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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Editorial:

Trotskyism's Latest Attack

Problems of Strike Strategy

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The British Party and the
Labour Party

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C O N T E N T S

TROTSKYISM'S LATEST ATTACK ON THE COMINTERN Editorial 106	THE C.P.G.B. AND THE LABOUR PARTY Central Committee of C.P.G.B. 119
PROBLEMS OF STRIKE STRATEGY A. Lozovsky 111	THE CHIEF LESSONS OF THE CIVIL WAR IN FINLAND, 1918 128

Trotskyism's Latest Attack on the Comintern

THE Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. summed up the final results of the long struggle inside its ranks between Leninism and Trotskyism, and drew a corresponding organisational conclusion on the incompatibility of belonging to the Trotsky Opposition and remaining inside the C.P.S.U., not only because of the fractional work carried on by this Opposition, but because the whole of its opinions is in contradiction to the Party's programme.

For several years Trotsky has disturbed the Party, and carried on within it a struggle to replace Leninism by Trotskyism. This has been very expensive to the Party, but in that struggle Trotsky has gone from defeat to defeat.

TROTSKY suffered his first ideological defeat in 1923, when he endeavoured to shake the organisational bases of the Bolshevik Party and to set the Party against its apparatus, when he proposed that the Party should take a "new course," should put the emphasis not on the workers but on the youth participating in the Party, and should allow freedom to various groupings within the Party.

He suffered his second ideological defeat in 1924, when in his "Lessons of October" he endeavoured to distort the history of the Bolshevik Party and to prove that it was not he who had come over to the Bolsheviks, but that on the contrary the Bolsheviks had come over to him, to Trotsky.

Trotskyism suffered its third ideological defeat in 1925, when Kamenev and Zinoviev endeavoured to distort the meaning of the Leninist strategic plan in favour of the Trotsky theory of permanent revolution, when they endeavoured to prove that according to Lenin the State enterprises of the U.S.S.R. are State-capitalist in their nature and that in economically backward Russia it is possible to build up, but it is not possible to complete the building up of socialism without the aid of a victorious revolution in more developed countries.

Trotsky suffered his fourth and final defeat in 1926-27, when the united Opposition which he headed drew the thoroughly logical deductions from the Trotsky theory, by following the Menshevik example and declaring that the capitalist elements in the U.S.S.R. were developing, while the socialist elements were being displaced; and that the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet Government were undergoing a "Thermidorian degeneration," and when, in accord with this calumnious evaluation, it undertook an open attack on the Soviet power, going even to the limit of counter-revolution.

TROTSKYISM took on an especially miserable aspect at the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. The Central Committee, summarising the results of the enormous achievements of the Soviet Government during the past ten years, unfolded their five-year plan for the industrialisation of the U.S.S.R., in connection with the socialist rationalisation of industry, the introduction of the seven-hour day and an intensified economic attack on the capitalist elements in the Soviet Republic. The C.C. of the C.P.S.U., on the basis of their achievements in the village, placed on the agenda a problem of the greatest historical importance—the collectivisation of agriculture. But the Trotskyists, showing absolute blindness to the great movements in the direction of socialism now being made in the Soviet Republic, and seeing only two "strong" figures in the U.S.S.R.—the kulak and the Nepman—in order to save the country from their pressure proposed to turn back the wheel of history and to resort to measures taken from the arsenal of the old "War Communism."

THE defeat suffered by the Trotskyists during the pre-congress discussion and at the congress itself was overwhelming: 99 per cent. of the Party declared themselves against the Opposition. The non-party working masses revealed their attitude to the Opposition by pouring a further 100,000 members into

Trotskyism's Latest Attack—continued

the Party which the Opposition was slandering. And as one man the Fifteenth Congress declared itself in favour of expelling from the Party all the Trotskyists, who had taken up a position hostile to the Party, merely hindered its progress, and disorganised its work. This overwhelming blow caused a split in the Opposition. Zinoviev and Kamenev capitulated to the Party. Some of Zinoviev's followers endeavoured to sit between two stools. But Trotsky and the "pure" Trotskyists, who had been behind him continuously since 1923 and even earlier, and had only temporarily been "travelling companions" of the Bolsheviks, raised the bedraggled banner of Trotskyism and betook themselves to their disruptive activities with still greater energy.

EXPLOITING the current economic difficulties in the Soviet Republic in connection with the grain collections and the conclusion of collective agreements, they began a demagogic campaign in the factories, going even to the extent of instigating the workers to strike, thus going hand in hand with the Mensheviks. None the less they do not count at present on great success inside the country, in view of the general defeat they have only just suffered. They only hope to raise their head in the Soviet Republic when some tremendous misfortune befalls the U.S.S.R., such as an intervention.

In his circular letter Trotsky speculates on this possibility with cynical frankness: "A more determined attack on the part of the bourgeoisie," he writes, "may effect a decided swing to the left inside the Party." The shattered Trotskyists do not count on success in the U.S.S.R. at the moment. But they have flung themselves with all the more energy into the fight in the international arena with a view to consolidating the Opposition in various sections of the Comintern, since that Opposition had begun to disintegrate in consequence of the defeat and break-up of the Opposition in the C.P.S.U. In "Pravda" for January 15th were printed two circular letters written by the Trotskyist centre and addressed to Trotsky's foreign agents, after Zinoviev and Kamenev had left him, or as the letter says, "after their betrayal." These circular letters throw a clear light on the tasks which the bankrupt Trotskyists are setting themselves at the present time.

THE separation of the old Bolsheviks, Kamenev and Zinoviev, from the Trotsky Opposition untied Trotsky's hands. The first circular letter frankly recognises that the declaration made by the Trotskyists at the Fifteenth Congress to the effect that they were ready to abandon fractional activity was only a manoeuvre, that it was a "concession to Zinoviev and Kamenev," that it was "a last attempt to avoid a split" with Zinoviev and Kamenev, that now this necessity no longer exists one can come out without a mask and set about the formation of a "left fraction" on an international scale for the "conquest of the Communist Party from within." Trotsky's break with Zinoviev, and Kamenev, who are bound to the Bolshevik Party by twenty years of work, and his expulsion from that Party have given him great freedom of action.

BUT the Trotskyists clearly understand that anyone who tries to make himself at home between the two millstones of the Second and the Third Internationals at the present time will be ground between them, and in the best of cases will be condemned to a spectral existence in a small sect. For this reason, and only for this reason, while they are actually now forming a new party and a new International, they do not resort to the open formation of a second party, and a fourth International, but prefer to disintegrate the Comintern and its sections from within; and, hiding under the mask of Communism, to play the role of agents of the Second International inside the Comintern, just as the Second International itself plays the role of agents of the bourgeoisie within the working class.

The circular letters issued by the Trotskyist centre unmask this manoeuvre adequately enough. In the first letter we read; "M. and R. [Maslov and Ruth Fischer] evidently think that we are against a split in view of the specific conditions in which the U.S.S.R. is placed. That is not correct. We are against a party, against a fourth international in the most irreconcilable fashion," because "from the point of view of the international working class as a whole, the Opposition would put itself in the hopeless position of a sect, if it allowed itself to be thrust into the position of being a fourth International, in inimical opposition to everything connected with the U.S.S.R. and the Comintern." On these same strategic grounds the circular letter says: "We must strike at the leadership of the C.P.S.U. without putting ourselves in opposition to the U.S.S.R. . . ." If the Opposition puts itself into direct opposition to the U.S.S.R., as to a bourgeois State, and to the C.P.S.U. and the Comintern as to a petty bourgeois party, it will be transformed into a sect. Thus in reality the Trotskyists are not in the least taking the interests of the Soviet Republic into account, but are endeavouring by all means to discredit it, to vilify it, and would not be averse to drawing it into a war. (See Rakovsky's speech at the Fifteenth Party Congress.) They make no attempt to deny that the U.S.S.R. is a "bourgeois State," they make no attempt to deny that the C.P.S.U. and the Comintern constitute a "petty bourgeois party," but they do not consider it convenient to say these things openly, because that would turn the workers against them and would condemn the Trotskyists to the role of a small, lifeless sect. It is for this very reason that the Trotskyists are trying to get their feelers into the Comintern and, under the flag of Communism, to disintegrate it from within; it is for this very reason that Trotsky in a second circular letter, addressed to a certain Peter, gives instructions for him to do everything to ensure that Opposition delegates should get to the congress of the Profintern (R.I.L.U.), and the forthcoming congress of the Comintern, and "to prepare theses on all the questions on the agenda of the congresses, so that, taken as a whole, these theses should compose the platform of the international Communist left (Opposition)." For, he would point out, "Bukharin's programme is the poor programme of a national section of the Comintern, and not the programme of a world Communist Party." (This is said of a programme approved by Lenin and accepted as a basis by the Fifth Congress of the Comintern!)

Trotskyism's Latest Attack—continued

ALL the sections of the Comintern should give the most diligent attention to the Trotskyists' latest attack on the Comintern, and first and foremost should unmask the true character of the Trotskyists, who have returned to their primitive state, have broken with Bolshevism and the C.P.S.U., and, like cuckoos, are trying to lay their eggs in another's nest.

They call themselves "the international Communist left," and evidently are disposed to continue the defence of the celebrated Opposition "platform" now fallen into ruin. The Leninists have long since known well that these so-called "left" Communists are distinguished from the rights only by the fact that they cover their right-wing activity with left-wing revolutionary phrases. But while that is correct in general, in application to Trotsky it is doubly correct. His lack of principle, his ability to cover right-wing phrases have broken all records. If one needs convincing of this, one has only to remember first of all how he has changed his features during the last five years inside the C.P.S.U., and secondly to give attentive study to the instructions which he is now issuing in the above-cited circular letters to his agents in various sections of the Comintern.

WHEN in 1923 Trotsky put the emphasis on the active youth instead of on the workers, when he went to the defence of free groupings in the Leninist Party, when he made an attack on the C.P.S.U. in company with Radek, who had only just previously been condemned for his social-democratic, opportunist policy in Germany, it was difficult for Trotsky to give his position a left-wing aspect, and then the C.P.S.U. and the Comintern condemned him for his openly right-wing social-democratic deviation.

When Trotsky repeatedly prophesied an economic catastrophe in the U.S.S.R., when he endeavoured to prove that in the economically backward Soviet Republic it was impossible to complete the construction of socialism without the aid of a victorious revolution in the west, when he endeavoured to prove that the mighty world capitalist economy would inevitably shatter the Soviet power economically if a revolution were not speedily victorious in the west, it was difficult to regard these things either as indicating a "left-wing" deviation. It was clear to everybody that a purely Menshevik pessimism, a purely Menshevik over-estimation of the forces of the bourgeoisie and under-estimation of those of the proletariat were being revealed in these views.

When after the Fourteenth Party Conference, in his speech at Zaporozhe, Trotsky argued that we in the U.S.S.R. should place the emphasis on the capitalistic development of the village in the interests of the development of production forces, that we should for a certain time place the emphasis on the kulak, whom he politely proposed to rename a farmer, when he said that "so long as we cannot collectivise agriculture with the resources of our industry we must allow a development of productive forces in agriculture even though it be with the aid of capitalist methods," when he argued that "the capitalist farmer," i.e., the kulak, is not our enemy at the moment, "but our possible and prob-

able enemy to a certain extent," under such conditions it was also difficult to hide behind the mask of "left-wingism."

