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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Editorial :

The Comintern's Militant
Task

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The Comintern's Militant Task

IN the circumstance of a partial stabilisation of capitalism, of a temporary depression among the European proletariat in their struggle with the disloyalty and "defeatism" of part of their former leaders, the first proletarian dictatorship has accomplished a triumphant transition from the restoration to the reconstruction period—in other words, to that of the direct building of socialism. The historical significance of the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. consists in the fact that it opened the epoch of the "great weekdays" of socialism in the U.S.S.R., that it wholly and practically set to work on socialist construction. But in outstanding fashion the congress coincided also with a **turning point** in the international workers' movement. The Canton rising has shown that the great Chinese revolution is alive and developing. A new, refreshing wave of class struggles is passing across all Europe, and the European proletariat is awakening from the temporary depression into which it was plunged by the partial stabilisation. As comrade Stalin said at the congress: "From the very fact of stabilisation is born a condition of crisis in capitalism."

THIS new process is taking its own new, peculiar roads: the objective situation **still** does not present a directly revolutionary position, but for the workers' movement the most difficult stage is undoubtedly **already left behind**. But this does not mean that the tasks of the working class and its Communist advance guard have been simplified in consequence. On the contrary. The class enemy is organised as never before. The concentration of capital and the fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie have made gigantic strides forward during these latter years. The political influence of concentrated capital on the State apparatus has grown to unheard-of dimensions. Trustified capital is stubbornly and insistently advancing against the working class. This advance is being carried on in the most varied forms: by intensified methods of capitalist rationalisation, the lengthening of the working day, the lowering of wages, raising the cost of living, the denial of the right to strike, the deprivation of trade union rights, high customs duties, the growth of taxes, the intensification of the white terror, growing imperialist activity, the military encirclement of the U.S.S.R.—such are the

expressions of this advance. It goes without saying even, that trustified capital, openly attacking, seeks leading strings for the working class with a view to its disintegration from within. This is voluntarily undertaken by the social-democrats, who are carrying on a disintegrating work exceptional for its cynicism. In 1919, after the November revolution in Germany, the well-known German reactionary historian, Hans Delbrück, said that "the restoration of Germany can only be successful if the social-democratic leaders and the officers of the imperial army united for joint labour." At that time the social-democracy more than justified the hopes of German reaction and made a present to the bourgeoisie of the bloody hound, Noske. Now the affair is more subtle. The present tactic of the social-democrats calls for the greatest attention: Hilferding, the theorist leader of German social-democracy, has made in the Budget Commission a speech which in essentials is more capitalist than the speeches of the official representatives of capitalists. With unsurpassed vulgarity he extolled the "planning qualities" and "organisation" of trustified capital, its "pacifist" "democratic" character, in which exploitation, so to speak is not exploitation but a complete "pacifist inculcation of socialism. . . ." That is why comrade Bukharin emphasised the central theme of his report with such energy at the Fifteenth Congress: "Never before has the gulf between us Communists and the social-democrats been so great from top to bottom as now. . . . We must attack the social-democrats still more resolutely than ever before **along the whole line of front.**"

IN order to find the key to the struggle with social-democracy, it is necessary to turn to those changes in the structure of capitalism which are taking place on the basis of partial stabilisation, and to those inconsistencies which arise out of the very fact of stabilisation. In the December number of the journal "Kampf" (for 1927) Otto Bauer writes on what he calls the "stabilisation" disillusionments of the Bolsheviks. "Becoming more and more disillusioned (on account of the defeats in Europe in 1919, 1923-26: Ed.) the Bolsheviks are pinning all their hopes to the thesis that on the one hand capitalism will not be in a condition to overcome the crises and mass unemployment which develop from the

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moment of the stabilisation of currency, and on the other, that the growing Eastern revolution will break the great imperialist powers. During the last few years both these hopes have been shattered: the one on account of the favourable situation in Germany, as the result of which there has been an improvement of the situation throughout Europe; the other owing to events in China." We shall not stop to deal with "events" in China in view of the Canton rising (which took place almost simultaneously with the publication of the journal in question) and in view of the fact of the new mighty wave of the peasant movement. In this matter the "greatest man in the International" may reveal his "Continental limitations" and innocence. But as for the "prosperity" in Germany, which, according to Bauer, is "propping up all the capitalist stabilisation in Europe." here too we have the presence of "limitations," of course, only of another kind. Even the bourgeois economists do not dare to speak now of the prosperity of capitalist Europe. In his latest book, "Economic Life in the Epoch of Advanced Capitalism," which is the first history of contemporary capitalism, Werner Sombart writes: "Anyone who attentively follows the development since the war can have no doubt of the fact that capitalism has entered upon a period of tranquillity (an epoch of wars and revolutions, say we—Ed.). The time for bold courage has passed." But how does Otto Bauer explain the unavoidable disproportion, which exists and has a tendency to increase, between the favourable German situation and the economic position of the German proletariat? The inconsistencies—not one, but a whole series of inconsistencies—are an intrinsic, innate quality of the partial stabilisation, whatever may be the possible improvements that take place within the framework of partial stabilisation. There are above all the inconsistency between productive possibilities and the markets for disposal, the divergences among the capitalist powers as the result of the transference of the centre of economic life, contradictions between the capitalist world and the U.S.S.R. The intensified competition between countries has evoked an unprecedented intensification of concentration within each country. The successes in the realm of concentration during the first half of 1927 in Germany are exceptional. Everywhere one and the same tendency—in heavy industry, chemicals, the building industry, and so on—by means of federation to obtain a new influx of energy and motive force. Trustification is taking place in almost entire spheres of production. The Chemical Industries Company has a capital of 1.1 milliard marks. The steel trust owns two-thirds of the production of steel. Together with this is taking place a stronger concentration of the militant organisations of employers. "The Ministry of Labour Yearbook" states, concerning the industrial associations in Germany in 1926, that "the solidarity of the employers has overcome all the difficult circumstances." Against the 1,535 unions of employers there are barely two hundred workers' trade unions of all kinds, including the very smallest in numerical strength. In only the two largest employers' federations of the metal industry—out of a grand total of 72 in this industry—the number of workers employed exceeds a million, while the entire Metalworkers' trade union (the largest in the country) has a membership of 750 thousand.

IT is quite apparent how far the specific weight of all trustified capital in the State has grown. The political power of the trusts is no longer veiled. A State expression of this power was the victory of the conservative-bourgeois blocs in the largest States: Germany, France and Britain. It is a characteristic fact that the largest anti-strike union of employers—the "Deutsche Streik Schütz E.V." in 1926 introduced a new clause into its constitution providing for the compensation of members of the union in the event of general and political strikes. Thus the process of coalescence with the State apparatus, the process of trustification of the State, is taking place on an enormous scale, and this in reality expresses a tendency towards State capitalism.

On the other hand we have the development—in much smaller dimensions—of the formal elements of State capitalism (the statification and municipalisation of enterprises). The newspaper "Frankfurter Zeitung" has published a thorough investigation of this form of enterprise in Germany ("Wirtschaftskurse der Fr. Z." Nos. 1 and 2). It appears that public institutions have had the greatest success in the production of electrical energy: in 1913 they supplied 23.6 per cent. of all the production of electrical energy, in 1920 32.1 per cent.; in 1925 76.8 per cent. They had no less success in the sphere of the aluminium industry—74 per cent. in 1925. In other spheres of industry the successes were very moderate: only in the coal industry was there an increase from 6.9 per cent. in 1913 to 10.1 per cent. in 1925, and in the ore industry from 10.6 per cent. to 18.8 per cent. In total the share capital of the large State enterprises does not exceed 170 million marks, and the number of workers engaged in them is sixty thousand. But even these small achievements on the part of the State and the municipalities evoke ruthless attacks from the employers, who see in them a damage to their own private enterprise interests. At the last congress of employers at Frankfurt very severe language was used against "cold" socialisation, although, of course, the State and municipal enterprises in capitalist Germany have nothing in common with real socialisation.

None the less it is necessary to note the specific character of these spheres of industry, which is reminiscent of wartime State capitalism. Aluminium plays essentially the same role as transport, the telegraph, etc. In other words, we have here a manifestation of the inconsistencies of stabilisation, the contradiction between States in hitherto unprecedented preparation for war.

It is true there are a number of other States (Austria, Italy, Japan) where the tendencies of State capitalism are expressed still more sharply—in every country according to its own pattern—although it would be the greatest of errors to proclaim already the present phase of development as the "era of State capitalism." But the presence of these tendencies has enormous significance, in so far as it places the proletariat in opposition to the united forces of the bourgeoisie.

THE governing factor in the present-day international situation is the extraordinary intensification of the class struggle on the basis of this very development of the internal contradictions of stabilisation. This movement to the left is taking place in the most varied forms. The growth of sympathy for the U.S.S.R., the electoral successes of the Communists in

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Germany, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, the economic conflicts renewed during the past year in large numbers, the remarkable wave of demonstrations in favour of Sacco and Vanzetti, which flowed over all Europe, and finally the rising of the Viennese proletariat in July of last year, which was the clearest expression of the intensification of class contradictions which has occurred. A movement in the correlation of forces of the working class and the employers is clearly to be felt. Almost everywhere is taking place the break-up of yellow and Fascist trade unions under conditions of secret voting in the election of factory committees. The most remarkable phenomenon in this regard is the fact that a simultaneous growth of social-democracy and of the revolutionary wing is taking place. An analysis of this phenomenon is extraordinarily instructive. It should indicate just what social strata are filling the ranks of social-democracy and what changes this in turn causes inside bourgeois society. For us the proletarian cadres and the tempo of development of the political influence of the Communists and the social-democrats are the deciding factors.

FROM this point of view the comparison of the development of the social-democratic party and of the trade unions presents a most interesting picture. In Austria, for example, the number of members of trade unions has fallen catastrophically of recent years. In 1921 it reached the record figure of 818,000; in 1913 it was still 692,000; in 1925 621,000; in 1926 588,000; and in 1927 the figure continued to fall and the Austrian bourgeoisie even spoke of the "twilight" of the Austrian trade union movement. At the same time the Austrian social-democratic party not only did not decline in numbers, but on the contrary it grew—even after its treachery during the July Viennese rising. In Vienna alone from July to October, the social-democratic party grew by 16,000 members. It is obvious that here we have a growth purely at the cost of the petty bourgeoisie, and not of the proletariat. It was not for nothing that at the last congress of Austrian social-democracy Renner spoke of the necessity to turn not only to the workers, but also to the peasantry, to the petty bourgeoisie, the shopkeepers and similar elements of the terrified petty bourgeois class, who are torn between opposition to monopolistic capitalism and fear of the proletarian revolution.

In Germany the number of members of the free trade unions is now some 300,000 less than in 1925, and less than half that of 1922 to 1923. The number of members of free trade unions has almost entirely ceased growing. In 1925 the number was 4.58 million, and in July 1927 4.14 million. At the same time during the last year the social-democratic party has grown from 806 thousand to 823 thousand.

Still more noteworthy in this regard were the recent municipal elections in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia. It must not be forgotten that the elections in Germany took place in circumstances of acute economic situation and nine months after the coming to power of a reactionary bloc. None the less the elections yielded brilliant results both for Communists and for social-democrats. The elections in Hamburg were most significant. Here the Communists achieved the highest figure that they have had since the time of the revolution, during the

elections to the Reichstag in May, 1924: 110,339 votes against the 114,365 of that time. In comparison with the last elections which had taken place, i.e., the presidential elections in 1925, the number of Communist votes increased by 43 thousand, or by two-thirds. The number of social-democrat votes is now 257,000 against the 214 thousand of that time. Thus we have not simply a simultaneous growth of Communists and social-democrats, but, what is the decisive factor—the tempo of increase in Communist votes greatly exceeds the tempo of increase in the case of the social-democrats. While during the presidential election there were 32 Communist for every hundred social-democrat votes, now the percentage has increased to 44.5 per cent.

