next step was to cut down the number of State employees. The army of unemployed increased; discontent with the Government grew even among the petty-bourgeois officials. Then came the introduction of a stable currency, the gold Krone. The Government fixed the value of the discarded Krone so as to make one gold Krone equal 100 Estonian marks. On the Exchange, however, the gold Krone is negotiated at 115 or more. The reception of the gold Krone by the right wing of the ruling classes was one of malevolent and annihilating criticism.

All these "reconstruction measures" led to a violent fight between the ruling cliques. The measures of the Government roused protests on every side. The stoppage of loans from the Estonian Bank, as well as the demand for the payment of old debts, placed debtors in a serious position. As they had not enough Estonian marks to pay their debts, they had to exchange the foreign currencies or gold in their possession into Estonian marks, and thus contributed to the "stabilisation" of the Estonian mark at the value desired. This artificial "stabilisation" of the mark reduced many large firms to bankruptcy, and the temporary improvement of the financial position was bought with the development of a more acute and hopeless crisis.

The wages of workers and employees did not increase during this critical period; their purchasing power has, on the contrary, diminished by more than 50 per cent. as a result of the fall of the mark, and the increase in the cost of living.

SPREAD OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT.

The hopelessness of the situation and the Government's confession of bankruptcy are best seen in that it has invited a representative of the League of Nations to "investigate the economic conditions of the country."

Pjat's Party focussed its interest on France and showed great enthusiasm for an alliance of the Baltic Provinces with Poland. The other parties had no definite orientation and up to the present have not found one. The fraud of Democracy and "independence" has lost its power of attraction for the broad masses of the populace, and it is difficult to imagine that this small country, in which 80 per cent. of those who are earning their living are independent craftsmen, etc., will go on indefinitely looking for its salvation to the minute group of exploiters who, up to the present, have provided the workers merely with promises and suppression.

The Government has only one trump card left: to obtain foreign credit through the League of Nations and to sell the last remnants of the State forests. This means the annihilation of the last reserve of capital and of the foundations of the national economy. And even then the bourgeois Press declares with deep conviction that the sum which would result from the sale of the forests is a mere drop in the ocean.

The political situation is becoming complicated. The palliative measures of the present Government satisfy no one. The Right declares that "we"—i.e., the bourgeoisie—cannot overcome even a fraction of our internal difficulties unless "we" can proceed with the revision of the constitution of the country. By "internal difficulties" they, of course, understand the revolutionary workers who, regardless of reprisals, persecutions and arrests, aim with increasing boldness and obstinacy at carrying out "their revision" of the constitution. The organisation of secret Fascist troops, the supply of guns and munitions to rural "volunteers," is an open secret to everyone except the liberalising parties and the Socialists. The history of the Fascist organisations, which came to light in July, proves that the worthy members of the Labour Party and Socialists are deliberately lying when they assert that there are no Fascist organisations, that the Communists have invented the Fascists and that they are in alliance with them, etc.

The revolutionary workers understand perfectly well the hopeless situation of the bourgeoisie and know what efforts it is making to extricate itself from this situation. The increasing antagonism between the ruling classes, the general disintegration of the national economy, the thefts from the treasury, and speculations, which flourish by reason of the general ruin, are evidence which go to show better than dozens of demagogic speeches that the cause of "independence" and of exploitation is approaching its end. This is recognised not only by the workers, but also by the great masses of the poor and smaller peasantry, of the officials, of the petty bourgeois intellectuals and of the artisans. Estonia has approximately 28,000 industrial workers. The whole force of the working class lies in its alliance with the agricultural labourers, the poor and smaller peasantry and other semi-proletarian elements. The revolutionary workers have, in the course of a few years, conducted an agitation for a united front of all workers and have made efforts to get into touch with the needs and demands of the semi-proletarian elements and to persuade them to join with the working class in a fight for their common interests. The sympathies of the majority of the working population are now on the side of the working class.

The Government is getting nervous. Its members are seeking a way of escape from the situation which has arisen. And the only means which the Government discovers in such a case are repressions and persecutions of the workers and of the Labour movement. The Labour papers are exposed to seizure and suppression. Workers are being arrested almost daily. But no one can intimidate the workers, let alone undermine the revolutionary movement. Only six months ago, when the trade unions were closed and destroyed and more than 200 active functionaries were arrested, the bourgeois Press triumphed: "The Communist movement here is entirely destroyed and will not easily get on its feet again." Now, however, the revolutionary wave is rising higher than ever, there is no end to the influx of new forces and new combatants.