Up to this point Trotsky had involuntarily played without a mask, and when Zinoviev went over to the Opposition he did not even know, according to his former follower, Antonov-Ovseenko, on whose side to place himself—on the side of the "right wing" C.C. or that of the "left wing" Zinoviev.

But as soon as the union between Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev had been achieved, Trotsky donned an ultra-left mask. Zinoviev and Kamenev tried to hide their transference to the Trotskyist line and their panic, by accusing the Party of not carrying on a sufficiently energetic struggle against the kulaks and Nepmen; and Trotsky, who only a short time previously had actually put all the emphasis on the kulak, caught up these slogans. Radek and Zinoviev together began to accuse the Comintern and the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. of what they termed opportunist errors in regard to the Anglo-Russian Committee and the Chinese revolution. Trotsky seized on this "left-wing" slogan also. Thus it was only at the moment of the formation of a bloc between Trotsky and Zinoviev that the Trotsky Opposition became formulated as a "left-wing Opposition."

IT has already been sufficiently stated and proved that under this "left-wing tendency" was hidden an equally right-wing opportunist attitude. Here we shall only note two facts which clearly unmask the real complexion of this Opposition.

The first fact. The Trotsky Opposition accused the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. of a policy of "national limitation," of not setting a course for the approaching world revolution. And then the devoted Trotskyist, Rakovsky, makes a speech at the congress and completely reshuffles the Opposition's cards. At the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. Rakovsky reproached the C.C. with actually exaggerating the revolutionary mood of the west-European proletariat, with not seeing "the most alarming fact—a decline in the activity of the working class." He also reproached them with under-estimating the strength of "our external enemy, who occupies five-sixths of the world, in whose hands are State power, capital, the highest technique, a colossal political experience," and so on. Rakovsky's speech confirmed the fact that the Trotskyists have as little belief in the proximity of a victorious revolution in the west as they have in the possibility of completely building up socialism in any one country. And this is not an accidental slip of the tongue on the part of one of the Trotskyists, Rakovsky. We know that the Trotskyists see only our defeats everywhere. In their recent "appeal to the Executive Committee of the Comintern and to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern," the Trotskyists regard the Canton rising for example as "a putsch policy" applied in an ebbing revolutionary wave, in opposition to the Comintern, which declared and still declares that there was and still is a revolutionary situation in China and that the Canton rising suffered defeat not in an "ebbing revolutionary wave," but in a period of transference of the revolution to a higher stage, a process which is always accompanied by great difficulties.

Trotskyism's Latest Attack—continued

The second fact confirming the opportunistic character of the Opposition in international questions is the startling coincidence of its views on the militant Chinese question with the views of a now dead comrade at a period when the latter was still a confessed "centrist." We recall that Serrati, when he was still a "centrist," attacked Lenin and Roy at the Second Congress of the Comintern for their resolution on the national and colonial question in almost the same words and for the same reason. Serrati then said:

"I personally consider not only that the theses put forward by comrades Lenin and Roy contradict themselves, but I consider that there is in them something still worse—a great danger to the position of the communistic proletariat. . . . Any manifestation of a struggle for national liberation, whether it be even a rising or insurrection, in which the initiative comes from the bourgeois democratic groups, is for that reason not revolutionary. The struggle of the classes, even in the so-called backward countries, can be consummated only in the circumstances of the complete isolation of the proletariat not only from its exploiters, but even from bourgeois democracy in its role of 'revolutionary nationalists.' The true revolution of the oppressed peoples can be carried through only with the aid of a proletarian revolution and a soviet power, and not by a temporary and fortuitous alliance between the Communists and the bourgeois parties, called revolutionary nationalists. On the contrary, an alliance of that nature can only lead to an obscuring of the proletarian consciousness, especially in countries where the workers are still untempered in the struggle with capitalism."

In answer to this speech comrade Roy said: "Serrati has called the theses drawn up by Lenin and myself counter-revolutionary."

We ask, do not the arguments used by the Trotskyist Opposition against the tactic of a bloc with the national bourgeoisie during the first stage of the Chinese revolution—a tactic defended by the Comintern—exactly echo the arguments which Serrati used against Lenin during the Second Comintern Congress? And at that time Serrati hung on to the skirts of the open reformist and Menshevik Turati.

BUT the truly opportunist social-democratic core of Trotskyism, its extreme lack of principle, is being demonstrated more clearly than ever before now that Trotsky has broken with Zinoviev and Kamenev; and they are demonstrated by those very circular letters which we have cited above. Trotsky now wants to form an "international Communist left fraction" on the basis of the "left platform." But now that Zinoviev and Kamenev have "betrayed" him, he wants to guarantee himself against further "treachery" and capitulations, he wants to make a review of all the elements of the international opposition in the sections of the Comintern and to consolidate the opposition around a group of his dependable adherents. And who

are these "dependable" adherents of Trotsky? In his view they are not those who joined the united opposition of 1926, but those who agreed with Trotsky earlier, those who even in 1923 attached themselves to the pure Trotsky Opposition. But these old adherents of Trotsky, who were in a united front with him in 1923, are as it happens the most arrant opportunists in the various sections of the Comintern. They were and still remain the extreme right, and the majority of them have long since been expelled from the Comintern just because of their right-wing attitude. Thus we get a humorous picture, which plainly characterises Trotsky's exceptional absence of principle: he is setting himself the task of scraping together an "international Communist left wing" on a left-wing platform from those very elements which were and still remain right-wing. Meanwhile he proposes to keep the ultra-left-wingers in quarantine, as suspect of capitulation tendencies, and as being close to Zinoviev in their views.

IF we make a cursory review of the Opposition in the various sections of the Comintern and compare the result with those instructions which Trotsky has just issued to his agents through the above quoted circular letters, we reach the following unchallengeable conclusions. First, that everywhere the ultra-left and the ultra-right Oppositions, whether already expelled or still remaining in the Comintern, are now uniting in a general struggle against the Comintern, against the C.P.S.U. and against the U.S.S.R.; and are also uniting with the Second International in a general outcry against the suppression of the Opposition in the C.P.S.U., against the "Tsarist" methods of struggle used against those who think differently, and so on. Secondly, that everywhere the most frantic of Trotsky's personal adherents and the "pure Trotskyists" are the right-wing elements. Thirdly, that Trotsky himself in his circular letters also recommends that these right-wing elements should be shown the greatest confidence and should be depended on first of all.

IN Germany the chief disruptive work is being carried on by ultra-lefts, by Maslov and Ruth Fischer, who recently established a daily newspaper, the "Volks-wille," which is waging a desperate struggle against the C.P. of Germany, and in particular is setting itself the task of assisting the bourgeoisie and the social-democracy in the forthcoming elections campaign. These ultra-left renegades are now also conducting a campaign of protest against the Soviet Power's suppression of the Opposition, are demanding an implacable attitude on the part of all Russian Opposition members, are demanding that they should unite with the Sapronov Opposition and so on. But they are not prepared to put the emphasis on Trotsky alone, and to set him in contra-position to the "capitulationists," Zinoviev and Kamenev. And this for quite understandable reasons. Trotsky is known in Germany as having been condemned for a right-wing deviation by the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, and as having actively supported Radek even in 1923, at the time when Radek committed a right social-democratic error during the German revolution. It is quite understandable that they should not be able to bring them-

Trotskyism's Latest Attack—continued

selves to put the emphasis on Trotsky, for they fear that this would drive from them the last few handfuls of German workers that have remained faithful to them. In consonance with this Trotsky says in his circular letter: "M. and R.'s [Maslov and Ruth Fischer's] attitude to the Opposition in the C.P.S.U. is, so far as our present information goes, rather a manœuvre than one of principle. . . . Without doing anything to strain relations unnecessarily, these manœuvres must be resisted, elucidating their hidden idea (by word of mouth or in writing, and only in the case of necessity in print)."

IN France there are two fractional groupings within the Party, a right and an ultra-left group. The right consists of Loriot, Paz and others, who are grouped around the weekly "Against the Current." These right-wingers have proved themselves to be the most vehement of right-wing opportunists. They were against industrial nuclei; during the Moroccan conflict they treated the Moroccans as a "lower race"; they stand for an "honest united front" with the socialists, for offering the socialists only such conditions as are acceptable to their leaders, and so on. The ultra-left group inside the French Communist Party is at the moment represented by Treint and Suzanne Girault, who publish the journal "Lenin Unity." Outside the Party Souvarine and Rosmer are attached to the right-wing group, and publish the "Révolution Proletarienne" and the "Bulletin Communiste." They all jointly publish the documents of the Opposition and articles against the C.P.S.U. and the Comintern, they all with one accord slander the U.S.S.R. But the difference between them is that the right-wingers, Loriot, Rosmer and Souvarine are old Trotskyists. In consonance with this the high-principled Trotsky, who is now building up an international left-wing, pays more court to the journal of the ultra-rights than to any other, and in his circular letters he writes: "The French organ 'Against the Current' gives a comforting impression. . . . We must now put the emphasis on the group around 'Against the Current,' as being the sole group of our adherents. . . . It is very desirable to draw Rosmer into the work of the journal." As for the right-wing renegade Souvarine, Trotsky writes of him: "Souvarine's approach to the British workers' movement is not infrequently erroneous, . . . but he is a talented historian and revolutionary. We have not lost hope that his road will run into ours to the great advantage of the French workers' movement." Thus the "left-wing" Trotsky is seen embracing the right-wing Communists and renegades. His attitude to the ultra-lefts is different: "If Treint and Suzanne Girault continue to waver between capitulation and so-called Trotskyism, we must leave them to their own fate."

IN Czecho-Slovakia there is a right-wing group of Bubnikovists, out and out opportunists—Skala, Hula, Herrlich and Vaniek. Their nature is sufficiently indicated by the fact that they propose that the workers attached to the Communist Party and to the Social-Democratic Party should conclude a united front without their party (and hence without the participation of

the Communist Party in the united front). Also one of them, Vaniek, participates in the journal of the "national socialists." Besides these ultra-right wingers there is also the ultra-left Opposition of Mikhaletz and Pollak, who has immortalised himself by the declaration that if the U.S.S.R. resorted to war and suffered military defeat, "from the dialectical point of view," it would still be an advantage. Neurath is also attached to the ultra-lefts, although not officially. These two groups are on very good terms with each other, as is evident from their joint publication of a newspaper. Both of them are, of course, equally sympathetic to the Russian Opposition. As for Trotsky, he again displays rather more trust in the right than in the left-wingers. In regard to relations with the right-wingers he expresses dissatisfaction only on account of their indefiniteness: in his circular letter he says: "It is better to have a small, but closely consolidated directing group, than a formless bloc with the right wing." As for the left and ultra-left wingers, and Neurath in particular, we read in his circular letter: "To break, no matter with whom, is criminal [a truly Menshevik piece of wisdom: Ed.], but it is still more criminal to cling to individual persons, if even now, after Z. and K.'s capitulation, they still continue to waver and wriggle."