On the other hand, the municipal elections revealed both in Hamburg and in Bremen and Altona that in the proletarian districts the Communist Party gained from 100 to 150 per cent. of votes. The increase of social-democratic votes took place mainly at the expense of the bourgeois parties, who lost their semi-proletarian and petty bourgeois elements, which revolted against the policy of the bourgeois bloc. It is characteristic that among the proletarian votes won by the social-democrats in Hamburg, the chief place is occupied by the votes of workers in the State and communal enterprises.

THE same picture was observable during the recent municipal elections in Czecho-Slovakia. In Prague the number of Communist votes rose from 66.7 thousand in 1925 to 70.6 thousand, while those cast for the social-democrats rose from 41.8 thousand to 47.6 thousand. The petty bourgeois Czech national democratic Party (Dr. Kramarsh) suffered greatly, losing approximately as many votes as the social-democrats won.

Finally, the elections to factory committees and the strikes reveal an extraordinarily symptomatic picture of the return to the trade unions and to the class workers' movement on the part of those proletarians who left their class even for the Fascist ranks during the period of greatest depression. In Moravian Ostrava in Czecho-Slovakia, where about two years ago the miners suffered a heavy defeat and where afterward the Fascist trade unions were greatly strengthened, the workers are now abandoning the latter en masse. In the elections to the factory committees in a number of factories (Tinetch, Bitkoviner and others) where the employers had gathered a special force of workers and with the aid of the corrupted elements of the factory committees had driven out the "unreliable elements," under conditions of secret elections to the factory committees the revolutionary trade unions obtained the great majority of votes. Experience of the reformist policy of the arbitration courts in Germany, which at present are actually a repetition of the celebrated business partnerships, has convinced the workers that the proletariat have nothing to hope for in the shape of positive results from the arbitration courts. At the same time the reformists assured the workers that it was very difficult to carry on a strike struggle at the present time, owing to the large number of unorganised workers. Their tactics consisted in causing conflicts with the employers in order to increase their own prestige in the eyes of the working masses and then, carrying this conflict to the arbitration court, they there betrayed the further struggle. Meantime the greatest strike which occurred in Europe during

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1927, the strike of workers in the German brown coal region, revealed the active and hundred per cent. participation of the unorganised and yellow workers, and also of the overwhelming majority of members of the Fascist unions. Neither the Government, nor the employers, nor the trade union leaders believed that the struggle would take place, but it did. Moreover, after the strike a large number of the workers who had previously left the trade unions returned to them.

Thus we see how this process of development of the class struggle and the leftward tendency of the working class is going on. It would, of course, be a hasty generalisation to presume that the social-democrats are growing exclusively at the expense of the petty bourgeoisie. Not a few workers are still even now going into the ranks of the social-democratic party. But as a whole the social analysis of the growth in the Communist Party and of social-democracy speaks of a favourable conjuncture for the revolutionary advance guard of the proletariat both in the sense of its composition and in the sense of the tempo of its growth.

IN this struggle for political influence with the masses and for the leadership of the class struggle, the Communist advance guard clashes in the first place against social-democracy. In connection with the trustification of capital, which urgently raises the question of the struggle for power, on the one hand, and on the other in connection with the general leftward movement of the working class and the open preparations for war against the U.S.S.R., we observe the process of a universal rightward movement of social-democracy. We see how inside social-democracy itself the extreme right wing is taking the upper hand, while before it capitulate not only the so-called "left-wingers," but the centre also. In Austria we have the defeat of Otto Bauer at the last congress of the Austrian social-democracy and his capitulation to Renner. In Germany we have the final treachery of Hilferding and Crispian to the social-democratic centre and the dictatorship of Wels and Hermann Muller in the social-democratic party. Dittman could declare with absolute justice that the opposition consists of a dozen young editors and teachers. Finally, in Britain the last congress of the Labour Party at Blackpool as well as the trade union congress marked a sharp turn to the right of the upper ranks of the British working class movement: the break with the Anglo-Russian Committee was to have the effect of acquitting them of the accusation of association with Bolshevism; the slogan of the capital levy has been expunged from the electoral platform.

Together with this is being created the finished theory of "developed" economic democracy, which in actuality signifies the complete capitulation to bourgeois ideology. At the Kiel Party Congress of the German social-democracy, in his lecture on "The Tasks of Social-Democracy in the Republic," Hilferding gave approximately the following "objective" thesis: "The direction of the modern enterprise is a social task. For us the determining factor is that we are at the present time in such a period of capitalism when the era of free competition is overcome, when from the free play of forces we pass to organised economy. Technically, together with electricity and steam, synthetic chemistry is mov-

ing forward to the foremost place. It is rendering capitalist economy independent of the problem of raw materials, in so far as out of non-organic substances, which are found in mass quantities everywhere, it is working up the necessary raw materials. There is no place for war over the sources of oil. The basis of capitalist industry is being changed at a colossal tempo. Hence the pacifist and revolutionising significance of concentration. 'Organised' capitalism is not true capitalism, but a substitution for the capitalistic principle. It replaces free competition by the principle of 'plan' by social regulation."

IN these reflections the class character of the capitalistic trustification is completely eliminated. There is organised economy in general and democracy in general, by means of which the working class is "democratising" the State. The means for this is the factory committee—the "constitutional factory," and the wage agreement (in place of the class struggle) which, according to Renner's supplementary statement, represents the process of "socialisation" of wages. In this theoretical structure there is nothing whatever to differentiate these "Marxists" from the acknowledged authority of bourgeois anti-Marxist economic science, Werner Sombart, who recently in the trade union journal "Gewerkschaftarchiv" wrote: "We are gradually becoming accustomed to the thought that the difference between stabilised and regulated capitalism and technicalised and rationalised socialism is not after all so very great, and that it is a matter of comparative indifference for the destiny of humanity and its culture whether economy wears capitalistic or socialistic forms."

After that, is it surprising that the reformist trade unions are refusing to wage a strike struggle, while the trade union theorists are inventing new theories as to the danger of and lack of necessity for strikes? In connection with the rise of the workers' movement in Germany, the A.D.G.B. (General Federation of German Trade Unions) has worked out a "programme of action." It is characteristic that this programme is addressed not to the proletariat but to the bourgeoisie. In the opinion of the German "Vorwaerts," this programme contains the "demand for a State and national economic sense." Meantime, there is not a word in this programme of the attack of trustified capital on the working class. Instead the A.D.G.B. openly supports the capitalists, declaring for the "development of productive forces in German economy," i.e., for the strengthening of the hegemony of the trusts. "Every undermining of confidence in the social and private economy of Germany means an undermining of the favourable situation." This programme is the programme of the future coalition government and it is pervaded with the spirit of service to trustified capital. Even the slogan of a "united State," which is the demand of trustified capital for the end of its own imperialist policy, is caught up by the leaders of social-democracy and of the A.D.G.B. With this goes the disgraceful use of the name of Lassalle as a cloak, by setting up the "State-thinking" Lassalle in opposition to the "State-hostile" Marx. Thus, in the words of comrade Bukharin, "we have a capitalistic practical and a capitalistic theoretical prospectus supplied by the social democrats." A resolution of the last Viennese Congress of Austro-Marxists "does not desire any kind of civil war. Social-democrats

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wish to obtain their ends by democratic methods; only in one sole case will they resort to arms—if reaction attempts to destroy the democratic republic or to deprive the workers of the rights granted to them by the democratic republic.”

For the purpose of obtaining a perfect characterisation of the physiognomy of contemporary social-democracy the statistics appertaining to age of membership presented to the last Kiel Party Congress of the German social-democracy are of exceptional interest. In all the social-democratic party of Germany the number of members aged below 33 years composes only 17 per cent. of the total; the overwhelming majority is composed of people over forty years old. In certain districts, for example in the district of Hanover-Bremen, the youth up to twenty years form 1.7 per cent. of the party composition, those from 21 to 25 years 6 per cent., while those from 46 to 55 compose 28 per cent., and older than 55 14.3 per cent.

THE exceptional tempo of concentration of capital and the new disposition of social forces dictates to the Communist International the adaptation of the tactics of the Communist Party to the changed conditions. The question of what this leftward process represents is of radical importance in the given case. Is it a new revolutionary rise or the last fight of a declining movement? Is it an advance guard or a rearguard struggle? Unquestionably the social-democratic parties have grown in the first case as an opposition against the conservative-bourgeois bloc; while the influence of the Communist Party is growing both by reason of the rightward movement of social-democracy and by the growth of the socialist construction in the U.S.S.R., and chiefly out of the contradictions of partial stabilisation. In the article above-mentioned, Otto Bauer emphasises with satisfaction that the new rise does not bear a revolutionary character. “It is a question,” he writes, “only of this or that reform, of this or that section of power within capitalism.” Of course, no one will stop to maintain that at the present moment we are living through a directly revolutionary period. But there can be no doubt that these symptoms are not the vestiges of defensive struggles against attacking capital, but an advance guard fight, connoting that the worst period of depression is already behind us. “Despite pacifist illusions, idylls and deceptions from the social-democrats, within the womb of capitalist society conflicts of monstrous, enormous, tremendous force are maturing.” (Bukharin.)

THIS process raises directly before the Communist International problems of tactics, of skilful direction, and the exploitation of the approaching period of class struggles, and especially of the first period of the rising wave. Against the slogan of “economic democracy” we must counterpose every-day economic and political slogans, the putting into operation of which would bring with it the inevitable break-up of the economic and political might of the trusts, and the unsettling of capitalistic stabilisation. In this connection, as earlier so now the central slogan of our party is the united front. But the changed social situation necessitates essential corrections not along the line of general

policy, but along the line of direction of this slogan. In so far as we have a strong rightward movement of the upper ranks of social-democracy, all the weight of the struggle for the united front must be transferred below, in which the attack against the social-democratic leaders must be carried on with double and triple energy. The new application of the tactic of the united front must be expressed in a change of our electoral tactic in the sense of rejecting compromises with the Labour Party in Britain, with the radical bourgeoisie in France, and so on. Not always does our party understand the seriousness and the importance of intensifying the struggle against social-democracy at the present moment, and not infrequently this results in big opportunistic mistakes. The difficulty of struggle with social-democracy is further increased by the fact that social-democratic agents are still found in our ranks. On the other hand, during the last municipal elections, in Czecho-Slovakia, for example, the central organ of the Czech Communist Party, “Rude Pravo,” deducing a leftward movement of the petty bourgeoisie—their transference from the national-democrats to social-democracy, welcomed this transfer and “promised” the social-democrats support in the matter of consolidating the petty bourgeoisie behind them. An analogical error was made also in Czecho-Slovakia during the re-election of the factory committees, when in the face of two lists in a factory—one of the revolutionary and one of the reformist unions—Communists, members of the revolutionary unions, voted not for the Communists, but for the reformist list. The Unitary Confederation du Travail in France also applied an incorrect tactic of the united front last year.

A classic example of unprincipled opportunism was supplied by the recently organised right opposition in Czecho-Slovakia (Hula, Skala and Co.) who, it is to the point to mention, united with the Trotskyist opposition of the C.P.S.U. In the journal “Viestnik,” published by this group, the number for October 25th, 1927, we read: “The split in the workers’ camp cannot be overcome in the last resort in any other fashion than by way of a prolonged and honest joint labour.” This “united front” however, deviates greatly from the “united front of Communists with social-patriots and traitors” preached by Ilek and Co. It is, of course, not surprising that this opposition demands that the committees of unity which have existed for about two years in the factories of Czecho-Slovakia on the initiative of the Communists, should be “independent” of the party.