The most interesting fact in the development of the revolutionary movement, however, is that these new forces are recruited from the ranks of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, the teachers and the peasants. This demonstrates the shifting towards the left which is taking place in the camp of the semi-proletarian elements. This fact is described by the bourgeois Press as a "menace to democracy."

The country of the White Terror is passing through a very severe crisis which will undermine the power of democracy and will lead the working masses of the people to the last, decisive battles against the blood-guilty bourgeoisie.

THE PERSECUTION OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN BULGARIA.

The Bulgarian Trade Unions have addressed a Memorandum to all political parties and trade union organisations, to the Supreme Court of Justice, to Parliament, to all parliamentary fractions and members of parliament, and to all workers and employees, from which we give the following extract:

ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THE TRADE UNIONS.

That it is the intention of the Minister of the Interior to dissolve the trade unions is to be seen from his attitude towards them. We pub-

lish some facts which characterise the hostility and the hatred of the government against the trade unions, especially when they represent the true interests of the workers and employees. Since the 9th of July last, up to the present day, the trade unions have been deprived of the right to convene meetings. Meetings can only take place after the previous permission of the police has been obtained, and subject to their direct control. Even the participants in one of the these meetings of employees in Sofia were arrested. The records and property of the trade unions have been confiscated. The functionaries of the trade unions are arrested, interned, persecuted. Thus, for example, the secretary of the textile workers' union, H. Dantcheff, was arrested and dragged from one prison to another. After several months of imprisonment he succeeded, two months ago, in obtaining his release against a surety of 10,000 Levas. His sole crime was that, at the request of his organisation, he made a journey to Russia. In the meantime he has been again arrested without any cause whatever.

THE MISERY OF THE WORKERS.

What is the result of the government's policy towards the trade unions? The eight hour day has been abolished in 90 per cent. of the factories and workshops, wages have not been increased, on the contrary they are being reduced in spite of the daily increase of prices. Bread has risen from 3.50 Leva per kg. to 10.50 per kg. The cost of living is forty times as dear as before the war. The workers' wages, however, are only fifteen times higher than before the war. The employers are taking advantage of the enormous unemployment in order to reduce wages, lengthen the working days, to worsen the working conditions and to tread underfoot the laws for the protection of Labour. The women and children are exposed to fearful exploitation.

It is only the trade unions that can improve the conditions of the workers and employees. If this sole means which the workers have for defending their interests is taken from them, the working class will be handed over to absolute slavery and the most fearful misery.

As a result of the dissolution and persecution of trade unions, the road

for legal struggle is barred for the workers. It is ridiculous to think that if there were no trade unions the struggle between the employers and the workers would cease. On the contrary, the struggle would still be carried on by the workers with such means as would still be open to them. Without the trade unions the workers' struggles would be nothing else than a series of excesses and acts of violence.

We once again emphasise that the assertion of many official circles and government newspapers, that behind the trade unions there stood the Communist Party, is absolutely untrue. The records and the statutes of the trade unions are in the hands of the authorities. Let them bring forward a single fact or a document which will go to show that the trade unions took any part in the September revolt or in any kind of illegal work since the revolt. The 35,000 workers organised in the trade unions and the hundreds of thousands of sympathising workers and peasants—men, women and children—exhausted by exploitation, who go hungry in rags, are raising their voices in protest against the destruction of the right of combination of the working people, against the suppression of the labour press, of meetings, of wage-struggles, etc.

The trade unions address this appeal to parliament and to all political parties, to all cultural and economic organisations and to the press, and expect from the Bulgarian working class that it will adopt a plain and unequivocal attitude to the great social question; the right of combination of the workers and employees; whether the workers have a right to their trade unions which have existed for twenty-five years.

Workers and employees! Continue the struggle with still greater energy and tenacity until our rights are restored.

Sofia, 3rd, November, 1924.

For the Metal Workers' Union, N. Petroff; Tobacco Workers, G. Wangleoff; Wood Workers, G. Dodoff; Tailors, St. Maximoff; Leather Workers, M. Stajkoff; Union of Employees, G. Christoff; Union of Food Workers, M. Stephanoff; Miners' Union, M. Stojanoff.