IN Holland the right-winger, Roland-Holst, and the ultra-left leader of the N.A.S., Sneifeld have begun jointly to publish a monthly journal, "The Class Struggle," in which co-operate anarchists, reformists and Christian socialists. In this journal Trotsky's most ardent devotee is Roland-Holst, and in it are printed the documents of the Trotskyist Opposition side by side with articles by Roland-Holst demanding the union of the Second International with the Third International.

In Belgium, the chief defender of Trotskyism is the social-democrat, Libers, who has taken up an openly anti-soviet position.

In the United States Trotsky works through two right-wing renegades: the celebrated Max Eastman, who was expelled from the Party long since, and now publishes the literary and artistic journal, "The New Masses"; and Lory, the editor of the "New Yorker Volkszeitung," who was expelled from the Party in 1925 for refusing to subject his newspaper to the control of the Party.

SUCH is the honourable international company, persons connected with Trotsky by personal bonds, from whom Trotsky is preparing to scrape together a nucleus for his international Communist left-wing, and with whose aid he is preparing to cleanse the Comintern of opportunism. A purer adventurer, or a greater absence of principle it would be difficult to imagine. Of course, Trotsky cannot scrape together anything at all. And such is the fate of Trotsky, who all his life has endeavoured to set up his own party, and has never set up anything; and who played a positive role only when the great wave of the elemental movement raised him on its crest, and who, as soon as that wave fell, inevitably fell with it.

Trotsky cannot set up any kind of international organisation, but he and his adherents can cause no little injury to the Communist movement. We are now living through a moment of a new rise in the workers' movement and a fresh intensification of the class

Trotskyism's Latest Attack—continued

struggle, under conditions in which the parties of the Second International are becoming openly bourgeois parties, under conditions when the social-democratic centrist leaders, who formerly gave vent to left-wing phrases, have openly passed into the camp of the ultra-right wingers. Under these conditions we may expect an increased flow of social-democratic workers into the Communist camp. During the post-war rise of the revolutionary wave, in the presence of an analogical attraction of social-democratic workers to the Comintern, the position of the Second International was saved by the centrists, who with their left-wing phrases restrained the masses from breaking with the Second International. Now there are no centrist parties; now the great majority of the social-democratic centrist leaders have thrown away their masks and have openly turned to the defence of the capitalist system. Now only a small handful of leaders of the Second International are still holding on to their centrist positions—those who are grouped around "Der Klassenkampf" in Germany, for example. Under such conditions the counter-revolutionary mission, which in 1918-1923 fell to the lot of the social-democratic centrists, the "independents," now falls to the lot of the ultra-left and ultra-right oppositionists, who partially remain inside and are partially already thrown out of the Comintern, and whom the Trotskyists are now endeavouring to unite. The objective task of this new variety of Menshevism will consist in discrediting the Comintern, the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet Government, and by these means first of all restrain the flow of social-

democratic workers into the Comintern and cool their sympathies for the Soviet Republic, attacked by all the capitalist world; and secondly, according to their power and possibilities establishing disintegrating elements inside the Comintern itself. This task is openly counter-revolutionary, and is all the more dangerous for the work of the revolution, the more swiftly severe class struggles overtake the working class. Consequently all sections of the Comintern should give redoubled attention to the latest destructive work of the Trotskyists, and in order to unmask them should make use of all the wealth of material concerning Trotskyism which is to be found in the reports of C.P.S.U. congresses and conferences, in the discussion brochures, bulletins and pamphlets and in the articles in the "International Press Correspondence" (Inprecorr), and the "Communist International."

THE Trotskyists are organising another attack on the Comintern even after they have been shattered to fragments in the U.S.S.R., even after they have definitely taken the road of counter-revolution, even after their allies in the C.P.S.U. have renounced them, even after they have been compelled to put their hopes on the ultra-right refuse of the Comintern and the open renegades in various countries, though continuing to utter left-wing phrases. The sections of the Comintern would commit the greatest of errors if they did not resort to a counter-attack, if they did not exploit the incipient break-up of the U.S.S.R. Opposition, which will inevitably spread to other countries, in order to shatter and finish off the Trotskyists.

Problems of Strike Strategy

(For the forthcoming Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U.)

A. Lozovsky

THE existence of a rising strike wave in all countries, and the dimensions and character of the economic conflicts, make the problems of strike strategy of exceptional importance at the moment for the revolutionary wing of the workers' movement. The question arises with all the more severity since the number and the dimensions of those economic conflicts are extending, and since little by little a large strike now takes on an intensified political significance. The importance of small conflicts and strikes is continually declining. In all the large capitalist countries where industry is concentrated, and the industrialists well organised, a petty conflict in any single factory is only the starting-point for a conflict between organised capital and much less organised labour. Whether we take the miners' lock-out in Britain, the lock-out in Norway, the lock-out and strike in the mining industry of the United States, the conflict in the iron-working industry of Germany, or any conflict of less importance, always and everywhere we are faced with the complex question of the forms and methods of the revolutionary workers' movement's participation in these conflicts, and the means of mobilising the masses for a defensive

struggle not only against capital, but also against its allies in the workers' midst.

The problems of strike strategy are not problems of abstract theory, but of vital, everyday practice. Because the problem is not an abstract one, but is concrete and practical, it is necessary first and foremost to turn one's attention to the circumstances of the struggle and to those forces which are set in motion in every large economic conflict.

During the last two years the circumstances of this struggle have greatly changed. We must first of all clearly realise the fact that capital is swiftly concentrating. Powerful industrial organisations, possessing large funds and supported by the whole apparatus of the bourgeois State, have a complete series of important advantages over the workers, advantages which they exploit very cleverly. The more powerful the federation of employers, the larger sums the concerns and trusts have at their disposal, the less desire do they show to reckon with any federation of trade unions whatever.

In the large industry of old capitalist countries there is now being revived a slogan which long since

Problems of Strike Strategy—continued

passed out of usage: "No unions whatever." As was the case several decades ago, the employer wishes to deal with each individual worker, and not with the collective will of the proletariat organised according to industry. And this greatly increased might of the employers' organisations, their absolute command of all the resources of the bourgeois State, is the most characteristic feature of the present day economic conflicts. In their frenzied hunt for markets the employers of every country are striving to surpass their competitors by lowering the standard of existence of "their own" working class. All the employers' efforts are directed towards this end, and that is the whole meaning of the capitalist offensive which has now been going on for several years.

The second peculiarity of the present situation consists of the role which the large trade union organisations of Europe and America are playing. The trade unions of Britain, Germany, the United States and other countries have ignored this violent concentration of capital. One would have thought that the first obligation of trade union leaders would have been to organise the masses as swiftly as possible in order not to fall behind in comparison with the employers. And, on the other hand, one would have thought the capitalist offensive would have aroused an intensified activity in the trade union organisations, and a feverish political and organisational work to reconstruct their ranks and to adapt them to the new conditions of the class war. But the leaders of the trade union organisations of Europe and America have taken another road. *The more violent the bourgeois became, the more moderate became these leaders; the more sharply the employers forced any question, the more gently did the reformists act; the stronger the attack, then, despite all the laws of defence, the weaker was the counter-action.*

How the Reformists Act

First and foremost it began with their ideological disarmament and their philosophical adaptation to the contemporary capitalist State. At the very beginning of the German revolution the reformists put forward the slogan of "Economic Democracy," which signified *agreement instead of struggle*. When the attack was intensified in Britain, the leaders of the British trade unions held forth on "Industrial Peace" with an energy worthy of a better cause, while the chairman of the General Council, Ben Turner, quite recently emphasised the view that peace in industry must be established in the name of Christ. Economic democracy and peace in industry are different forms of terminology for one and the same capitulation, for *the starting-point of economic democracy and peace in industry is first and foremost a recognition of the inviolability of capitalist relations and an endeavour to revive and rehabilitate the capitalist system which was shaken during the war.*

What is economic democracy? The German reformists, who suffer from philosophic verbal incontinence, define it as the equality of labour and capital, while this "equality" arises from the basis of the assurance to the factory owners, manufacturers and

bankers of their property and the continuation of the system of wage slavery.

What is peace in industry? Peace in industry is a system of mutual relations between labour and capital which has to give definite advantages to a small minority of workers, under the conditions of the exploitation of the majority of the British working class and of hundreds of millions of colonial slaves. Such, too, is the purpose and the whole philosophy of the American trade union bureaucrats, who have long since covered themselves with glory as the finest of strike-breakers even among their own reformist colleagues.

Economic democracy and peace in industry are both the reformists' *music of the future*. The reformists realise this full well, and consequently they put forward something in the nature of a minimum programme, something in the nature of transitional demands. Until this glorious economic democracy is established, until peace in industry is established, we must in the meanwhile *achieve our ideal even in sections!* When the whole aim is the rehabilitation of capitalism it is necessary to save the national industry from stagnation, from loss of time owing to strikes, from the unproductive expenditure of labour, time and so on. From this view logically develops a system of long-term trade agreements, compulsory arbitration and a whole series of other delightful things, which have as their aim the establishment of peace in industry at the expense of the working class. Thus step by step international reformism has come to a complete renunciation of the leadership of the working class's economic struggles, and now puts all its hopes on peaceful discussions and on the method of attempts to persuade the employers.

Frightening the Bourgeoisie

This method has a two-fold character. On the one hand they address themselves to the employers, to the bourgeois State, and say: "If you do not make us this concession you will be compelled to make this concession on a much larger scale to the workers, for they will strike!" In the same way the Russian Liberals frightened the Tsar in their day: "Make us concessions or else they [the revolutionaries] will shoot!" In this regard the innumerable speeches and declarations of the bankrupt British leaders are of particular interest at the present time. They resort to all measures to persuade the employers to agree to negotiations for industrial peace, and these bankrupts rely on the argument that if they are not successful in reaching agreement after them will come the deluge, disintegration, chaos, and other jungle-passions. And as, according to the reformist dictionary, chaos, disintegration and the other terrifying words are synonymous for revolution, the reformist leaders frighten the bourgeoisie with revolution, in order to compel them to a more gracious attitude and to concessions.

What does this move towards economic democracy, industrial peace, long-term agreements, compulsory arbitration and so on signify? The idea behind it is seen with particular clarity in every fresh economic conflict, in which always and everywhere the reformists pursue one and the same tactic. As soon as the bourgeoisie, in the name of national industry, begin to

Problems of Strike Strategy—continued

attack, the Amsterdamers turn to the workers and say: "Don't get agitated, don't allow yourselves to be provoked, don't listen to the left wing visionaries and agitators; allow us to carry on negotiations and by peaceful methods, without the loss of your resources, without the expenditure of superfluous energy, we shall compel the employers to retreat. We are all the more able to do this since we exploit the whole democratic apparatus of the State, which of course will always be on the side of justice and the interests of the working class."