In connection with the attack on the trade unions and the inculcating of the social-democrats in “economic democracy,” the fighting slogan is the freedom of strikes against the imposition of the capitalist arbitral awards. Unquestionably in the immediately forthcoming period the questions of strike strategy will take on a dominating significance in the class struggle. Basing their position on the development of concentration of capital, which on the purely economic ground throws the trade unions into an attitude of defence, and also on the basis of the growing complexity of the character of the present-day strike struggle, the reformists, under the pretence of a preliminary accumulation of forces and of large funds, have in actuality disowned the strike struggle altogether. On the other hand, strikes take on a political complexion when the broad masses are attracted into them and thus the economic might of capital is

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undermined. The strike in the brown coal area of Central Germany did not grow into a political strike because it was not successful in embracing the electro-technical and chemical industry—that citadel of trustified capital. Only in such a case could the strike be lifted to a higher stage.

FINALLY, it is necessary to emphasise the opportunist danger of certain formally radical tactical slogans. Such are the slogans of workers' control and nationalisation under the capitalist State. Both workers' control and nationalisation are questions associated with the question of State power. They can and should arise in an epoch providing a direct revolutionary prospect. Any other situation would in essentials reflect the reformist ideology of the growth of socialism in capitalism.

Thus, if we consider the general tactical conclusions arising out of the analysis of the present period of the international workers' movement, we are bound to say: the work of the Communist International must be built on a strict accountancy basis and on the practical direction of the growing economic struggle of the proletariat, on a skilful association of these every-day questions with the great political tasks of struggle against the domination of the trusts and of the reactionary bourgeois bloc, on the transference of the unity tactic below, on fixing the attention of the working class on the danger of war against the U.S.S.R., and finally, on the struggle in intensified fashion against the social-democratic deceptions of "economic democracy." The actual and militant task of the Communist advance guard of the proletarian revolution is that of removing from the ranks of the working class the capitalistic advance guard wearing the mask of international social-democracy.

Historical Significance of the Canton Rising

A. Lominadze

ALL the information which has reached us so far concerning events in Canton have as their source only the communications of correspondents of the international bourgeois press and the imperialist agents of Reuter etc. These communications are "made" in the Pacific Ocean citadel of British imperialism, in Hongkong. It goes without saying that it is impossible to depend on the accuracy and disinterestedness of information coming from such an envenomed slanderous source. We are still far from knowing all the truth about the Canton rising. But with what an impression of greatness that truth must be stamped, since even now, through all the lies and insinuations of the bourgeois press the rising of the Canton workers emerges in such an heroic light and in such grand outlines! The Canton rising is the first big independent action of the Canton workers in the struggle for political power. The Canton workers struggled not in a bloc with the "national" bourgeoisie, but in an alliance with the peasantry and the poor of the city against the bourgeois and landowning reaction. In this struggle the Chinese proletariat now emerges in the role of leader and director of all the oppressed classes of China. The Canton rising was carried out not under the banner of the Kuomintang, but against the Kuomintang and under the banner of the Soviets. The political position of the Chinese proletariat in December is incomparably more solid, the proletariat itself is much more matured in the revolutionary sense, than in March of last year. This is borne out by the gigantic dimensions of the Canton rising. And though the Canton workers were not able to consolidate the revolutionary position, though the revolutionary government of the Soviets in Canton lasted a still shorter period than the government of the revolutionary Kuomintang in Shanghai in its time, the causes of this lie not in the political, but in the military and technical weakness of the Chinese working class; not in the hopelessness of its alliance with the peasantry and the city outcasts, but in the fact that the bourgeois-

militarist reaction with its preponderance of military forces flung itself on insurrectionary Canton before the peasantry could succeed in rising to answer the call of insurrection. The December rising in Canton excels the March demonstration of the Shanghai workers in its historical significance to the extent that the Chinese proletariat has advanced in its revolutionary development during this period.

A comparison of the Canton rising with the July rising in Vienna unquestionably demands more caution in view of the enormous difference in the whole situation between Central Europe and China. But none the less this comparison is invited just because of the contrast in the character and conditions of the development of the workers' movement in Austria and China, not to speak of the obligation on Marxism to regard both these events as parts of a single process of international revolution. The Viennese rising revealed all the rottenness and hopelessness of capitalist stabilisation in Europe. Therein consists its enormous historic and international significance. But from this point of view the Canton rising has no less significance. With the voice of cannon and shot it proclaimed to all the world the truth concerning the indestructible force of the Chinese revolution. For the Canton rising occurred after a triple defeat of the Chinese revolution (in Shanghai, in Wuhan, and around Swatow). For the revolutionary overthrow was carried out in the capital of the Kwangtung province, in which during the last eight months a most ferocious and bloody persecution has been waged against the working class and the peasantry. In this gigantic force of the revolutionary movement of the Chinese workers and peasants is contained a tremendous threat to all the world imperialism, and in the first place to British imperialism. If even Kuomintang revolutionary Canton could in its day strike such blows at British imperialism that its might in the east was seriously shaken, the rise of the workers' and peasants' revolution in southern China brings with it a much

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more terrible danger to the colonial dominion of Britain and other imperialist countries. This circumstance attaches a highly important international significance to the events in Canton.

Vienna and Canton

But if we compare the type of the workers' risings in Vienna in July and in Canton in December last year, we must come to the conclusion that the Canton rising belongs to a much higher form of revolutionary class struggle than the demonstration of the Viennese proletariat. The rising in Vienna was an elemental, unorganised outburst of indignation, which had grown among the masses of the working class; by no one was it appointed and prepared; it did not set itself the conscious task of overthrowing the bourgeois government and the achievement of proletarian dictatorship; it did not succeed in growing to the extent of raising the slogan of Soviets; it was a gigantic explosion, swiftly dying away within a few days. The Communists self-denyingly fought in the front ranks on the streets of Vienna, but it was not they who led the elements, but the revolutionary elements which led them. Quite otherwise was the position in Canton. The Canton rising was prepared (politically, organisationally and technically) and carried out by the Chinese Communist Party. It pursued the conscious aim of dominating the bourgeois landowner reaction and the conquest of workers' and peasants' government. It began under the banner of the Soviets. It based itself on the elemental rise of the revolutionary movement of the worker and peasant masses, but it was organised. The conjunction of the elemental and the conscious—this it is that compels us to allocate the Canton rising to the higher forms of the proletariat's class struggle. And finally, in distinction from the Viennese rising, the rising in Canton is not a swiftly passing explosion, but the signal and beginning of a new rise in the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people. This last thesis may easily arouse doubts among those who do not see the distinguishing peculiar features of the Chinese revolution, those who do not take into account its singularities. Actually, if one comes to the Canton rising with a conventional measure, one has to draw the conclusion that following on the destruction of revolutionary Canton should succeed a long period of depression in the workers' and peasants' movement of China, as has always happened after serious defeats of the revolution in other countries. But from this point of view it is not possible to explain the very fact of insurrection in Canton. For the Canton rising broke out almost immediately following the heaviest defeats of the Chinese revolution. True the savage orgy of white terror now raging in Canton exceeds in its dimensions and ruthlessness all that the Chinese workers' and peasants' movement has ever had to experience before. But it must not be forgotten that after the perfidy of Chiang Kai Shek and the leaders of the Kuomintang in Wuhan the persecution of the revolutionary masses was also no joke. One can give some idea of its dimensions by the figures ascertained by I.C.W.P.A. of 29,000 workers and peasants killed during five months (from April to August) in only five provinces (including Kwantung). The counter-revolutionary coup in Shanghai and Wuhan, the dispersal of

the armies of Ho Lung and Yeh Ting, the defeat of a number of peasant risings—all this gave more than one cause for international social-democracy and the mourners of the Trotskyist opposition to declare the Chinese revolution finished (Otto Bauer's "1849") or broken for a long period. How else if not as a mere coup must the Canton rising be regarded by social-democrats or persons holding the view that the Chinese Communist Party would "go easily into Wang Ching Wei's side-pocket"? But even in the ranks of Communists comrades are to be found disposed to draw the conclusion that "it was not necessary to resort to arms." Victors are never condemned, but a rising which suffered such a serious lack of success involuntarily forces many to raise the question: but was a rising in Canton at the present moment expedient, was it not premature, would it not have been more correct for the Communists to occupy themselves with the preparation and collection of forces for a more serious attack? We consider it necessary to answer these questions with all clarity. It is necessary to do so because the answer to these questions should simultaneously elucidate a number of other more important problems: i.e., through what stage is the Chinese revolution passing at the present time and what should be the tactics of the Chinese Communists.

Was it a "Putsch"?

What reason is there for regarding the Canton rising as a coup? The fact that the revolutionary overthrow was not successful, that the insurgent worker Communists were destroyed within forty-eight hours? But if we are to judge only by this symptom, then one can declare all unsuccessful risings to be coups and adventures, and there have been not a few such in the history of the revolutionary struggle of the international proletariat. The Moscow armed insurrection of 1905 lasted only a few days altogether and then was suppressed. The same can be said of the Hamburg rising of 1923. But Bolshevism never condemned the Moscow and Hamburg risings, never declared them to be coups. On the contrary, Bolshevism always regarded both these risings as typical examples of the proletariat's revolutionary tactics. It is obvious that it is not permissible to draw conclusions as to the adventurist character of the rising itself, merely from the one fact of the defeat of the rising, no matter how great that defeat may be.

Were Conditions Ripe?

Were the objective prerequisites of an armed attack in Canton present? This question must necessarily be

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WORKERS' LIFE

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Significance of Canton—continued

answered resolutely in the affirmative. The general situation in China bears an exceptionally tense, directly revolutionary character. No one can dispute that. The general crisis in China (both the economic and political and military crises in the country's international situation) has reached the extreme limits of severity. How did Lenin define a revolutionary situation? "The impossibility of the ruling classes retaining their domination in an unchanged form; one or another crisis at the top, a crisis in the policy of the ruling classes, causing a fissure into which burst the dissatisfaction and indignation of the oppressed classes. To ensure an advance of revolution it is usually insufficient that the lower orders do not wish to, it is also necessary that the upper orders cannot go on living in the old fashion." History has not known a clearer illustration of these words than the contemporary situation in China. On the ruins of the ancient Chinese despotism, on the fragments of the Asiatic-feudal State system, new local "formations of governments," inimical to one another, devouring one another, arise and perish with kaleidoscopic rapidity. The bourgeois militarist reaction in the southern part of China was not only unable to arrest or restrain this process of disintegration and wrecking of the old social system, it even speeded up its tempo. The intensifying crisis among the bourgeois-landowner "upper orders" of China finds its expression in the unbroken internecine wars of various militarist groupings. The whole of southern China is in the grip of these generals' wars at the present moment. And into this "fissure" has burst the indignation of the oppressed classes in the form of an endless series of peasants' risings in the provinces and the attempt at a revolutionary overthrow in Canton itself.