Then the Amsterdamers begin to manoeuvre. We saw this manoeuvring going on especially clearly during the conflict in the iron-working industry of Germany. The manoeuvre consists in the reformists beginning negotiations both openly and behind the scenes, attempting to frighten the employers by reference to the indignation of the masses. If the dissatisfaction grows among those masses and the workers begin to pass resolutions of protest in their factories against the conduct of their leaders, the latter strive to hand the question as speedily as possible into the competence of some governmental authority (compulsory arbitration) and to obtain as speedy a decision as possible, previously announcing that they will accept that decision. And when the workers resolutely declare themselves against compulsory arbitration the reformists come out against the workers and say: "What, you don't wish to submit to the decision of an institution established by law? You are not satisfied with the 'achievements' we have succeeded in obtaining by means of arbitration? In no circumstances can we give our sanction to any kind of attack. Do what you like, you will not get any trade union money if you strike."

That is the average programme of action resorted to by the trade union bureaucracy and their methods of "defending" the interests of the working class. And if any kind of offensive movement sets in among the working class, the entire tactic of the trade union bureaucracy consists in damming the movement, and not allowing it to break out, not allowing it to take on a mass character. They run to the employers and to the State institutions, and, attempting to frighten everybody with the rising workers' wave, they tearfully lament: "Yield on this point, or worse will follow." If the pressure of the workers is still very great the employers make "voluntary" concessions, and then the Amsterdam leaders turn to the workers and say: "You see, we were right when we advised you not to strike. Only thanks to our tactics, thanks to peaceful negotiations, thanks to our influence in the State, and our power with the employers have we been able to obtain a concession, and if you had struck we don't know what it would all have led to." That is the nature of Amsterdam strike strategy, and that is how it is pursued with very small variations by all the Amsterdam organisations in every country.

The United Front with the Capitalists

And what does the very latest strategy of the Amsterdamers signify? It signifies no more nor less than that the trade union apparatus created by the work-

ing class not only does not decide all questions in favour of the working class, but frequently decides all questions together with the employers and against the workers. We have now entered into a phase of development of the class struggle in which the reformist *trade unions and employers' organisations are not two warring parties but are one party, which reaches agreement in the measure that the dissatisfaction of the masses accumulates, in order to prevent the discontent of the masses from breaking out and in order to direct everything along the old, customary channel.*

The reformists now say openly that they are one of the most important factors in the stability of capitalist society. They even have their own programme directed towards this end. While in Germany they talk themselves into a stupor with their economic democracy, in France the former syndicalists are working out an economic platform, the political idea of which consists in the formal *assimilation of trade unions into organs of the capitalist State.* This assimilation of the trade union apparatus into the bourgeois State bears an extremely varied character, but in general it indubitably presents a *growing alliance between the Amsterdam organisations and the bourgeois State, a continually increasing alliance between the trade unions and employers' organisations.*

Before our eyes is going on a process of fusion of the Amsterdam unions with the employers' organisations and the transformation of those unions into organs for strike-breaking. And it is no accident that in Germany, for example, in every conflict the Amsterdamers at once find a common language with the Catholic and the Hirsch Dunker unions. This unity and this united front arise on the basis of the strike-breaker platform of the Catholic unions, on which platform the All-German Federation of Trade Unions has now also taken up its stand. Thus we have a complete political line of approach, which witnesses to the fact that *strike-breaking has become the most important principle of the Amsterdam International and its sections.*

Some New Problems

The transformation of the Amsterdam trade unions into open strike-breaking organisations, which interfere with the struggle of the working class, raises before us a number of extremely important problems, without a practical settlement of which it is impossible to move forward a single step. In the given circumstances the problem of strike strategy is especially complicated owing to the fact that in many countries the revolutionary workers still represent a minority inadequately organised, insufficiently consolidated, and not always acting according to a single plan.

It goes without saying that our tactics during economic conflicts will have to alter in accordance with the situation. Our tactics in those countries where we have independent organisations (France, Czechoslovakia) must be different from those in the countries where we have no independent organisations, and where the workers sympathetic to us are members of reformist unions, and are caught in the cogs of the reformist apparatus. In such a situation the struggle against the strike-breaking tactic of the official organisations is particularly difficult and complicated, the more difficult

Problems of Strike Strategy—continued

since we can depend only on those workers who set up special organisations (strike committees, councils of action, and so on) to counteract the united front of the employers and the Amsterdammers. There was a time when strike-breaking was punished by the workers with general contempt and expulsion from the place of work. Since the war international social-democracy has made political strike-breaking the basic principle of their tactics, and now strike-breaking in the sphere of economic struggles has become an inseparable function of all the troubadours and minstrels of economic democracy and industrial peace. In connection with this fact a number of extremely serious problems of a general character arise before the revolutionary wing of the workers' movement, and without an understanding of these problems it will be difficult to pursue a correct line of action in any particular country and in any particular economic conflict.

The first problem that has to be discussed under such conditions is the problem of the staff and the army. An army at the head of which stand representatives of the enemy country cannot be victorious. It is predestined to continual defeat. If during the world war several secret agents of Germany had been on the French general staff, could France have carried on the fight? Everyone will answer, of course not. Despite everything, France would have been smashed. If several agents of Hindenburg's and Ludendorff's general staff had been on the British general staff, could the British army have manoeuvred as it did during the world war? Of course not. This may all seem to be very elementary and may arouse no question, yet we have a close analogy in the workers' movement of quite a number of countries, and the workers' army has not yet been able to free itself from the spies of the enemy.

Remove Capitalist Agents

During the General strike, on the General Council of the British trade unions were Thomas, Bevin, Pugh and other spies and allies of capital. The struggle was lost, but the spies remained in the general staff. We see an analogical state of things in America at the present moment in the miners' strike; we saw the same position arising during the conflict in the iron-working industry of Germany. Do the leaders of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions represent the workers in the very slightest degree? Is not all their activity directed to avoiding offence to the employers? Haven't they more than once organised the break-up of the German proletariat? And yet they are on the general staff of the German trade union movement. Taking one reformist organisation after another, and taking the strikes that have occurred in the corresponding countries, we see that the Amsterdammers have occupied themselves with systematic strike-breaking, with systematic disorganisation of the ranks of the proletariat and the cession of the positions already won. Consequently *the first step on the road to the working out of a genuine, serious, militant tactic in the economic struggle must be the driving out of the strike-breakers, the spies and the allies of capital from the governing organs of the trade union movement.*

When a staff is in continual relations with the enemy the struggle becomes doubly difficult. It is all the more difficult since part of the army trusts that staff in the hope of obtaining a real advance without a struggle. Under such conditions a double wisdom and a double stand in defence of the interests of the working class are called for from the revolutionary wing of the workers' movement. First and foremost, it is absolutely obvious that the army is not only not obliged to submit to the staff, but has the right (the realisation of this right demands the presence of large forces) to attack the employer and its own staff. The whole problem consists in when and how to attack. Such attacks are particularly serious because no united front exists in the heart of the army. Frequently the reformist staff carries a large part of the army with it, and then the attack of the minority is clearly destined to defeat. In cases where the staff is followed by a minority the situation is also extraordinarily difficult, for it is necessary to carry on a struggle simultaneously against the employers and against one's own trade union organisation.

This difficulty is increased in those countries where the revolutionary workers are inside the reformist organisations without having any perfected organisation of their own, for manoeuvring can only be carried on by organised sections which are based not on an attitude but on complete unity. Meanwhile in a number of countries the adherents of the Profintern, who stand for the unity of trade unions, do not wish to set up parallel organisations, and consequently are compelled to act under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. This all has to be taken into consideration in order to estimate with entire accuracy all the difficulties which lie in the way of the Profintern's adherents in their strike strategy.

The difficulties are not lessened in those countries where parallel revolutionary and reformist organisations exist. If the revolutionary organisations take up a struggle and the reformists sabotage that struggle, as has taken place more than once in a number of industries in France, the position of the employers is once again much more advantageous than that of the workers. These countries have their own specific difficulties. There both armies are divided by an organisational barrier one from the other, and our influence on the rank and file of the reformist unions is very often negligible. Thus in both cases, whether there be present parallel unions or a single union, the position of the revolutionary army is extraordinarily difficult, for it has to deal with an enemy strongly consolidated organisationally, and also with organised strike-breaking in the ranks of the working class.

As the result of all these difficulties every class-conscious worker, every adherent of the Profintern is faced with the problem first of all of how to strengthen the ranks of the revolutionary trade union movement in order that it may be possible to manoeuvre successfully and to carry on a defensive and offensive fight with the maximum hope of victory.

Difficulties where T.U. Movement is Split

In those countries where the trade union movement is split, the most important task of the present moment is to increase our strength by means of recruitments.

Problems of Strike Strategy—continued

If we consider France, where 90 per cent. of the workers are unorganised, the field of activity open to the Unitary Confederation is very wide. All energies must be directed towards drawing hundreds of thousands of workers into our trade union organisations. The greater the flow of workers into the unitary unions, the easier will it be to carry on a strike struggle, for the correlation of forces between the unitary unions and those of the reformists will be changed in our favour, and thus our chances of victory in the struggle against the employers will be greatly increased. But although the making of new members is a task of the highest importance, it is not the only task. The revolutionary unions are faced with the problems of strengthening their local organisations, of having a direct connection with enterprises, of the creation of a flexible, militant organisation from bottom to top, and all these things can only be achieved by means of detailed day-to-day organisation work and unbroken day-to-day struggle in all parts of the country, in every sphere of industry, for the improvement of the position of the working class.

While in France, Czecho-Slovakia and other countries where the trade union movement is split the problem of enrolling new members and the forms and methods of the day-to-day, practical training of these members and the transformation of indefinite sympathies into militant solidarity takes first place, in those countries where the trade union movement is united, and where our adherents are inside the reformist unions the same aim (of increasing the fighting ability of the proletariat) can be achieved by other methods. Here it is a question of more intensive work. This has relation both to those countries where we have a definitely formulated opposition, on the lines of the Minority Movement (Britain) and to those countries where the opposition movement has not taken an organised form (Germany). Both in Britain and in Germany the problem of our strike strategy is organically connected with not only the degree of our political influence on the masses, but the degree of our organised capture of those masses. We may have ideal tactics, ideal slogans, but if there are only 5 or 10 per cent. of the workers in any particular sphere of industry on our side it is quite obvious that we can play no role whatever in the struggle between labour and capital.

We Must Consolidate our Forces

The forms of consolidation will, of course, inevitably be different in different countries. In the United States, in Britain, Germany, Austria, Holland, or in Sweden the organisational forms by which the opposition in the trade unions will be united cannot but be different. Everything depends on the distinctive features of the workers' movement of the given country. But the point that is absolutely obligatory in every country without exception, quite independently of how the Profintern's followers are organised in any particular country, is that our influence inside the trade unions should be extended, fresh and ever fresh positions in the lower and in the regional and central trade union organisations must be captured, and there must be the ability

to estimate our own forces and those of the enemy when circumstances demand that the revolutionary wing of the workers' movement should attack despite and against the will of the leaders of the particular union concerned.