Lenin's second symptom of a revolutionary situation: "a more than usual increase in the severity of the need and poverty of the oppressed classes," does not call for special elucidation to meet the case of China. We all know the extraordinarily low level of life, or rather of slow death, to which the working class, the peasantry and the town destitute class of China are condemned beneath the oppression of foreign capital and under the domination of the landowners, the militarists and the "national" bourgeoisie. And finally, the third symptom of a revolutionary situation: "a large increase . . . in the activity of the masses, who in the peaceful epoch calmly allow themselves to be despoiled, but in stormy times are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis, and by the upper orders themselves into an independent historic attack," finds its expression in the continually increasing insurrectionary movement of the peasants and in the violent growth of the strike and political struggle of the town proletariat. This is true both in regard to all China, and in particular in regard to the Kwantung province. In this province the elemental revolutionary movement of the masses has grown with especial strength of recent months. In September the whole of the north-west of Kwantung was embraced by a gigantic blaze of peasant war. The revolutionary army of Ho Lung and Yeh Ting went to meet the peasant rising. As we know, it was broken up below Swatow (the causes of its defeat, which deserve special attention, lie mainly in the opportunistic errors of the Communists at the head of the army). Nor did the insurgent

peasantry succeed in gaining a big victory. But the revolutionary movement of the peasantry was by no means completely broken up. Of Ho Lung's and Yeh Ting's army two divisions were preserved and renamed the first and second workers-peasants' divisions. Around these revolutionary sections the peasants' movement again began to gather. Towards the beginning of December the second workers'-peasants' division, operating in the district of Hai-sin and Lu-fing, held eight counties. In these counties a Soviet Government was established—for the first time during the revolution in China. The area of the peasant rising swiftly extended. During the last few days the telegraph has brought information of the seizure of a number of towns and county centres by the peasants. And at the same time to the south (on the island of Hainan) and to the west of Canton the government of the militarists has of recent months held on only in the towns. In the villages all the power is in the hands of the revolutionary divisions and the peasants' unions. In October a wave of workers' movement rose in Canton itself in response to the peasants' rising. On the 14th December the revolutionary sailors' union seized the building of the yellow trade union. The mercenary leaders of the yellow trade unions were executed by the workers in the street. In the steps of the sailors followed other revolutionary unions. For five days the class unions were masters of the situation in Canton. They won summary recognition of the legality and established themselves in their old quarters. Gigantic workers' demonstrations were held in the town. At the demonstrations the Kuomintang banners were destroyed and the workers marched through the streets of Canton under Soviet banners and the Red Army star. Li Chai Sung quickly succeeded in driving the revolutionary unions back underground. But the workers' movement continued as active as before. On October 7th all the printing workers in Canton went on strike—an incident which occurred on the Tenth Anniversary of October only in China, only in Canton. After Chang Fat Kwai's overthrow of Li Chai Sung and seizure of power, the workers' life in Canton began to beat at a specially violent tempo. Summary meetings and demonstrations were being arranged continuously, directed against both Li Chai Sung and Chang Fat Kwai. The latter's coquetting with the workers met with splendid revolutionary resistance. After his error in counting on the support of the workers Chang Fat Kwai turned to bloody repression. This caused the Canton workers' cup of endurance to overflow. The masses were itching for the fight, the masses raised the question of revolt. In these circumstances the Chinese Communist Party organised armed insurrection in Canton.

There can be no question whatever that the moment of revolt in Canton coincided with the highest point of the rise both of the workers' and of the peasants' movement throughout the Kwantung province. Not only that, but it coincided with an extreme intensification of the crisis among the "upper orders"; only a few days before the rising Chang Fat Kwai had had to remove a large part of his soldiers from Canton in order to organise resistance to Li Chai Sung's divisions which were marching on the town. The few regiments of Chang Fat Kwai left in Canton were to a large extent "disorganised" by Communist activity, which had been carried on in their ranks over several months. There

Significance of Canton—continued

was a full guarantee that some of these regiments would come out on the side of the insurgent workers. It was impossible to await a more favourable moment for armed insurrection. The Communists absolutely correctly estimated the decisive moment for striking a blow at the antagonist.

The Revolutionary Spirit of the Chinese Workers

Such were the objective pre-requisites of the Canton rising. But we know that objective pre-requisites alone are insufficient for assuring victory to the revolution; it is also indispensable that there should be present "the capability of the revolutionary class for revolutionary mass action sufficiently powerful to break the old government, which never, not even in the period of crises, falls if it be not thrown down." (Lenin.) And what was the position in regard to this factor of insurrection in Canton? Of the capability of the Chinese proletariat "for revolutionary mass action" hardly any except incorrigible Mensheviks can doubt. Nor can there be any doubt that the Canton rising based itself directly on a rise of the mass movement and was an attack of the masses themselves. The whole problem consists in whether the advance guard of the Chinese proletariat—the Communist Party—was capable of organising, heading, and triumphantly effecting a revolutionary overthrow. We know the gigantic load of Menshevik errors in the past with which the Chinese Communist Party came to the Canton rising. But within a short time the Party was able to correct and overcome those errors. The best test of this is the line which the Party has been following of recent months in the same province of Kwantung. After the defeat of Ho Lung's and Yeh Ting's army the Communists betook themselves to revolutionary work among the peasants with doubled and tripled energy. The gigantic dimensions of the peasant movement quite recently in Kwantung is in large measure due to this work of the Chinese Communist Party, to its guiding participation in all the mass advances of the peasantry. But what of the position taken up by the Party in the day of Chang Fat Kwai's coup? It would have done honour to any large European Communist Party. The Chinese Communist Party foresaw Chang Fat Kwai's coup, had already evaluated its counter-revolutionary character and succeeded in maintaining to the end an irreconcilably hostile attitude to this "left" general. And yet Chang Fat Kwai came out under a banner and slogans which were more "radical" than the banner of Pilsudski in his time. And we can get an idea of the correct line taken up by the Chinese Communist Party even from the slogans as passed on to us by the imperialist agencies.

Justification of the Rising

Thus the combination of objective and subjective factors historically justifies the revolutionary rising in Canton and makes it absolutely in accordance with law, and even inevitable. It is just because of this that we regard it as an enormous factor in not only the Chinese, but also the international revolutionary movement, despite all the heaviness of its defeat. What are the further prospects of the revolutionary struggle in China? We have no desire whatever fatalistically to affirm that such defeats as that in Canton will not weaken the revolutionary mass movement of China in the least degree. No, the lesson conveyed by the defeat is enormous, and the healing of the bloody wounds received in Canton will occupy the Chinese workers and peasants a long time yet. But we maintain that this defeat will not arrest, or rather, cannot for any serious length of time arrest the new rise of the Chinese revolution which has begun. On what do we base this statement? Not simply on "faith" in the invincibility of the Chinese revolution, but on the circumstance that any other road except the revolutionary one would not be able to avoid or to alleviate or weaken those contradictions which brought to birth and are now nourishing the great Chinese revolution. There is no class, there is no social force in China which could direct the development of China along the way of compromise and reformism. This is excluded both by the entire international and the entire internal situation in which China exists. The Chinese "national" bourgeoisie have shown themselves to be just as incapable (if not more so) as the old ruling classes of China, of resolving the historical tasks which have arisen before this great country. It is too immature, too weak, to do so.

A New Stage

The victory of the bourgeois-capitalist reaction in Canton cannot interrupt or arrest the revolutionary development of China just because reaction increases and develops to the extreme degree of intensification those contradictions which are causing the breakdown of the present-day economic system of China. All talk of the possibility of a "Prussian" or "Stolypin" road of development in China at the present time is based upon an absolutely superficial attitude, on fictitious analogies, and is radically off the track politically. The difficulties are great, but the workers' and peasants' revolution will succeed in overcoming them. China is entering upon a period of development and intensification of extremely ruthless civil war. Ahead lie fresh gigantic struggles and conflicts. The Canton rising is only the beginning of a new stage.



The Problem of the Reliable Army

L. Alfred

THE problem of the reliable army has, since the world war of 1914-18, come more and more into the forefront in the military policy of the capitalist countries, and the question of reliability has become decisive in the solution of the army problem.

The last imperialist war led to powerful revolutionary uprisings within the armed forces of most of the imperialist Powers. The collapse of the Russian Tsarist army and of the German and Austrian forces, is still fresh in our memory. In the spring of 1917 there was also in the French army a broad movement of rebellion which extended throughout the whole army, and which the French army leaders could quell only with the greatest trouble and by extremely barbarous measures.

The history of the years since the war is the history of most intensely bitter class struggle, of armed uprisings—victorious or bloodily massacred—of great revolutionary movements in the colonies, of armed intervention and systematic preparation of a great war against the first Workers' State, the Soviet Union. All these events completely justify the assumption that in a future war, particularly if it were concerned with an imperialist war against the Soviet Union, such revolutionary risings within the masses of the army will be more probable than formerly.

The capitalist governments have made a similar estimation of the position, and therefore in their military policy, which, because of their experiences in recent years, they seek to obscure by secrecy, they are all coming to the practical conclusion that it is more than ever before necessary to be armed against the "internal enemy," and against other revolutionary factors; for that purpose it is before all necessary to create at any cost a reliable army.

In many countries an attempt to solve the question of a trustworthy army has been made by founding *voluntary, armed fighting organisations of the bourgeoisie*. The Fascist Militia in Italy, the "Protection Corps" in Finland, and the "Home Army" recently formed in Austria are types of such organisations. The German Fascist organisations also belong to this group (Steel Helmets, Weirwolves, etc.), although, at least officially, they are not armed.

The purpose of these organisations is in most cases quite openly announced to be the maintenance and protection of the existing, that is, the capitalist order of society. Because of that they are, directly or indirectly, in contact with the organs of the State power. Thus, for example, the Italian Fascist Militia and the Protection Corps in Finland are officially sections of the armed forces of those countries. They are financed and armed by the State, and their officers are in the pay of the Government.

* * * * *

Besides these armed class forces of the bourgeoisie, *the paid armies, the professional armies*, are coming more and more into favour with the capitalist States in their efforts to secure reliable armies.

These are not new phenomena. On the contrary, they are much older than armies recruited by general conscription which took the place of the old mercenary armies of feudalism with the advent of capitalism. Before the world war there were mercenary armies in a few capitalist countries, a fact which can be explained by reference to the particular conditions of those countries (*e.g.*, England). But after the world war some countries which previously had conscripted armies, began to form mercenary armies, and this tendency to changes from armies based on a general obligation to serve *back* to the professional army is becoming more and more apparent. Germany, Austria and a few other countries which before the war had purely conscripted armies, have now purely professional armies. France is about to create its professional army. In a few other countries measures have been taken which, more or less clearly, show the same tendency.

The Reichswehr and its Organisation

The origin of the German Reichswehr, that typical mercenary army, is sufficient to elucidate the meaning of this tendency towards the creation of mercenary armies. The Reichswehr came into existence in the revolutionary period of 1918-20, and arose from the immediate needs of the counter-revolution in the civil war against the revolutionary working class. It was formed originally from the revolutionary body which was created and led by the monarchist officers for the purpose of destroying the revolutionary movement, and which later was commissioned by the Ebert-Noske Government with the task of massacring the German revolution.

In this connection it is interesting to note that these counter-revolutionary officers, in organising their voluntary corps, were guided by the principle "Rather fewer but thoroughly reliable, men than many bad ones." (General Maerker in his book, "From the Imperial Army to the Reichswehr.") In those circumstances such a principle is perfectly correct from the counter-revolutionary point of view. In suppressing a mass rebellion the counter-revolution always has weakly-organised fighting forces to combat, or else rebellious sections of the regular army which are in a state of disintegration, that is, they have, from the military point of view, an inferior enemy. If well organised troops can be placed in the field against such an opponent, they have, with a firm leadership, though relatively few in numbers, an incomparably better chance of suppressing the mass movement than a much greater army which is exposed to the danger of disintegration.

Although mercenary armies after the war arose first of all in the defeated countries, and were to some extent forced on them by the victors, it cannot be maintained that the introduction of the mercenary armies were *in themselves* a disadvantage to the possessing classes in those countries. On the contrary, the victors were themselves interested in protecting capitalism in the defeated countries from the "internal enemy," the proletariat

The Reliable Army—continued

revolution. And such organisations as the German Reichswehr are admirably adapted to that purpose. The disadvantage, as far as the ruling bourgeoisie in the defeated countries is concerned, does not consist in the introduction of mercenary armies, but in the decisions of the Peace Treaty, according to which it is intended to make the establishment, formation and arming of large forces impossible for the defeated countries.

The French Army

The victorious countries, too, are pursuing the course of creating mercenary armies. The new French army reform affords a good example of this, showing at the same time the contradictions in which capitalist governments are involved in their military policy. On one hand the conduct of modern warfare demands the complete utilisation of all sources of help, even of the entire population of a country. Paul Boncour's proposals for the "armed nation" satisfy this requirement, envisaging as they do the militarisation of the whole population, including women and children. On the other hand, however, the problem of the reliable army has in recent years become particularly acute in France. To solve that problem the French Government is proposing a thorough reorganisation of the army in its "Painlevé Bill." According to this the character of the French army will be radically changed. It will be mainly a mercenary, a professional army, while up to the present it has been an army based on the general obligation to serve. The effective strength of the army is to be about 600,000 or 700,000, of whom, however, only slightly more than 200,000 will be recruits called up annually;

the remainder, that is, about two-thirds of the whole, will be a professional army.

A professional army is an expensive institution. That the reliability of the army has become the decisive factor for the French imperialists in their military policy is shown among other things by the fact that they intend creating this professional army partly at the expense of military preparation for the masses of the population. They find themselves compelled to shorten the period of service from eighteen months to twelve, and to reduce the number of the army units. These are measures which in themselves will deeply aggravate the difficulties of preparing and mobilising a large army, but they will effect savings which will reduce the cost of maintaining the expensive professional army, an army which it is thought will be reliable in any circumstances.

No doubt the capitalists of all countries would like their paid guards to be as strong as possible, but not all States can afford such an expensive affair as that planned by the French Government. But the same tendency to increase the number of paid professional soldiers within armies recruited by general conscription in order to create within those armies at least some strong cadres of reliable persons, can be observed in many countries.

Efforts are made to have the N.C.O. corps and particular sections of the troops (e.g., the flying squads) which are more deeply concerned by the question of reliability, composed exclusively if possible of professional soldiers.

* * * * *

Even the Second International now finds itself compelled to discuss the problem of the professional army. In its business for the meeting of September, 1927, the

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The Reliable Army—continued

Bureau dealt thoroughly with the question: "Popular or Professional Army." Since the beginning of the last world war the social democrats of the different countries have justified and supported in every way the militarism of their own bourgeoisie. And of course they have supported them on this question also. The German and Austrian Social-Democrats—whose countries have mercenary forces—defended the professional army on the ground that it meant freedom for the broad masses of the population from the burden of compulsory service. The French, on the other hand, defended the law introduced by their Party comrade, Paul Boncour, a law which allows the French imperialists to militarise the entire population without respect to age or sex.

The Bureau of the Second International naturally came to no decision on the matter. It merely agreed to examine the question further. It is not necessary to be a prophet to be able to foresee that the Second International will not come to any other decision than that of defending and justifying the military systems of each capitalist "fatherland." The agreement to "investigate" the question expresses the desire to lay aside, to hush up, and to forget the whole matter.

It does not occur to the imperialist lackeys of the Second International to put the question on a Marxist basis. Such a formulation of the problem would mean in the present situation that it would have to be considered not only from the standpoint of the class struggle within the capitalist countries, but also from the point of view of the struggle for freedom on the part of oppressed peoples and of defence of the first proletarian State. If the question is considered in such a manner a perfectly definite position with regard to it can and must be taken up. It is not difficult to see that in the creation of professional armies we are dealing with dangerous measures which are openly reactionary and directed against any and every revolutionary movement. In forming mercenary armies the world reaction hopes to be able to create a blind and flexible tool, estranged and isolated from the working-class masses and insured against the danger of "revolutionary infection." The world reaction needs such mercenaries in its fight against the revolutionary working class, and for its expeditions against the colonial and other oppressed peoples. And finally the world reaction sees that in an imperialist war against the first Workers' State, the armies recruited from conscripted working and peasant masses will not be sufficiently reliable, and that in such circumstances it will be more advantageous to make use of the mercenaries.

Selection of "Reliable" Personnel

In order to ensure the reliability of the professional army, great attention is devoted in most countries to the selection of persons. They are recruited from those consciously or unconsciously reactionary elements, which best correspond to the interests of reaction. A "fatherland," that is, a reactionary cast of mind, is essential for acceptance in the German Reichswehr. Members are drawn mainly from the monarchist "front fighters" organisations. The percentage of workers in the Reichswehr is very small. In other countries the professional soldiers are to a large extent drawn from among declassed elements, even common criminals.

Since the tendency is to found mercenary armies and armed voluntary fighting organisations of the bourgeoisie, as well as all the other measures described above, which are taken by capitalist governments in their efforts to create a reliable army of an openly reactionary, counter-revolutionary and dangerous character, this tendency must be combatted by the class-conscious proletariat by every means at its disposal. It must try to prevent the carrying out of such reactionary "reforms." If this is not successful, work must be carried on to make even these mercenary soldiers, however carefully they are chosen, and whatever desperate measures the capitalist governments may take to isolate them from the working masses, not so blind and obtuse, not so inimical to the working class and the revolutionary peoples, as their masters would wish them to be. Work in this direction is difficult, but possible, if one sets about it practically, concretely and energetically.

* * * * *

The Communist Attitude

What is the position of the Communists with regard to the question put above, "Popular or Professional Army?" Are we, after a decisive rejection of the professional army, in favour of the popular or national army, as the army based on general conscription is also occasionally called?

If it is known that in a bourgeois State every army, whether professional or so-called popular, is a means of oppression in the hands of the ruling bourgeoisie, it is quite clear without further discussion that we cannot have as our slogan "an army based on general obligation to serve." We are against any form of military organisation in capitalist States. But in spite of that it is in practice not unimportant to distinguish between the various forms, and to lay it down that, in comparison with a conscripted army, a professional army is much more dangerous for the working class.

In opposition to the thesis maintained above on the comparative danger of professional armies as an openly reactionary phenomenon, it may be brought forward that the example of the *Austrian Confederate army* disproves such a generalisation. It may be said that the Austrian army—which is also a purely mercenary army—is not at all reactionary in its composition; not a reactionary, but a republican outlook is required as a condition of acceptance in the army. The great majority of its members are Social-Democrats; the army is relatively little isolated from the working masses, has the political franchise, and can accordingly take part in political life; it is organised in trade unions, and even Communists can work in the army, etc.

It is true that the Austrian army in many respects is an original phenomenon, a fact which can be directly attributed to specific, purely Austrian conditions, an analysis of which would carry us too far here. Nor is that necessary. It is sufficient to state the fact that even for the Austrian bourgeoisie the problem of a reliable army has recently become a most acute one, particularly after the events of July; and that it is at present working feverishly in this direction. Besides the creation of the "Home Army," that armed fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie, the Austrian bourgeoisie has begun a systematic struggle to make the army non-political, that is, to isolate the soldiers from the working class and from political life, and to cleanse the army from its undesirable

The Reliable Army—continued

elements. The German "Military Weekly" (11-11-27) announces with great satisfaction that the policy of making the army non-political has recently made great progress in Austria. In the army elections of 1927, the Government so managed it that the great majority of the elected persons came from the consciously reactionary and bourgeois elements, while formerly the majority were Social-Democrats. The government achieved this result by a special election strategy, by peculiar vanishing tricks, and at the same time by all sorts of terroristic and bribery measures. Such a measure was the transference of large numbers of superannuated soldiers to civilian positions, while the prospect of unemployment by dismissal was placed before the less reliable ones. All that shows that on this question Austria is no exception to the general rule.

In his works Marx constantly developed that thought of genius which Lenin formulated with extraordinary clarity in his article, "The Lessons of the Moscow Rebellion," as follows: "The revolution pro-

gresses as it creates a firm and united counter-revolution, *i.e.*, as it compels the enemy to use even more extreme methods of defence, and in this manner develops more powerful means of attack."

The correctness of this statement in relation to the efforts of the capitalist governments to obtain a reliable army is indeed striking. For what are such measures as the arming of the bourgeoisie in the form of separate, purely class armies, the creation of mercenary armies, wherever possible from reactionary and apathetic "lumpen" proletarian elements; what are these but the desperate measures to create a "firm and united counter-revolution"? Such a concentration of the forces of the counter-revolution is, historically speaking, an expression of the weakness, a characteristic phenomenon of capitalism in its period of decline. For the same reason it gives no cause for pessimism. But in the present phase of the practical struggle it is a serious and a dangerous phenomenon which must be considered and combated. The practical methods of fighting it must be sought and found.

There is a counter-manœuvre for every manœuvre.

Geneva

A. Lunacharsky

THE nightmare of war has left deep scars on the memory of all working humanity. It is true that even the fundamental antagonist to the imperialist war—the proletariat, proved to be not so class conscious and organised as to ensure that that war was really the "last." In one of his articles Vladimir Ilyitch writes that possibly yet another convulsive slaughter is necessary in order to make the world proletariat understand the absolute necessity of uniting all its efforts and putting an end to the bestial regime, now threatening man with destruction, as quickly as possible.

If anti-militarism, even among the proletarian masses, has not proved to be sufficiently powerful to tear out imperialism by the roots, this is of course still truer in regard to all the varieties of petty bourgeois pacifism. The pacifists would doubtless screech like jackdaws if war were again to break out, and would fuss around, wringing their hands and weeping, and certain of them would again say that this time the war was absolutely just and absolutely final, the real, true "last war." To expect weak-charactered European and American pacifism to be able actually to stop the military machine is as absurd as to expect a May breeze to stop a flying express.

None the less the bourgeoisie cannot entirely leave out of account, not the organised, so much as the instinctive, pacifism of large sections of the population.

If this atmosphere of fear of the possibility of fresh wars, the painful memories of the recent sufferings, the shame arising from the disillusionment which the lying promises of the Entente, Wilson and others brought with them, had not existed, then neither the League of Nations, nor the Geneva Protocol, nor the proposed con-

ference on disarmament, nor its preparatory commission and similar phenomena would have come into being.

The bourgeois governments of the largest countries are by no means inclined towards pacifism, they fully understand that there is no other way out for capitalism except by the redistribution of the earth by wars. When capitalism is sick, when it is in a decline, it resorts to the sword, so as brigand fashion to cut itself off a piece of the earthly globe and with blood to restore its own failing health. When it is well, ruddy-cheeked, full-blooded, it begins to get restless about an insufficiency of raw materials for its fully-developed production, about the inadequacy of the markets for disposal of its goods, and it sees itself compelled to fight with its neighbours for the extension of spheres of influence in accordance with the new growth of strength. Militarism is in the blood of capitalism and is an inseparable part of it. In Moscow there is a tiger which has been taught to eat porridge, but it is impossible to teach capitalism—it will always feed on human flesh.

Of course, the capitalists would not be short of professors and poets to sing the resounding praises of war as the tutor of humanity and an arena of heroism, and in a defening chorus to extol the virtues and the beauty of warring humanity. However, these voices are now few and far between. Governing capital did not wave its baton in the direction of a sounding brazen trumpet ready to break into paeons of praise to the man-beast. On the contrary, it relies on the very tenderest of flutes, on the singing violins and velvety violoncellos of pacifism and with their aid drags out a long, slightly mournful and exceedingly tedious melody.

The ancient proverb has it: "Hypocrisy is the tribute paid by vice to virtue."

Geneva—continued

In the given instance we have before us all three: vice, in the form of the full-blown, unfettered capitalism of various countries, continually baring its aggressive fangs: virtue in the form of the meagre and anæmic virgin, pacifism, always ready to sigh or faint, but at the same time fond of casting her eyes to heaven and ready to talk of anything in high and melodious accents; and hypocrisy, which it is easy to imagine in the form of a sly, meek-looking young man, with an excellent knowledge of which side his bread is buttered, but clever enough to hide the crocodilian physiognomy of his master vice, with honeyed looks and treacley pronouncements on the endeavour of the powers that be to establish universal prosperity on the earth.

Bourgeois vice knows full well what services the Genevan cunning hypocrite renders him. If this were suddenly unveiled and unmasked, vice itself would be unmasked, and that would be very unpleasant for him. "Public opinion" with its consumptive virtue seems hardly worthy of attention, and yet even the untrammelled governments of bourgeois States have to take it into account.

"Public Opinion"

"Public opinion" is easily changed; to-day it is the above-described virgin, but to-morrow it may be transformed into a dangerous Valkyrie, who will leave not one stone lying upon another of the prison of lies built for her by the lords of the situation. In actuality, in opposition to the bourgeois "public opinion" is set the public opinion of the working class, the public opinion of broad masses of the peasant underdogs, and there are times when the attack coming thence, from the left, suddenly animates the crumbling masses of the petty bourgeoisie, and consolidates it like a living periphery around the revolutionary centre. And then—beware!