Now as to the question of slogans and demands. Everybody knows that the revolutionary workers are distinguished from the reformists by the fact that they connect the day-to-day struggle of the workers with the ultimate aim of the struggle, but that does not mean that every strike can be linked up with the slogans of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the overthrow of capitalism independently of that strike's dimensions and character. The economic struggle faces the workers with a number of concrete problems: that of the trade unions' right to legal existence and representation, etc. And consequently we should first and foremost give an answer to these concrete, practical questions. We must be more sensitive to the demands of the masses, we must react more energetically to every blow dealt by the employers; at every given moment we must know where the shoe is pinching the worker; we must know how to canalise the accumulating discontent and must be able to transform the unclass-conscious discontent into political consciousness and to prepare the masses for the struggle. Our difference from the reformists consists in the fact that we are at any moment ready to put forward more radical economic demands, and in the fact that the reformists hope to obtain their demands without a struggle, while we know and must impregnate the consciousness of the working masses with the fact that without a struggle the working class will achieve absolutely nothing.

Wage Agreements

Since the reformists endeavour to avoid any struggle whatever the cost they strive by all means to conclude long-term wage agreements. There are Communists who think that long-term wage agreements are more advantageous than short-term ones—more advantageous because the workers, they say, are safeguarded for a long period, independently of the possible changes in the economic situation in the given sphere of industry. This hope that one can by means of long-term agreements compel the employer to take the way of sacrificing his own interests in periods of unfavourable economic circumstances implies a primitive understanding of the logic of the class struggle. At the basis of this "justification" lies a reformist understanding of the character and significance of wage agreements.

What is the reformists' view of a wage agreement? It is peace in industry. It is an agreement of brotherhood and friendship between the employers and the workers, an agreement which will eliminate all misunderstanding and unfriendly activities arising out of fortuitous causes.

What is the wage agreement from our point of view? It is a temporary armistice, and that armistice has for us the purpose of affording a breathing space for the organisation, consolidation, development and strengthening of the class army. If we are daily going to consolidate, increase and develop the fighting ability of our class army a long-term agreement is advantageous to us. If we are not going to worry about the fighting ability of the army, the improvement of its divisions, the

Problems of Strike Strategy—continued

raising of its fighting spirit, then, of course, it is more advantageous to have a long-term agreement. Thus, in this question of the period of wage agreements two fundamental tendencies in the trade union movement have their reflection: the revolutionary and the reformist tendency. If the followers of the Profintern give thought to this question they will come to the conviction that long-term agreements are in contradiction to our fundamental task of increasing the fighting ability of the proletarian army.

Arising out of our general position, we must carry on the most resolute struggle against all attempts to tie down the workers by compulsory arbitration. Compulsory arbitration has its origin in the assumption that between capital and labour there is also a third, neutral force. This neutral force, this super-arbiter is usually synonymous with the bourgeois State in the form of the Ministry of Labour or judiciary organs, the "extra-class" character of which we know well enough. There would appear to be complete unanimity in the ranks of the revolutionary wing of the workers' movement on this question, but that unanimity is not actually a hundred per cent, unanimity. Many opponents of compulsory arbitration are put to perplexity by decisions which have already been made, especially when those decisions, taken under extreme pressure from the masses, contain certain concessions to the workers. "The decision is made and you can do nothing now," so think some revolutionary workers, albeit not many. In these reflections and attitude is mirrored a social-democratic conception of compulsory arbitration.

No Compulsory Arbitration

May we for even one moment slacken our campaign against compulsory arbitration after a decision has been taken? Our campaign should be intensified, strengthened, developed farther and farther, and we should be able to prove to the workers that there is no such thing as neutral arbiters, and that if any particular Minister of Labour or State official, even if they bear the "proud title of social-democrat, has made an arbitral decision, as happened recently in Germany, which allows of certain concession to the workers, it is because the pressure from below is very great and the arbiter gives a little in order that the employer should not lose still more in a struggle. This point has to be thoroughly elucidated, and around it the masses must be mobilised.

The question of compulsory arbitration is at the moment being raised in a very severe form. We know how compulsory arbitration has corrupted part of the workers' organisations of Australia, what demoralisation this arbitration has induced in the trade union movement of Germany, and consequently *a most vehement and ruthless struggle against compulsory arbitration is the first obligation of the revolutionary wing of the workers' movement.*

But the struggle against long-term agreements, against compulsory arbitration, and for the rising of wages, the shortening of the working day and so on cannot be carried on sporadically, by fits and starts, by sudden advances based only on the enthusiasm of the leaders. The struggle against concentrated capital is

daily becoming more and more complicated. Readiness for the struggle is extremely good, yet not only one's own readiness but the readiness and fighting ability of the army have also to be taken into consideration. And at this very point we have two highly-dangerous and injurious deviations in our midst. The first is chiefly to be met with in France. If the tactics of the Unitary Federation of Miners are attentively studied, an extremely interesting *lesson can be drawn of how one ought not to organise a strike.*

Quite recently the Federation called a strike in Annecy, and only after the calling of the strike was it convinced that 80 per cent. of the workers would not answer their call. Was it really impossible to check this beforehand? Surely it was not necessary to call a strike in order to be convinced that foreign workers would not answer to the call of the Federation? It is long past the time when we should have renounced our anarcho-syndicalist traditions, which consisted in calling a strike (on paper, of course) almost every day, whether the working masses followed us or not. This readiness to declare a strike whenever we feel like it, without taking into consideration the question whether the army would answer to our call or not, witnesses to anything except an understanding of the elementary principles of the class struggle.

In Czecho-Slovakia we have the other extreme. There the trade union movement is still more disintegrated than in France. Naturally, with such disintegration a double caution, firmness, and solidarity in the struggle are necessary. But here we have a leaning in the other direction, a deviation which particularly revealed the weakness of our comrades during the last conflict in the textile industry of Czecho-Slovakia. Our comrades saw that the overwhelming majority of the textile workers were ready for the struggle, and even desired to struggle for a rise in wages. According to their own words it was an excellent moment for a struggle, but they reflected: "We have very little money in our funds, we cannot guarantee the workers prolonged support in the event of struggle, and so we ought not to attack."

To place the success of a strike in dependence on the strike fund is a reformist tendency against which a ruthless struggle must be waged. The conflicts become more mighty with every day, and to count on ever having adequate strike funds to carry on the gigantic social conflicts which shake one or another country daily is a reformist utopian hope.

Does that mean that we are against strike funds? Not in any circumstances. We are in favour of strike funds, of collecting the maximum amount of money, but we must not over-estimate the value of such funds, and we must not put everything in dependence on the amount of money accumulated, otherwise we shall go the way already marked out by the Amsterdamers. As we know, on this question the Amsterdamers have followed a line of evolution, the first stage of which was insistence on the necessity to collect strike funds in order to carry on a genuine struggle against capitalism; the second stage was that when they had large funds they considered it impermissible to expend them idly on fruitless strike struggles. And their last stage was their submission to compulsory arbitration, thus preserving

Problems of Strike Strategy—continued

the funds collected by them. That was the way of international reformism, a road which runs in quite a different direction from the general line of the revolutionary trade union movement.

The reformists do not want a struggle, and consequently neither prepare for it themselves nor do they prepare the masses for it. Inasmuch as we regard the struggle as inevitable we must prepare the masses for the struggle and subordinate all our agitational and propaganda work to this task. How are we to prepare them? There are two roads our adherents inside the reformist trade unions can take. The first way is to prepare the masses for independent struggle, warning them that the reformist leaders will always act against them at the decisive moment. This line of approach presumes the possibility of the masses attacking in opposition to the official trade union lead. This line of approach sets the course *only* in the direction of the activity of the masses, previously taking the official reformist course into account as a negative factor in the struggle.

But there is also another attitude taken up. In the view of those who hold this attitude the whole task consists in jogging the reformist leaders into the struggle, and if they do not wish to act we shall submit, restraining our indignation. If our "jog" is unsuccessful we shall put off the struggle until we have won the entire apparatus of the trade unions. This is putting the emphasis not on the masses but on the apparatus. If anyone doubts the existence of this second attitude, we advise him to read the articles of a number of responsible workers of the German Communist Party in connection with the conflict in the iron-working industry. From those articles he will come to the conviction that there is still a good deal of confusion in many Communist heads on the problems of our strike strategy.

If the adherents of the Profintern were to take this line they would commit an irremediable error. The theory of jogging the trade union bureaucrats leftward recalls to our mind the Menshevik theory of jogging the bourgeoisie leftward. Whether the trade union bureaucrats will go left or not, whether they will condescend to *head* the movement in order to *behead* it, these are not the kernel of the question. The crux of the question lies in the way the great masses of workers will go and what they will do at that time. The crux of the question consists in whether we shall be capable of placing ourselves at the head of a growing movement, without taking any formalities and the "acquired rights" of the trade union bureaucrats into account. The man who hands the agitated masses, who are rising in protest and entering on a struggle, over to the leadership of the reformist leaders merely because that leadership belongs to them in conformity with the constitution of the trade union, is sabotaging the strike with his own hands. That is why as soon as a conflict develops we should immediately put forward the slogans of an elected strike committee, of councils of action, unity committees, and so on. For only after we have set up a directing organ which reflects the will of the masses can we count on a successful struggle.

Guerrilla Tactics

It is quite natural now to turn to the problem of guerrilla attacks in the economic struggle. In the complicated situation of the present day, is a guerrilla movement possible in the strike struggle? The problem is raised by the whole course of the economic struggle and the conduct of the reformists of all countries.

What do we mean by a guerrilla movement in the economic struggle? We mean the refusal of workers in separate enterprises to submit to the trade unions and their independent entry on a struggle for the demands they are putting forward. Guerrilla attacks can be of various types: (1) A strike; (2) the introduction, as a method of protest, of a restricted working day; (3) an "Italian" strike (go slow, work to rule, etc.) in the works, and so on. In all these instances the workers of one particular enterprise put themselves in opposition to the organised employer and the apparatus of the trade unions. Under such conditions the struggle is very difficult, and the question has to be determined, not on the grounds of principle, but from a practical point of view. It entirely depends on the correlation of forces. It is impossible to object to guerrilla attacks of workers in separate enterprises, separate districts, and so on. But at any given moment it is necessary to estimate the correlation of forces. For example, a situation is possible in which the struggle, begun at one factory, may, owing to the extreme tension in the working masses, serve as a signal for a general attack on the part of the workers despite all the decisions of the union officials. In such circumstances a guerrilla attack is of advantage, and consequently it is obligatory. But if the attack is limited to one or two enterprises, if it does not draw in large forces of workers from the very beginning, that kind of guerrilla movement may lead to a cruel defeat and to the discrediting of the revolutionary wing of the trade union movement. Again we come up against the question of the evaluation of one's own forces, only this time from another angle. This is of particular importance at a moment of large social conflicts; then every mistake may be very expensive and consequently the utmost coolness, firmness, cold calculation and merciless struggle against empty talk are especially necessary. To summon the workers to the struggle, and to receive an answer from 5 or 10 per cent., in other words, to be left in splendid isolation, connotes the establishing of a barrier between the advance guard and the army; and that is the greatest of defeats, one which will leave its effects for years after. Hence the necessity for especially cool calculation of the manœuvring abilities not only of the advance guard but of at least a large part of the proletarian army, in such circumstances.