At the moment this is not so, but still capitalism understands full well that it has to struggle with communism for the social opinion of the groups between the capitalists and the proletariat. It understands full well that these are inclined either in the direction of the capitalist or in that of the proletarian-communist centre. It understands that many still remain neutral or even strive in its direction only because it hides its essential being behind the Genevan lackey. Naked capitalism with the fatal stigma on its forehead, foretelling an inevitable bloodshed unprecedented in its horror, may with its deformity aid tremendously in the polarisation of social opinion and a flow of forces to the communist flank.

It goes without saying that capitalism, paying its tribute to virtue in the work of Genevan hypocrisy (a most suitable and hypocritical town for hypocritical counterfeit peacemaking!) does not stand on ceremony at all in its work.

Beneath the din of talks about peace the capitalist countries are arming themselves. The melancholy Lord Cecil, the Hamlet of pacifism, speaking of the last session of Geneva, pointed to the fact that it began simultaneously with Coolidge's bombshell declaration on the forthcoming swift increase of the fleet and of aviation in the United States. It is an indisputable fact that the states of Europe are at the present time spending altogether not less than two thousand million dollars per annum on armaments.

Armaments Competition

In the memorandum which was handed in by the Soviet delegation during the preparatory commission and which will shortly be published we show that the present-day armaments exceed those which existed before the imperialist war. It is true the president of the preparatory commission Loudon declared that certain countries challenged the figures cited by us.

Challenge it or not, the fact remains that a keen competition in armaments is being carried on, a fact which is clear even to the short-sighted.

How does the matter stand with the Genevan kitchen of peace-making counterfeiter?

When after the last war Germany was compelled to disarm, the victors, as is well known, gave their promise that other countries would also proceed to disarmament within a short space of time, and that in the forthcoming millenium all disputes would be settled by arbitration.

The question of the importance of the Geneva protocol has now become transparently clear.

At one of the first sessions of the committee for security, the British representative, Lord Cushendun, flatly declared that this question was like the snow of yester-year, that he would not allow the French to draw Britain into any kind of disarmament on the basis of that scrap of paper.

Britain considers that altogether she has already sufficiently disarmed. There was nothing startlingly novel in Lord Cushendun's declaration.

But that does not mean that Britain has abandoned the "business of disarmament."

The knight of the dolorous countenance, Lord Cecil, nobly retired and gave up the game because he understood Britain's unwillingness to take even the least step in regard to a real disarmament of herself, and also understood the idea behind her further actions, directed exclusively to the purpose of weakening France. But the attempt at joint labour continues. The fruits of the love between the inconsistent interests of the militarist hazard and pacifist hypocrisy proved to be the so-called project for a convention. This is startling by its clumsiness and lack of vitality. To begin with, this convention is not a convention at all, in it not one vital figure appears which would affect the future armaments of individual countries, and the whole of it consists only of an index, in other words, a nomenclature of the questions which have to be answered in order to define the amount of armaments decently appropriate to each power. And even this ludicrous, meaningless document caused so much dissension that in actuality it does not contain one vital passage, one agreed point, saving a few trivial phrases.

It is clear that a second edition of this "convention" would be an idle waste of time.

Consequently the French thought of a way round the difficulty. The author of the new project to set up a Committee of Security was the representative of France, Paul Boncour. At first sight it is rather a naive plan, for it appears to be a simple and quite transparent bit of jugglery to cover up the fact that further conversations on disarmament are only a means of marking time. But in my view it is not at all so. According to the task entrusted to it by the Council of the League of Nations, the committee for security has to establish,

Geneva—continued

to construct a whole series of mutual pacts of non-aggression, an entire network of reciprocal diplomatic obligations which are to safeguard the security of every country. "First security, then disarmament," proclaims Paul Boncour.

Paul Boncour is a great rhetorician, and his person and manner present a blend of the clever and self-confident lawyer, an unctuous and effective catholic preacher, and a well-trained actor. Some people greatly like his nightingale style of speaking and his plastic declamation, others snort: "Whom is Boncour trying to take in with his airs and graces?"; still others, more naive, say frankly: "Boncour listens to himself like the bird in the fairy tale, which, 'when it began to sing, forgot even itself.'" Boncour supplies, so to speak, an artistic note in the extremely dry work of Genevan diplomacy.

The French Plan

However, all these views of Paul Boncour are quite naive. Paul Boncour, still an official socialist even today, is really a very clever figure, excellently carrying out the business of his career and the task entrusted to him by the French bourgeoisie.

The committee for security is not in the least a roundabout road, a labyrinth of complicated corridors, into which it is desired to allure the delegations of various States, so that they will not be able to find their way out even to that hopeless spot on their road at which they were before they entered the labyrinth of "security."

That is not at all the position. I am confident that Paul Boncour considers that the committee for security supplies a superlative opportunity for France to push forward the task of organising a Continental bloc. Before Boncour's eyes hovers a vision of an all-European Locarno without the participation of Britain, and yet under the patronage of America. An enticing idea, granting France the possibility of playing a great role, which will deal a heavy blow at her rival, Britain.

The vision hovers before Paul Boncour of either compelling Britain to sign agreements which will bind her hand and foot or compelling her to stand aside and thus isolating her, and an isolation which this time will be far from "splendid." Viewed from the point of view of this line of policy, France's interest in securing the participation of the U.S.S.R. in the Genevan business and in particular in the committee for security becomes especially clear.

What Continental bloc could there be without the Soviet Union? And what "all-European Locarno" could there be without an "eastern Locarno"? What form of masked, yet none the less decisive union of forces against Britain could there be without Britain's chief antagonist—the U.S.S.R.? But, of course, the advocates of this line could not openly express such arguments in favour of the U.S.S.R.'s participation in the Genevan diplomatic chess tournament, they only said that in general the absence of the great eastern power holds up the whole business of disarmament.

Cool Welcome to Russia

And so we appeared. Apparently we brought very little joy to the artists of the Genevan diplomatic stage.

If things had gone according to British prompting, we should either have been deprived under some pretext or other of the possibility of reading our declaration, which has echoed throughout the world, or it would have been passed by as if it were an act of insanity, it would have been certified as a foreign body which had penetrated the organism.

The speech in which Paul Boncour criticised our resolute, categorical declaration, indicating to the travellers who voluntarily had got off the road the direct and true way to the end which they asserted to be theirs, has to be judged not merely from the aspect of an attempt to counter our arguments by certain critical observations, and not merely as the gentle preparation of a hostile act—the act, dangerous in face of public opinion, of setting aside our revolution.

Paul Boncour himself, who at the end of the first session declared that he would not speak on our declaration and made a speech at the beginning of the second session, explained his action as due to considerations of courtesy. It was necessary, he said, to explain to our new colleagues why their proposals were unacceptable to us. But Paul Boncour explained nothing. His arguments were extremely weak because strong arguments against our declaration do not exist at all. For when they talk of the utopianism of complete disarmament it is because of the fact that all the powers are egotistic, sanguinary, and endeavour rapaciously to exploit each others' weakness, and consequently it is ludicrous to talk of their agreeing to allow their own teeth to be pulled out and their own claws to be cut. But, of course, this cannot be said aloud, for in the ends of hypocrisy it is necessary on the contrary to show that all the powers think only of giving up their teeth and claws. And then it becomes very difficult to find an answer to the first proposal of "Well, come on then, my friends!"

What were Paul Boncour's objections? First that the proposal was too simple; if it were so easy to establish peace on the earth it would have been established long since, because all humanity has always desired this. Secondly, if all countries were to disarm all the same some of them would be left strong and others weak. If a strong neighbour wishes to injure a weaker, he will arm in a moment and injure him.

In my reply I pointed out the weakness of these, the only two arguments Paul Boncour could produce.

Humanity always desired peace? Yes, but did ever humanity, i.e., the colossal labouring majority, determine its own fate? Was not that fate determined by the warring and covetous ruling classes? And only now, for the first time in the history of humanity, has the demand for peace been formulated by representatives of a power where the workers rule. And this opens the way for new hopes.

And disarmed powers also can fight, and the strong will conquer the weak; but surely that does not mean that disarmament will set up worse conditions than exist at present, and meantime states will not have to expend huge sums on armaments.

Some strong power may suddenly break its obligations and fling itself on its weak neighbour. But then surely the obligation of all the other powers to bring the delinquent back to the legal sphere will come into operation. If any power suddenly arms itself again to attack its neighbour, then all the world will take arms against it.

If everyone is going to start with the idea of the

Geneva—continued

possibility of breaking the agreement, then, of course, there is no earthly reason why any power should subscribe to it.

In the conditions of an entire absence of armaments a combination of all the other States in the world will in any case prove to be stronger than any individual power which thinks of a hasty armament.

But we need not flatter ourselves and think that the meaning of Paul Boncour's speech consisted merely in this its decorative aspect, in an attempt at a courteous and skilful answer to our arguments, in order that we should not be able to suggest that the commission made no answer to our proposals either out of confusion or from an indecent unwillingness to talk with representatives of a workers' government. No, that was not the point; the cause lay in Paul Boncour's desire as the representative of France to throw a kind of bridge across to us.

Boncour Plays to Gallery

In his next speech at the last session he theatrically extended his hand towards the U.S.S.R. delegation and pathetically exclaimed: "I implore you, our Russian colleagues, to regard us with more confidence and to take a real part in our attempts to arrive at disarmament." For the public, for the gallery, this was very affecting. Paul Boncour, you see, was trying the last resource—namely, the committee for security. He was imploring the Soviet delegation, which could play such an eminent role in this direction, to try out this last hope together with them, for any swifter road had already been offered and rejected. But for those who are capable of detecting the political meaning of such acts, it was clear that there was something else in the wind. What was really occurring was a proposal to the U.S.S.R. to enter by means of the Genevan apparatus (preparatory commissions, committees of security, and so on) into the combination of a diplomatic game of the powers among themselves. That is why, after the conversations with Briand, of which only those contents became known which Briand himself told the journalists, the rumour arose of a fresh rapprochement between France and the U.S.S.R. That also is why the German press (quite unnecessarily, for that matter) began somewhat touchily to declare that the Franco-Soviet rapprochement in preparation would safeguard good German-Soviet relations to a certain extent. And that is why Sir Austen Chamberlain himself began to talk of the value of the U.S.S.R.'s participation in the Genevan labours, and in answer to a question in the House as to their attitude to the Russian proposals, the British Government stated that they were studying the question. And that is why, when some beefsteak hardface in the House addressed a request to the Government to confirm the scurrilous nonsense of a whole series of right newspapers to the effect that if the Soviet Government were not to depend on bayonets it would not outlast a single day, the Speaker ruled the question out of order, stating that it raised matters of dispute. Give a little attention to the tone which is to be detected in all these statements. It witnesses to the fact that at the present moment the U.S.S.R. has gained enormously in the sense of its European importance. It was desired in the

first place to force the U.S.S.R. to stop shouting too loudly of peace, to prevent her from thrusting her head out of the window on a crowded square, and to keep her at the green table of diplomacy; and secondly it was desired to draw the U.S.S.R. into the complicated combination of a large card party. Then there was a remarkable pricking up of ears!

"Oh! the devil!" said the journalists of the right flank and the centre to themselves, "why they're still carrying on conversations with those people! What are they talking about, against whom and in favour of whom are they talking? The U.S.S.R. delegation has arrived at Geneva and somehow or other has entered into one of the central labours of world diplomacy. Won't somebody avail himself of this, won't some form of Continental agreement against Britain be arranged? How will the neighbour, the U.S.S.R. combine with Poland, Germany, France?"

It was necessary to be amiable.