Caution not Inaction

But if we approach the problem of strikes in this way shall we not be forced to reject them altogether? Is this not the preaching of superfluous caution and a demand of a guarantee of victory? So speak those who think that the revolutionary impatience of the leaders is an absolutely adequate basis for an advance on the part of the masses. It would be simply foolish to make a guarantee of victory a condition of attack on the part of the masses. And, generally speaking, no one can

Problems of Strike Strategy—continued

give such a guarantee. If there was a complete guarantee of victory then any fool could manoeuvre. There is a large element of risk in every attack of the masses, and the more severe the social conflict, the greater the risk.

Lenin taught us that no one can guarantee a 100 per cent. victory, but he also taught us another principle—it is not possible to play about with insurrection. That which is correct in application to an insurrection is correct in application to a strike. It is not possible to play about with a strike; a strike is a sharp weapon and often double-edged, and consequently it is necessary to try to call a strike at a moment when there is a minimum chance of defeat and a maximum chance of victory. That is all we have in mind.

People are always to be found who will carry a sound idea to a point of political absurdity. The reformists say: "A strike is a sharp weapon of struggle and consequently we must reject it." Against that theory and practice we must wage the most ruthless struggle. On the other hand, the anarchist-syndicalists say: "A strike is a sharp weapon, and consequently we will organise strikes almost every day." We answer, that this point of view also has nothing in common with the revolutionary strategy of the working class. Old Engels taught us the "concrete truth," and consequently in dealing with this question of strikes we must take into consideration the situation in the given sphere of industry, the correlation of forces between the employers and the workers, the economic position, the degree of organisation of the employers and the workers, the character of the trade union organisation, the correlation of forces as between the revolutionary and the reformist wings in the given union and in the whole trade union movement, and on the basis of all these factors taken together must work out our tactics.

If all these separate points are taken into account then, with their various conjunctions, a varying tactic is possible according to industries and according to countries. In certain conditions we can not only defend ourselves but even attack, in others we can only defend ourselves. A situation is possible in which it is not possible to take up a defensive position (a small revolutionary minority, and a large union which is being brought under the rein of the employers). In the general arsenal of the class struggle every weapon may be utilised; a strike, and a boycott, and passive resist-

ance, and guerrilla attacks, and demonstrations, and the summary putting into operation of the demands being put forth, and so on. Only he can be called a genuine trade union leader who in the given concrete situation, and basing himself on the actual forces present, applies various methods and means of struggle in order to achieve the maximum results in thorough-going defence of the interests of the working class.

Different Conditions—Different Tactics

The problems raised in this article touch upon one of the most important spheres of our work. Even at the Third Congress of the Profintern the question of strike strategy was raised. This question was then raised for the first time at an international congress. Except for the Profintern no one has ever yet considered the question. As the question was then raised for the first time one can only regard the debates at the Third Congress as an introduction to the problem, as an indication to the organisations attached to the Profintern to occupy themselves with the problems of strike strategy.

Three and a half years have passed since the Third Congress. During this period we have lived through a number of gigantic economic conflicts. The problems of the economic struggle have become much more complex, and a number of new problems have arisen, which can only be resolved on the basis of the study of the wealth of material available and the situation in each country. All Profintern organisations must seriously occupy themselves with the problems of the economic struggle, our weaknesses must be ruthlessly exposed, and a most resolute struggle must be waged against the vestiges of *anarcho-reformism* in our midst; we must think and work over the accumulated experience in order that a new step forward in this question may be made at the Fourth Congress.

Strike strategy is part of our general class strategy, but it is just that very part which has been least studied and least worked over, despite the fact that every day supplies us with dozens and hundreds of fresh facts. We must realise that until our organisations and minorities are able to play the leading role in the economic battles of the proletariat they will not succeed in winning the trade union movement. That must be realised once for all and all the necessary deductions drawn from the fact.

13th January, 1928.



The C.P.G.B. and the Labour Party

Thesis of C.C. of C.P.G.B.

(Adopted January 5th, 1928)

The following Thesis was adopted at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain. In addition to this Thesis, the Executive Committee has addressed an open letter to the Party Membership on various questions inviting the Party members to open a discussion in the Party press. Those comrades who have an opposing point of view are asked to take this opportunity to express their opinions in the course of the discussion.

EDITOR.

1. The Labour Party

1. The attitude of the Communist Party towards the Labour Party and towards electoral activity is part of the general activity undertaken by the Party to win the leadership of the masses of the British workers for Communism and the social revolution, and cannot be considered in isolation from the other activities of the Party which are directed to this end. The Party can only arrive at a correct policy in this respect by taking into account the tendencies of the existing political situation in Great Britain. "It is beyond question that the problem here, as everywhere, consists in the ability to apply the general and fundamental principles of Communism to the specific relations between parties and classes, to the specific conditions in the objective development towards Communism—conditions which are peculiar to every separate country and which one must be able to study, understand and point out."—(Lenin: "Left Wing Communism," p. 69.)

2. The Labour Party is a federal body of trade unions and affiliated political parties. The highest governing body in the Labour Party is the Annual Conference, composed of delegates from affiliated unions, affiliated political parties and local Labour Parties. The delegates from unions are elected according to the rules of the unions, which vary. In most cases a portion of the delegates are elected by union ballot vote, and represent the union together with a number of officials, who are not elected but who attend as representatives of the Executive of the union. The Executive of the Labour Party is elected by card vote at the National Conference. For purposes of election the E.C. is divided into three sections. (Section A) National Societies Section for which the trade unions and affiliated political parties nominate; (B) Local Constituencies Section for which the local Labour Parties nominate; (C) Women's Section for which all organisations (trade unions, political parties and local Labour Parties) having women members are allowed to nominate. Delegates nominated for either section are elected by the card vote of all organisations represented at the Conference. Communist Party members can get to the Labour Party conference as delegates from national unions, but are not eligible for nomination to the E.C.

The local Labour Parties are built up on the same lines as the National Labour Party. There are individual men's and women's sections, local branches of national political parties, like the I.L.P., and delegates from trade union branches. No Communist is allowed to be a member of an individual section, though left wing groups within such sections are common. The delegates from the individual sections, branches of political parties and trade unions meet together usually once a month in the management committee which is the governing body of the local Labour Party. The management committee elects the Executive Committee of the local Labour Party. Communists are allowed to serve as trade union delegates on the management committee of the local Labour Party, but are not eligible for the Executive Committee. Candidates are selected by a selection conference, which is really a special management committee meeting called for the purpose of selecting a candidate. Any affiliated body can nominate a candidate, it being generally understood, however, that the body so nominating must pay the candidate's election expenses. The Divisional Labour Party as a whole can, however, adopt a candidate, making itself responsible for the election expenses. It was largely under this rule that Communists like Saklatvala, Paul, Geddes, Vaughan and Ferguson were adopted as candidates by Divisional Labour Parties.

Since 1924, however, a Communist adopted by a Divisional Labour Party would not be endorsed by the E.C. of the Labour Party, if the Divisional Labour Party continued to run him as their candidate. The Selection Conference has power to replace a sitting M.P. by a new candidate, though this, however, has never actually been exercised.

The structure of the local Labour movement still varies from district to district and the same Committees have different names in different localities, though this does not detract from the general accuracy of the above sketch.

3. Our present attitude towards the Labour Party is fundamentally determined by the fact that the British Labour Party in spite of its social democratic programme, its "completely putrefied leadership" (Bukharin's speech at the Fifteenth Congress of C.P.S.U.), and the attempts of its leaders to impose Social Democratic Party discipline, is not yet a Social-Democratic Party in the accepted meaning of the term. It remains a Federation for Parliamentary purposes, of reformist political parties and trade unions, in which the trade unions have overwhelming numerical predominance, and which is still a loose federation because of the autonomy which the trade unions jealously preserve. Owing to its trade union basis, the Communists can still enter the Labour Party (1) as trade union delegates to the Committees and Conferences (for selecting parliamentary candidates) of the local Labour Parties, (2) as trade union delegates to the Labour Party Conference, (3)

C.P.G.B. and Labour Party—continued

where Communist influence is strong, as parliamentary candidates of the trade unions.

4. The Labour Party represents historically the first steps of the British workers towards class consciousness and socialism in the era when imperialism permanently ceased to be able to raise the working class standards of living (1870 onward). It has from the outset been led by reformist politicians because the unions entered that era under the domination of reformists, and because the bulk of the trade union bureaucracy, steeped in the day-to-day problems of union administration, were content to leave the political thinking and parliamentary direction of the Labour Party to middle class reformist politicians from the affiliated reformist parties; while numbers have been on the side of the unions at the Annual Conferences, the effective direction has, from the inception, been in the hands of reformist politicians outside the unions. The position in the Labour Party in this respect has been the natural development of the earlier position in the trade unions (1870-1900) when the trade unions were content to accept the advice and Parliamentary leadership of middle class Liberal and radical politicians.

5. The fact that the Labour Party is based on the unions, which are from time to time forced by the workers to conduct a struggle in their defence, has had important bearings on the development of the Labour Party, as the decline of British imperialism continued. The intensification of the class struggle in Great Britain, particularly from 1910 onwards, the growth of the unions, automatically increased the membership and the resources of the Labour Party. The effect of the great pre-war strikes, the shop stewards' movement during the war, the post-war Labour unrest, the unemployed movement, the General Strike and the mining lock-out, has been to drive hundreds of thousands of workers into the Labour Party, even though the great struggles which had won them away from adherence to the capitalist class had been opposed and sabotaged by the leaders of the Labour Party itself. Its basis upon the trade union organisations of the working class has strengthened the support of the Labour Party through every successive phase of the class struggle, even though the existence of that struggle was denied by the leaders of the Labour Party itself.

6. The Labour Party is not a real working class political party, but simply a stage in the development of the masses of British workers towards such a Party. Not the policy of its leaders but the development of the class struggle which those leaders were sabotaging, has attracted the workers to the Labour Party. Hence throughout its whole history, the Labour Party has been torn by struggle which reflected the antagonism between the instinctive class aspirations of the masses and the bourgeois policy of the leadership. The struggle against the MacDonald policy of supporting the Liberal Party in pre-war days, the struggle against the coalition policy during the war, the struggle of the Communist Party and the left wing workers of recent years, are all reflections of this process. Of recent years the Communist Party (since the end of 1925 the Communist Party through the left wing) has been the leader of all forms

of working class protest within the Labour Party, directed against the bourgeois policy of the leaders.

7. The present attitude of the Communist Party to the Labour Party has, in the last few years, not only enabled Party members to state the Communist point of view within the Labour movement, despite the exclusion of Communists from the Labour Party as individual members, but also to lead all the genuine working class elements in that Party in the struggle against the bourgeois leadership. This struggle was an integral part of the Party's fight for leadership of the masses against the bourgeoisie. This policy has brought the Party closer to the masses and has forced the bourgeois leaders to concentrate all their energy on expelling the Communists from the Labour Party, thereby leaving the workers within the Labour Party without a leader in their struggle within the Labour Party. This exclusion policy of the bureaucrats has met with a fair measure of success. The work of the Communists within the Labour Party is undoubtedly becoming more difficult. At the same time the leadership of the Labour Party has to a certain extent exposed itself to the masses through its conduct during the Labour Government and during the General Strike. Has not the time come for a revision or at least a re-examination of the attitude of the Communist Party towards the Labour Party?

2. Lenin's Advice in 1920

8. The present policy of the Party was based to a considerable extent on the advice given by Lenin to British Communists in 1920. The advice was given at a moment when the tempo of revolution was rising in Europe, before the Red Army had entered Poland, or the Italian metal-workers had seized factories, or the British workers had forced their leaders to form Councils of Action in order to force the Government to maintain an attitude of neutrality on the Russo-Polish war. In Britain the post-war economic crisis had reached its apex. Trade union membership was at its highest point. The unions were making drastic economic demands on the employers. The Third International was winning support from the class conscious workers all over the world, and in Britain the Centrist I.L.P. was coquetting with us. While a Communist Party had not been formed a number of socialist bodies were in the process of coming together in a Communist Party, and seemed assured of considerable support. The Lloyd George Government was in difficulties, and the Parliamentary Labour fraction composed in the main of right wing "war" socialists was in discredit with the workers. In this situation Lenin wrote:

"They must from within Parliament help the workers to see in practice the result of the Henderson and Snowden Government; they must help the Hendersons and Snowdens to vanquish Lloyd George and Churchill united. To act otherwise means to hamper the progress of the revolution; because without an alteration in the views of the majority of the working class, revolution is impossible; and this change can be brought about by the political experience of the masses only, and never through propaganda alone. If an indisputably weak minority of the workers say 'Forward without compromise, without stopping or turning,' their slogan is, on the face of

C.P.G.B. and Labour Party—continued

it, wrong. They know or at least they should know that the majority, in the event of Henderson's and Snowden's victory over Lloyd George and Churchill will, after a short time, be disappointed in its leaders, and will come over to Communism—or at any rate to neutrality and, in most cases, to benevolent neutrality towards the Communists. It is as though ten thousand soldiers were to throw themselves into battle against fifty thousand of the enemy at a time when a reinforcement of one hundred thousand men is expected, but is not immediately available; obviously, it is necessary at such a moment to stop, to turn, even to effect a compromise. This no-compromise slogan is intellectual childishness, and not the serious tactics of the revolutionary class.

“The fundamental law of revolutions confirmed by all revolutions, and particularly by all three Russian revolutions of the twentieth century, is as follows:

“It is not sufficient for the revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; for the revolution it is necessary that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule as of old. Only when the masses *do not want* the old regime, and when the rulers are *unable* to govern as of old, then only can the revolution succeed. This truth may be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without an all-national crisis, affecting both exploited and the exploiters. It follows that for the revolution it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the conscious thinking, politically active workers) should fully understand the necessity for a revolution, and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; second, that the ruling class be in a state of governmental crisis which attracts even the most backward masses into politics. It is a sign of every real revolution, this rapid tenfold or even hundredfold increase in the number of representatives of the toiling and oppressed masses, heretofore apathetic, who are able to carry on a political fight, which weakens the government and facilitates its overthrow by the revolutionaries.

“In Great Britain, as is seen specifically from Lloyd George's speech, both conditions for successful proletarian revolution are obviously developing. And mistakes now on the part of the Left Communists are now all the more dangerous just because some revolutionaries show an insufficiently penetrating, insufficiently attentive, conscious and foreseeing attitude towards each of these conditions.”—(“Left Wing Communism,” pp. 65-66.)

9. What were the tasks of the Communists in relation to the Labour Party as Lenin saw them at this time?

“That the Hendersons, Clynes, MacDonalds and Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary, is true. It is also true that they want to take power in

their own hands (preferring, however, a coalition with the bourgeoisie), that they want to govern according to the same old rules of the bourgeoisie and that they will inevitably behave, when in power like the Scheidemanns and the Noskes. All this is true, but it does not necessarily follow that to support them means treason to the revolution: on the contrary, in the interests of the revolution, the revolutionaries of the working class must render to these gentlemen a certain parliamentary support.”—(“Left Wing Communism,” p. 62.)

“On the contrary, since the majority of the workers in Britain still support the British Scheidemanns and Kerenskys, since they have not yet experienced a government composed of such men, which experience was necessary in Russia and Germany before there was an exodus of the masses towards Communism, it follows without any doubt that the British Communists must participate in Parliament. They must from *within* Parliament, help the workers to see in practice the result of the Henderson and Snowden Government; they must help the Hendersons and Snowdens to vanquish Lloyd George and Churchill united; to act otherwise means to hamper the progress of the revolution, because without an alteration in the views of the majority of the working class, revolution is impossible, and this change can be brought about by the political experience of the masses only and never through propaganda.”—(p. 65.)

“If we are not a revolutionary group, but the Party of the revolutionary class and wish to carry the masses with us (without which we run the risk of remaining mere babblers) we must first help Henderson and Snowden to defeat Lloyd George and Churchill; or to be more explicit, we must compel the former to defeat the latter for the former are afraid of their victory. Secondly, we must help the majority of the working class to convince themselves through their own experience that we are right: that is, they must convince themselves of the utter worthlessness of the Hendersons and Snowdens, of their petty bourgeois and treacherous natures, of the inevitability of their bankruptcy. Thirdly, we must accelerate the moment when, through the disappointments of the majority of the workers with the Hendersons it will be possible, with serious chances of success, to overthrow the Henderson Government.”—(p. 66.)

It is clear from these quotations that the type of Labour government which Lenin envisaged as possible, and which he urged the British Communists to assist in realising, was a Henderson-Snowden Government, i.e., a Labour Government of the extreme-right type. Furthermore, the criterion which Lenin used was the opinion of the majority of the working class (or at least of its politically active section).

10. The tactics which Lenin advised the British Communists to pursue were as follows:

“The Communist Party must offer to the Hendersons and Snowdens a compromise, an electoral

C.P.G.B. and Labour Party—continued

understanding—'Let us go together against the union of Lloyd George and Churchill, let us divide the seats in Parliament according to the number of votes cast by the workers for the Labour Party and the Communists (not in the election, but by a special poll), we to retain the fullest freedom of agitation, propaganda and political activity.' Without the latter conditions, there can be no blocs, for this would be treason;"—(pp. 66-67.)

It will be noted that Lenin advised this without discussing the question of affiliation to the Labour Party which, at the moment of writing "Left Wing Communism" he confessed he knew little about. That is to say, Lenin had in mind the offer of a bloc by a Communist Party which was outside and distinct from the Labour Party, not fighting for affiliation to it, taking part in its local committees and election conferences, national conferences, etc.

11. But Lenin developed his views on the Labour Party further during the debate at the Second Congress of the Comintern:

"But we have very peculiar conditions in the Labour Party. It is not a Party in the ordinary sense of the word. It consists of the members of all the trade union organisations, which means four million members at the present moment. It leaves sufficient liberty to all political parties which are its members. Therefore, we have in this Party the great mass of the English workers, led by the worst bourgeois elements, by the social patriots, worse even than Scheidemann and Noske, and similar gentlemen.

"Comrade McLaine has pointed out that such peculiar conditions prevail now in England that a political party which really desires to be and can be a revolutionary workers' party, nevertheless can be united with this strange workers' organisation of four millions of workers, of half-trade union and half political character, which is led by the bourgeoisie. Under these circumstances, it would be the greatest mistake for the best revolutionary elements not to do all in their power in order to remain in this Party. Let Thomas, and the other social traitors who are being treated as such, exclude them. This will have an excellent influence on the English working masses."

12. The Communist Party did not offer the Labour Party an electoral bloc of the type recommended by comrade Lenin in "Left Wing Communism," and the question of a bloc in the sense first outlined by Lenin was never raised again after the Second Congress. The Party arrived at the conclusion (endorsed by Lenin and the Comintern) that the form of united front which the constitution of the Labour Party made possible, and which was the correct one under the circumstances, was Communist affiliation to the Labour Party (Communist individual membership and trade union delegates to the Labour Party, combined with the fullest possible criticism of the Labour Party leaders).

13. The possibility of the leaders of the Labour Party refusing a bloc (as they have refused to allow Communist affiliations) was not overlooked by Lenin. With such a situation in view, he wrote:

"Should the Hendersons and the Snowdens refuse to form a bloc with the Communists, the latter would have at once gained in the work of obtaining the sympathies of the masses and of discrediting the Hendersons and Snowdens: and if on that account the Communists should lose a few seats in Parliament, it would not matter very much to them. We would not put forward our candidates only in very insignificant numbers and only in absolutely safe districts, that is, where our candidates would not help to elect a Liberal against a Labourite. We should carry on an election campaign, spreading literature in favour of Communism, and proposing in all districts where we have no candidate, to vote for the Labourite against the bourgeois."—"Left Wing Communism," p. 68.)

14. The conditions laid down by Lenin for carrying out the united front tactic were:

1. Freedom of criticism on part of Communists.

2. "Political opinions [i.e., Labour Party members and affiliated bodies] are not enquired into. The British Socialist Party can freely brand Henderson as a traitor, nevertheless remain a member of the Labour Party. This means the collaboration of the vanguard of the working class with the rearguard It is a matter of the utmost importance for the entire movement that we insist on the British Communists forming a link between the Parties, that is, the minority of the working class and all the backward sections of the workers."

Again we see Lenin regarding the whole question from the standpoint of the Party's relation with the backward majority of the workers and of the Party being able to lead that majority into political experiences which were an essential transitional stage to the revolution.

3. Changes Since 1920

15. How far have the conditions changed since Lenin wrote? Objectively, the situation in Britain in 1927 is not so revolutionary as in 1920. Capitalism in Britain and in Europe has achieved a certain measure of temporary stabilisation at the expense of the workers: and though the latter is beginning to break down here and there it is still a factor to be reckoned with. It has not as yet to face once again the vast elemental movement of the masses pressing for the satisfaction of their immediate demands which was characteristic of 1920, while the revolution in China has begun a definitely new era, British imperialism is not yet faced with the same direct menace as it was in India in 1919 and in Ireland in 1920-21. The number of the organised workers has been halved in Britain as in most European countries, the active workers are politically clearer, but the reformists are more united, more openly straining every nerve on the side of the capitalists and are using the Labour Party and trade union machine in a more deliberate fashion in order to hinder the spread of Communism. Undoubtedly the tempo has been rising steadily again

C.P.G.B. and Labour Party—continued

in England, after the first depression caused by the defeats of the workers in 1921 and 1922, and has been accelerated by the experience of the Labour Government and the General Strike. The existence of a united Communist Party, uniting the revolutionary vanguard of the workers, constitutes a big step in advance. Nevertheless, while the tempo is rising, it has not yet reached the pitch attained in 1920. This is seen particularly well if we measure the situation by the picture drawn by Lenin in 1920. "In Britain, as is seen specifically from Lloyd George's speech, both conditions for a successful proletarian revolution are obviously developing. And mistakes on the part of the Left Communists are now all the more dangerous just because some revolutionaries show an insufficiently penetrating, insufficiently attentive, conscious and foreseeing attitude towards each of these conditions."