Certain newspapers welcomed our appearance not only with hostility (it goes without saying that the attitude of part of the press remained hostile to the end) but even with some scurrility. The swine had poked his snout among gentlemen. With what servile rapture the emigré press, for instance, piped that such noble gentlemen as Briand and Chamberlain would never stop to talk with the Soviet "rabble." Gradually eyes were opened in astonishment all around us. The press began to understand that all the concert had thoroughly realised that a great power had appeared, on whose further conduct much depended.

Aims of U.S.S.R.

Is it necessary to repeat here what ends the diplomacy of the U.S.S.R., which is the direct expression of the basic principles of our State and of the Communist Party, set itself? There is, of course, no necessity to repeat them. But there are two roads to the realisation of those ends: the road of proud isolation and propaganda from our own platform, and another road—the road of exploiting all the discord ruling among the bourgeois states, the road of exploiting the great platforms erected by those bourgeois states themselves (out of hypocrisy or for other reasons) with their enormous loud-speakers for the purpose of the same propaganda.

On us lies the obligation to maintain peace generally, the obligation of defending ourselves diplomatically from a possible intervention, the obligation to expose all the secret moves of bourgeois policy in order thus to render it difficult for that policy to achieve its rapacious objects. These obligations cannot be fulfilled by way of a somewhat simple-minded frankness. We must thoroughly follow all that takes place in the camp of the antagonists. The U.S.S.R. is not at all that "blessed man who walketh not to the council of the ungodly." We have been and shall again go to that council. We exploit its inconsistencies, we elucidate and publish its secret purposes. And at the same time we avoid giving any justification for representing us as strangers, who have cut themselves off from all the rest of the world, mechanically locked up by themselves.

No, we are a part of the modern world, of modern civilisation, of modern Europe. It is true that our part is not in the least like all the other parts, but it is a real part, which takes a very real participation in all,

Geneva—continued

even secondary, even petty affairs, yet undeviatingly exploiting them all for following our own line. We must explain to the proletariat, must explain even to the petty bourgeois public opinion the true position of things, must render it difficult for the bourgeoisie to crush the proletarian revolution under some specious pretence; must encourage in all ways the growth of the world proletariat, first of all preserving the independence and the possibility of peaceful labour in the one workers' power—in our Union.

Our Genevan experience has shown that our appearance in the arena of diplomatic labours, our open participation in its chief problems, is from all points of view extraordinarily valuable to us. Here is to some extent repeated that which we have in the sphere of parliamentarism or the trade unions. How easily the words burst from our Communist mouths: "Down with the bourgeois parliament, with the talkative compromisers, the deception of the people! Down with the yellow trade unions, the organised betrayers of the interests of the working class to the employers!" But Lenin's wisdom cautioned us: In this evil-smelling den of diplomatic intrigues and discourses you, Communists, must appropriate one of the very biggest platforms for yourselves. You must there also carry on, and at times very subtly carry on a certain part of our general policy, not, of

course, for one minute forgetting its connection with our general tasks and not in the least being infected with parliamentary cretinism. You must enter the trade unions. You must hang on to the doorpost if they wish to throw you out. For it is from within that you will best be able to unmask the lemon-yellow and orange coloured social-traitors, because it is from within that you will most easily win over the mass, still only mistily realising the truth.

It is not difficult to make corresponding deductions in regard to conferences of the type of the conference for disarmament now being prepared, or said to be in course of preparation. Entry into the League of Nations itself is another matter. Such an entry imposes the obligation to submit to the majority of votes, it allows the possibility of drawing around us a fine noose of diplomatic artful devices, it would render it easier to deceive public opinion in regard to us for the purpose of justify some form or other of intervention. In no circumstances of course shall we put our feet in the jaws of that trap. So also we entered the committee for security not as members, but only as observers. The advantage of such a position is obvious. When going "to the council of the ungodly," it is still, of course, necessary to be careful, but to go to such councils is indisputable. And Soviet diplomacy must be not a "blessed man," but a "wise man."

'Where Ignorance is Bliss . . .'

The old tag applies most truly to a recent much-advertised book entitled *Communism*, written by Professor Laski, a notorious Fabian. Evidently the learned Professor thought it 'folly to be wise' when dealing with the Communist movement. Militant workers will think otherwise. They will read the masterly and convincing study written by Ralph Fox as 'a Reply to H. J. Laski.' Bound in a striking coloured cover, 1/- (postage 1½d.)



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Developments in the Political Situation in India

G. A. K. Luhani

1. The Process of Relative "De-Colonisation."

AS a result of the operation of world economic forces since the conclusion of the last imperialist war, profound changes were initiated in the relations between the subject countries of the East and the imperialist powers. These initial changes may now be described as having reached the stage of adult maturity, and as beginning to function as autonomous factors in the world situation. In any case, they have gained enormously in sharpness of outline and lend themselves at the present moment to a precise formulation in terms of practical politics.

We have to note one set of these changes in the case of the relations between England and the colony of India. These changes cumulatively constitute a big factor in the present international situation, though they have not had the advertisement which similar developments in China have had by reason of a nation-wide revolution.

Two Factors of Change

There are two factors to be noted as operating these changes, namely, the decline of capitalism in England and the development of capitalism in India. The capitalist decline in England is a process induced, first, by organic defects and accelerated secondly by external factors among which the capitalist development of India plays, till now, a very minor role. On the other hand, capitalism in India, once started as a historical process in the evolution of productive forces, finds in the simultaneous process of capitalist decline in England at once a stimulus and a terrain for further development.

It is to be noted that the processes in England and India are parallel and counteracting. The result of their parallelism and counteraction is a third and distinct process, namely, the relative "de-colonisation" of India. It is a new and startling phenomenon in the history of colonial countries. Its implications must be thoroughly grasped for an objective appreciation of that radical redistribution of revolutionary forces which strikes the eye as the most far-reaching of transformations that have taken place in India in recent years.

It is necessary to emphasise that the "de-colonisation" of India is primarily the function of the decline of capitalism in England; it is only secondarily the function of the development of capitalism in India. The process in which India is shedding the hitherto-accepted characteristics of a colony has been induced by the weakness of British imperialism and not by the strength of the Indian bourgeoisie. Though, by now, the Indian bourgeoisie has become quite strong, and its position relative to the imperial authority becomes visibly stronger, as the present political struggle proceeds. But the fact of the initial momentum towards "de-colonisation" having come from the British process of capitalist decline, has an important bearing. It explains much

that is otherwise inexplicable in the recent rapid rise of the Indian bourgeoisie. It explains the persistently non-revolutionary character of the struggle by which that rise has been registered as a political fact.

The period is long past when India was, for the purposes of British capitalism, merely a reservoir of raw materials and a dumping-ground for the products of British industry. That was the period of classical colonisation which now survives only in the more backward African and Asiatic possessions of England and France. It was succeeded in India by the period of export of finance capital from England to assist in the realisation of the official policy (projected in 1916) of British imperialism to industrialise India.

We are, at the present moment, witnessing the change from the period of export of finance capital to a new period. In this new period, finance capital is still being exported, but its export is being increasingly subjected to the restrictive and competitive influence of other powerful factors. These latter are operating in the direction of progressively weakening the grip of British capitalism on the economy of India and thus laying the economic foundation of what we term the "de-colonising" process.

The Three Phases

A study of the situation yields us three phases.

First, the export of finance capital from England is becoming increasingly precarious, because of the instability of its source. The export of British finance capital to India does not now proceed from the surplus of a prosperous capitalist system at home. The British capitalist system, organically affected in the basic industries, is hemmed in by powerful competition from Continental and American sources. This, by the way, found its expression in the fact that J. M. Keynes, the well-known English economist, has been asking for an official embargo on the export of capital from England.

Secondly, an increasing part of British capital invested in India is not exported from England. It is local capital accumulated by British firms operating in India, and invested by them—in denominations, not of British, but Indian, currency—in Indian enterprises. The gestation of this capital has given birth to a local British bourgeoisie, domiciled in India for commercial purposes, putting itself sometimes in opposition to finance capital of the metropolis and feeling in some cases a certain community of interests—in spite of the famous Anglo-Saxon scruple about the colour of the skin—with the Indian bourgeoisie.

Thirdly, we have to note the most important fact of the rise of a powerful native capitalist class in India and its determined and sustained attempt to secure an ever bigger and bigger partnership with exported British finance capital in the capitalist development of the productive forces of India.

Situation in India—continued

Exact and well-substantiated figures are not available to determine the economic strength of the Indian capitalist class. But we can lay our hands on some data which go to establish that this class is stronger than is generally supposed. The oldest established industry in India, namely the extensive cotton textile industry centring round Bombay, has been the main preserve of Indian owned capital. Though recently British capital is said to have made some encroachment on this field. As against this, we have to set the fact that the jute industry in Bengal (more properly, the industrial preparation of raw jute), which was formerly chiefly financed by British capital, is now carried on by Indian capital to the extent of 80 per cent. As to the general position of Indian owned capital as against British owned capital, we have the statement of a former president of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce (Sir William Carey), who maintained before the House of Commons Commerce Committee that 60 per cent. of the capital employed in India was Indian and that it had "largely" increased in proportion to the British since the war ("Manchester Guardian," 8-5-25).

The amount of British capital in India has been variously estimated at between 1,000 and 750,000,000 pounds sterling. Taking then the lower figure as representing 40 per cent. of the entire capital operating in India, we get the huge sum of 1,125 million pounds sterling as representing 60 per cent. owned by the Indian capitalist class (on the basis of the estimate of the president of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce). In the absence of more detailed data, this estimate must be accepted with some reserve. But it is evident from an accumulation of other concurrent facts that if Indian capital does not exceed British capital, it comes very near to it. What still gives the impression of the hegemony of British capital in Indian economy is that British firms have evolved and imposed a peculiar system of "managing agency" by which they continue to control industries in the financing of which they have very little or even no share.

Increased Native Capital

However, as to the greatly increased volume of mobility of capital accumulations in the hands of the Indian capitalists since the war, we have overwhelming circumstantial evidence from competent imperialist sources. The London "Economist" reports that "in addition to the reduction of India's sterling debt due to direct Government action, individual Indian investors have been reducing India's external liabilities by themselves buying back sterling loans. . . . [raised by the Government of India in London]." Commenting on this tendency on the part of Indian capital to liquidate Indian indebtedness to England, the "Times" marked "the beginning of a period when Indians will no longer bury their savings in the ground but will use them for reproductive purposes to the advantage of the world in general and India in particular." (1-3-27.) The position is not only accepted but encouraged by the imperial authorities because, as stated by the "Economist" "the result will be to release British capital now invested in India for utilisation in other countries."

We have also to register the very significant move-

ment of Indian capital to the less developed British colonies like Kenya and South Africa, where its competition has led to protracted political complications with the imperial government. In 1925, no less an authority than the Finance Minister of the Government of India said:

"It may sound fantastic . . . to talk of India not only supplying the whole of her capital requirements, but also becoming a lender of capital for the development of other countries . . . The time is not far distant when India will be doing both of these things."

"Colonial Imperialists"

What is clear from the foregoing forecast is that the imperial authorities are clearly envisaging the impending end of the period of export of finance capital to India, and, even the beginning of the period of export of capital from India to other (colonial) countries. The result of such a process in the "not far distant" time will certainly be "fantastic." It will mean, *mirabile dictu*, the imperialist debut of the "colonial" bourgeoisie of India, in, of course—as the British imperialists intend—a specific form of subordinate collaboration with British imperialism. Plainly speaking, it will mean the economic autonomy or the definite "de-colonisation" of India. Because, a country "not only supplying the whole of her capital requirements but also becoming a lender of capital to other countries" will certainly no more be a "colony" so far as the economic meaning of "colonisation" is concerned.

In the actual period, we are, it is true, as yet far from that state of affairs, and although the tendencies towards "de-colonisation" are clearly operative they do not yet command a free field for their operation. For one thing, British imperialism, with its financial, political and military apparatus, still stands in the way of the working out of underlying economic potentialities; though however, it is consciously and adroitly changing its position. It is trying to attract to its side new strata of the Indian bourgeoisie in order to strengthen its position by a policy of concessions. All the while, it is holding tenaciously to every pice of ground that it occupies, and whenever it is forced to retire from an untenable position, it does so after fighting a desperate rearguard action.

The collaboration of British and Indian capital in the proportion estimated above, is responsible for the present rapid industrialisation of India. The "International Labour Office" attached to the League of Nations considers India as one of the eight great industrial countries of the world. It laid stress on this fact by electing an Indian as the president of the "International Labour Conference" held in Geneva this year. Next to Japan, India is the greatest industrial country in the East. Since industrialisation began in India, it has gone on at a rapid sustained tempo, in spite of the obstructive exigencies of later imperialist policy to retain control of the process in its hands. The London "Economist," writing on July 9, 1927, says: "Industrial production (in India) . . . has raced ahead of local powers of consumption."

The yearly average of the consumption of coal in India during 1909-1913 was 13,148,000 tons; it reached the total of 20,220,000 in 1926. The metallurgical in-

Situation in India—continued

dustry also shows a great advance. The production of pig-iron and steel in India in 1914 was 235,000 and 67,000 tons respectively; in 1925-26, it was 900,000 and 540,000 tons respectively. In cotton textile industry, India occupies fifth place in the world. In 1914, India produced in its cotton mills 1,164.3 million yards of textiles and imported from abroad 3,197.1 million yards; in 1926-27, the local production is 2,258.7 million yards against 1,787.9 million yards of imports. The latest development of Indian capitalism is shown in the successful launching of a mercantile marine to oust British shipping from coastal traffic in the Indian ocean. Only a little while ago, a vessel of 6,000 tons, constructed for an Indian company, was launched from a shipbuilding yard in Scotland, and the launching ceremony was invested with the character of a political gesture by the participation of the ex-Swarajist president of the Indian Legislative Assembly.

The bare enumeration of certain principal features, as given above, does not exhaust the industrial developments that have taken place in India in recent years, but these are sufficient for the present article, as showing the character and tempo of industrialisation. The Indian bourgeoisie and its British senior partner represented by the imperial Government are now face to face with problems of tariffs, banking and currency, familiar in the history of modern capitalist States.

2. The Political Consequences of "De-Colonisation."

The Indian bourgeoisie has been described as having been "born and brought up in the lap of British imperialism." Before making its entry into the world in this exceptional way, it has been forced by the pressure of

historic circumstances to gestate for more than the normal period in the womb of feudal society. It still carries into its present awkward age of adolescence the marks of its birth and its pre-natal influences.

In spite of these disabilities, the political growth of the Indian bourgeoisie has been not inconsiderable. It has, of course, not yet emerged as the dominating social class, holding political control of the State in its hands in a specific form of vanishing partnership with the imperial power. That would require, among other things, a still more advanced stage of capitalist development than at present. But the bourgeoisie is in the process of evolution.

More particularly in its political aspect, the relative character of "de-colonisation" cannot be too often emphasised. The term is a misnomer, if it is taken to signify more than it is meant to signify. It is certainly not meant to signify the "de-revolutionisation" of India. It does not as certainly signify a permanent liquidation of the contradiction of interests between British imperialism and the social classes comprising the Indian population. Most emphatically, it does not signify the exclusion of India from the area of Asiatic revolution against imperialism. On the contrary, it signifies an enormous intensification of the exploitation of the proletarian masses of India in the latest capitalist forms in the big urban centres, and the expropriation of the vast peasant masses in the "hinterland"; because the imperative needs of advancing capitalism are a reserve of huge, cheap and mobile labour power and vastly increased productivity of the soil through a system of modern agriculture which in its capitalist development can be erected only on the debris of the present peasant economy. Consequently, "de-colonisation" signifies a profound disturbance of the social basis of the existing

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Situation in India—continued

overwhelmingly vast majority of the 320 millions of the Indian population, and a tremendous concentration of revolutionary forces released by the colossal pressure of a double exploitation of a desperate imperialism and an advancing native capitalism.

“De-Colonisation” makes Conditions for Proletarian Revolution

The process of “de-colonisation” develops the pre-conditions of an immediate merging of the national democratic revolution into a proletarian revolution.

The political consequences of the “de-colonising” process thus resolve themselves into (a) the “de-colonisation” of a considerable section of the bourgeoisie and its withdrawal to the other side of the barricade, and (b) the transfer of the hegemony of the national revolutionary struggle to the proletariat and the oppressed peasantry.

With regard to the Indian bourgeoisie, its contradiction of interests with British imperialism is partially equilibrated for the time being, only to begin again on a new plane. How the equilibrium has been reached can be clearly seen from the details of the recent history of imperialist transactions with India. The first political concession to the Indian bourgeoisie was made under the stress of the last imperialist war, when in 1917 “the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India” was fixed as the official policy of British imperialism. This policy has as its latter-day slogan the phrase—“British Commonwealth of Nations”—a phrase very enthusiastically taken up by the prospective successors of the present Conservative Government in England, namely, the British Labourites. The policy materialised in the first Reform Act of 1919 and awaits further development at the hands of the Royal Commission* to be appointed presently under the terms of the first act.

Lord Morley, a former Secretary of State for India, had spoken of the fixed determination of British imperialism, not to allow the introduction of bourgeois democracy in India. But the apparatus of bourgeois democracy in the shape of elected legislative bodies, has been existing in India already for some time. The most important characteristics of these legislative bodies is not that they in their present form exercise very little power, but that whatever power they exercise or they may exercise, is in the hands of two per cent. of the population, in other words, of the native bourgeoisie and the landed proprietors who alone are enfranchised. The legislative apparatus with its limitations is being increasingly used, as in any other bourgeois country, to consolidate the interests of the native capitalist class, as against those of the working masses. Financial organisation of the country to correspond with the developing process of capitalism is being brought up-to-date. A Federal Reserve Bank for the issue of unified currency is being brought into existence. The demand is becoming insistent to change from a silver to a gold standard.

* The Royal Commission on Constitutional Reforms has now been appointed.

Some degree of fiscal autonomy—the most important attribute of a developing capitalist State—is already exercised, and is being pressed forward even against the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie in England.

Raising Status of India

The Indian “State”—unlike the Free State of Ireland and the Dominion of Canada—does not yet exercise the privilege of diplomatic representation abroad. But India already became through an official representative, a signatory of the Treaty of Versailles and it is represented at the meetings of the League of Nations through its own representatives—though nominated by and under the control of the imperial Government. The Indian Chambers of Commerce have demanded Indian consular representatives in foreign countries. This year a significant concession has been made by the imperial government in sanctioning the appointment of an Indian diplomatic representative to the Dominion government of South Africa. The subordinate position assigned to India at the Imperial Conference held last year in London did not thus correspond with the reality of the economic strength of the Indian bourgeoisie, though it reproduced exactly the state of its political subjection.

A very eloquent commentary on the process of “de-colonisation” is furnished by the recent action of the representatives of British capital operating in India. The present capitalist development of India is the result of the operation of both Indian and British capital in a given proportion. So long as the share of Indian capitalists was a minor one and so long as they had not developed into a powerful political entity on the basis of their class interest, the representatives of British capital in India kept themselves aloof from any participation in the political struggle in India, depending for their hegemony on the security of British imperialist control.

But now the picture has changed. British imperialists, with their greater political acumen, have perhaps more clearly appreciated the fact of this change than the Indian bourgeoisie—itsself the vehicle of the change. It will be remembered that in 1924—that is, when the first Labour Government was “in office” but “not in power” in England—there appeared in London a rather sensational book called “The Lost Dominion.” The book was anonymous but internal evidence would show that the author belongs to the same circle of imperialist publicists as for example the celebrated “Augur” of the “Fortnightly Review.” The broad basis of the book was that the “dominion” of India was already as good as lost to

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Situation in India—continued

the British bourgeoisie, that circumstances had arisen in India which make the further tenure of British rule extremely precarious except on the basis of a progressive devolution of control to a specific indigenous social class. Such a thesis was symptomatic of imperialist pessimism of the period when capitalism had not yet clearly emerged from the post-war depression into its present period of more or less relative stabilisation, and when in England itself a certain panic—though exaggerated—reigned as to the future of the British Empire on account of the rise to power of the British Labourites. Since then, there has been a change in the imperialist outlook as regards India—the excessive pessimism of 1924 has been corrected. The correction has been made possible by the policy of compromise with the Indian bourgeoisie. Basing himself on that, Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, has been protesting in the House of Lords that “India is not a lost dominion.” But the very fact that a Secretary of State for India—even when he is a fundamentally vulgar demagogue like Lord Birkenhead—has to “protest too much” is an indication of the change in Indo-British relations that has been accomplished. A more balanced imperialist view of the situation is given in the latest number of the London review, the “Round Table.” In its issue of September, 1927, we read:

“The Government of India has changed almost beyond recognition . . . it will change even more in the future . . . it is not the unquestioned arbiter of the destinies of India, but has become increasingly responsive to the opinion of a certain class of the ruled. . . . **The British Government in India is abdicating its power progressively in favour of the educated middle class.**” (My emphasis—G.L.)

The Indian bourgeoisie has become a recognised

political force, joining issue in the political struggle simultaneously against the working masses of India. Therefore, now that the non-bourgeois social classes in India are heading towards a revolutionary orientation and British imperialism is forced to ensure its continuity by a closer liaison with the Indian bourgeoisie, the representatives of British capitalism there, have for the first time discarded their aloofness from their brother class in India and have come out with an offer of political alliance.

There was held in London in July last year, a meeting of the Indian Section of the London Chamber of Commerce, attended by representatives of over 100 (British) firms and companies established in, or trading with India. Between themselves they accounted for “one thousand million pounds of British capital invested in India.” They met together to assert that:

“British business men had so much capital invested in India and Indian trade that it was vitally necessary they should exercise their right to do all in their power to ensure that in the experimental and transitional period to self-government, unwise measures should not be taken which might do irreparable damage not only to India but to Great Britain. No one could foretell whether the anticipated Royal Commission on Indian Constitutional Reform would make any far-reaching recommendations or not, but everyone would admit that, with the increasing spread of Western ideas and of education in India, some further reforms and adjustments might be required, and even some readjustments might be desirable . . . any fresh constitutional changes should be devised with full appreciation of the economic issues at stake as well as of those which were purely political.”

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Situation in India—continued

The president of the European Association in India noted at the meeting the tendencies of the Indian bourgeoisie "in power in India":

"to look at every question from a racial point of view and to take an anti-British standpoint, regardless of the true economic interests of India. The threat of discrimination against British commercial interests was serious and would have to be borne in mind when the time came to meet the Royal Commission. Already a Bill to reserve the coastal traffic of India to a purely Indian Mercantile Marine had been introduced. Rail traffic in India was gradually passing under State control."

In view of the danger of the submerging of British capitalist interests in India, the meeting came to the conclusion that "a new organisation could be formed to include not only British but also Indian commercial interests." The new organisation to be called the "Progressive League" would—

"... enunciate emphatically the principle of complete and definite co-operation between the British and responsible Indian Communities whose interests were identical."

Further, the British capitalists would give to the Indian bourgeoisie, through the "Progressive League":

"positive proof that British interests were ready to co-operate with them, to organise for them, to protect them from insidious flank attacks."

The aim of the League was finally defined in these terms:

"... the aim should be to build up an organisation truly representative of British and Indian commercial and kindred interests—trade, industry, finance, shipping, the landowner, and that most important person, the cultivator. In this way these various interests would be moulded into one big constitutional force, strongly represented in the different Governments, and would so have a very direct influence over the future of India. Thus her destinies would to a large extent be taken out of the hands of the demagogues."

In the proceedings of this remarkable meeting, we have the culmination of tendencies which have been discernible for some time past and have pointed towards the active political career of a bourgeois Indo-British coalition for the greater glory of capitalism in a "de-colonised" India.

(To be concluded.)