It is, therefore, a mistake to argue that Lenin's advice is obsolete on the grounds that he gave it in a different situation. The question is, does the present situation differ from the 1920 situation in these respects which, in Lenin's eyes, determined the policy he laid down for the British Party? And to this question we must reply, that the tempo of revolution is not yet even as high to-day as he described it in June, 1920.

Lenin's Advice Holds Good

16. It is equally a mistake to argue that the advice of Lenin is obsolete on the ground that the workers have experienced a Labour Government. Have the Communists through assisting in the return of the government helped "the majority of the working class to convince themselves through their own experience, that we are right." Here one must ask oneself not only whether the vanguard of the revolutionary class has been convinced, but whether a substantial proportion of the working class has been convinced. The answer must be that whilst the experience of the Labour Government exposed to a number of the most active workers the true character of the Labour leaders, the experience of the Labour Government was too short and incomplete to convince the mass of the workers that the Communists were right. The history of the Labour Government in the mind of the average worker will contain not only court dress and Bengal Ordinances, but slight concessions to the unemployed, Housing Acts and a treaty with the U.S.S.R. which he is convinced stimulated the capitalists to destroy the Labour Government.

The unbridled reaction of the Baldwin Government has by way of contrast strengthened the desire of the workers for a Labour Government, and the wide masses of the workers at the moment are perhaps more anxious than ever before to return a Labour Government to office. We know that after the Labour Government the Labour Party secured a million more working class votes.

The experience of the Labour Government has, therefore, strengthened Party influence among the active circles of the workers without, however, weakening the influence of the leaders over the majority of the workers. This was recognised (1) in the discussions at the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. in November, 1924; (2) in the

resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in March, 1926 (Section 2).

17. The effect of the General Strike in exposing the Labour bureaucracy has been considerable, particularly amongst those sections of the workers who were particularly affected and who were accessible to C.P. propaganda. The experience of the General Strike has increased the Party influence in certain unions. On the other hand, the workers in many industries and districts who have been barely touched by the Party propaganda still accept the explanation of the bureaucrats, which puts the blame upon the stubborn miners who refused to accept the Samuel Memorandum. Thus, while the Party has gained notable successes amongst the miners, and has increased its influence mightily in other unions, the right wing has also been strengthened for the moment by the accession of former Centrists and pseudo-left elements.

The mass trend to the Labour Party is still continuing and was definitely strengthened by the General Strike for the same reasons as in 1924, namely, that the struggle itself brought still further masses of workers into the political arena for the first time. This was recognised in the resolution of the Seventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in November 26th (six months after the General Strike) in clauses 6 and 15, though the splitting policy of the bureaucracy is preventing the fullest results being reaped. All evidence goes to show that a majority of the working class still believes in Henderson and Snowden to a considerable extent, though not so uncritically as in 1920, in the dialectical sense, i.e., there is greater political differentiation amongst them.

Changes in the Labour Party

18. It is asserted that such changes have taken place in the constitution of the Labour Party as to render the conditions of Lenin, viz. (1) freedom of criticism, (2) freedom of entry to the Labour Party, practically inoperative. In 1920 it was argued that the federal structure of the Labour Party offered the possibility of a united front at least from below. Party members could enter local Labour Parties as (1) individual members; (2) trade union delegates; (3) could go to conferences as representatives of the local Labour Party or of their unions; (4) could secure adoption as Labour Party candidates; (5) could exert criticism from inside the Labour Party and mobilise the left wing opposition against the reactionary leadership, whereas criticism directed purely from outside would throw the rank and file into the arms of the leaders.

As a result of the intensification of the class struggle, the differentiation produced inside the Labour movement and the consequent sharp reaction of the bureaucracy towards the tactics of the Communist Party inside the Labour Party, a considerable alteration in the position of the Party inside the Labour Party has taken place, as can be gauged from the following facts:

1. No Communist is allowed to run as a Labour candidate with sanction from the National Headquarters of the Labour Party.

2. No Communist can enter the Labour Party as an individual member (except in a few isolated parties which have not yet been disaffiliated).

C.P.G.B. and Labour Party—continued

3. No Communist trade unionist can sit on the Executive of a Divisional or local Labour Party. (The Executive should not be confused with the General Committee or Management Committee of the local Labour Party in which ultimate power rests.)

4. No Communist trade unionist can go from his local Labour Party as a delegate.

5. The only way open to Communists to get to National Labour Party Conferences is through the trade unions.

6. The Labour Party Executive is considering as a remit from the Margate Conference, 1926, the alteration of rules. The rules may exclude Communists even as trade union delegates.

7. On the other hand while a few divisional Labour Parties have begun to exclude Communist trade union delegates, in the overwhelming majority of cases the latter can attend both General Council meetings and conferences for selecting Parliamentary candidates.

8. It is by no means correct to say, as has been done: "We are expelled from trade unions." This only applies to one union which is of quite a peculiar character.

Thus, summing up, the avenue into the Labour Party through individual membership has been closed for Communists since 1925; official posts in the local Labour Parties are formally closed to Communists; but the avenue to trade union delegation to the controlling body of the local Labour Party is still open.

The Local Labour Parties

19. The position in the local Labour Parties has changed in many important respects since 1920. In 1920-25 a considerable number of local Labour Parties by no means sympathetic to Communism, were prepared to support our entry to the local Labour movement; (a) because the Labour Party "ought" to be an all-embracing organisation; (b) because a united front was necessary; (c) because the Communists were good fighters. With the differentiation in the movement and the adoption by the Labour Party E.C. of disciplinary measures to enforce the Liverpool decisions, the differentiation in the local Labour Parties expressed itself along definite, political lines. A portion of the workers who had previously supported the Party now supported the E.C. The support of the workers who remained with the C.P. became more consciously political, i.e., they supported the Communist Party because they agreed with its policy, and not merely as formerly, its right to be in the Labour Party. Nevertheless, while the partial setback of the Party organisationally in its application of united front tactics under those conditions is undeniable, the political gains, direct and indirect, of this policy have been great. The Party has maintained close connection with the backward mass of the workers, and has been able to mobilise them and bring pressure on the bureaucracy, viz., in the campaign previous to the general strike, "Hands Off China Campaign," etc. It should be clearly stated since reference has been made to the London May Day demonstration in 1927 as a proof of the need to fight the Labour Party

as such at the elections, that the success of this demonstration was due precisely to the fact that the Party could mobilise the workers in opposition to the Labour leaders through the medium of a number of local Labour Parties and trades councils, in which it had formed a left wing bloc with a majority by means of its united front tactics within the Labour Party, and which in consequence had been disaffiliated by Eccleston Square. The Party has, by this policy, extended its influence at a period when an isolationist policy would have killed it; it has gathered round itself a nucleus of a genuine working class left wing within the Labour Party (both of whole local Labour Parties and of left wing groups within the Labour Parties) and by this policy has been able to begin to change the leadership of the trade unions which form the basis of the Labour Party.

While the number of Party individual members in local Labour Parties has diminished, strong left wing groups of left wing workers and Party trade unionists are now functioning in many local Labour Parties from which individual Communists have been excluded.

While the number of Party members attending Labour Party conferences has diminished, the number of Party trade unionists has tended to increase, as has also the number of left wing workers prepared to work within the Party.

The Organised Left Wing

20. The important thing to remember about the organised left wing movement in the Labour Party is that it is not composed of self-styled "left" elements of the Wilkinson, Maxton, Lansbury types, but of rank and file Labour Party workers who are for the most part prepared to work side by side with the Communists, around a policy of struggle against the Labour Party bureaucracy, for the admission of Communists, with full rights, into the Labour Party, and for a militant socialist programme in the Labour Party. The sham "left" of the Wilkinson type were and are in actual fact the strongest opponents of an organised rank and file left wing opposition, and while the National Left Wing has not attracted many national non-Party figures (apart from men like Gossip, Southall, Crick, etc.), it has achieved a considerable measure of support from Labour Party workers in the localities, and, with increased Party attention, is undoubtedly capable of rallying large numbers of workers for the three-fold purposes mentioned above.

The National Left Wing has been built up more on a basis of organised group work in local Labour Parties than of spectacular conferences, but there are still many important areas where this work is receiving insufficient attention. Given this attention, a genuine mass left wing opposition in the Labour Party is possible in the near future.

21. The growth of the Party strength in the trade unions is bound to produce a change in our favour within the Labour Party. On the other hand, the adoption of a policy within the Labour Party which alienates mass support from our Party would also alienate support from us in the majority of the trade unions, members of which still look to a Henderson-Snowden Government.

C.P.G.B. and Labour Party—continued

22. While the situation in the Labour Party has rendered the operation of the policy of the Party more difficult this policy still remains the most effective in the present situation for winning the mass of the workers to Communism. It is still possible for the Party members within the Labour Party to freely criticise, expose, and fight for the removal of the present Labour Party leadership; freedom of entry into the Labour Party is still possible locally and nationally through the trade unions; the Party can still assist in the development of the left wing in the Labour Party, and as the leadership of the Labour Party swings sharply to the right, the Party stands out as the only real opponent of reformism within the Labour movement. It thus stands to reap the results of this attitude as the Labour Party leadership reveals its bankruptcy in action to the "backward majority" of the working class.

4. Tasks of the Party.

23. In view of the desire of the broad mass of the workers to secure the defeat of the Baldwin Government, the C.P. must more than ever apply the tactic of the united front from below in relation to the Labour Party, by standing forth as the champion of the working class unity on a fighting programme and by placing upon the bureaucracy the responsibility for splitting the local movement. Where the support of the workers for the Communist Party is strong and the local Labour Party is not prepared to adopt Communists as candidates for local elections, the C.P. must approach the local Labour Party and demand a share of the seats to be contested.

23a. The Party must, therefore, continue its policy of applying for affiliation to the Labour Party and fighting for full rights for Communists as trade unionists and individual members of that Party. At the moment when the trade unions are collecting the political levy from all their members and not merely from those who agree with the present reformist policy of the Labour Party leadership, it would be capitulation for the Party to abandon this fight. The fight for full political rights for Communist trade unionists within the Labour Party must be accompanied by the campaign for Party affiliation to the Labour Party, as this campaign in spite of the obstacles created by the reformists helps to increase Party influence amongst the workers. To abandon this campaign at the moment when we are slowly increasing our strength in the unions would be folly.

24. The Party in 1928, no less than in 1920, must help to push a Henderson-Snowden Government into office in order to help the workers by their own experience to convince themselves of the worthlessness of reformism. In pushing the reformists to office the Party must combine criticism with support, explaining to the workers why they are pursuing this tactic. The tactic of helping the reformists to office must not be made an excuse for the C.P. supporting or contesting the current illusions of the workers as to the possibility of a reformist government bringing about an improvement in the condition of the working class, let alone their emancipation. It must be remembered in this connection that the masses will be more critical of a minority or coalition Labour Government than they were in 1926, just

because events since then have hastened differentiations amongst them.

25. Party support for a campaign to hasten the advent of a second reformist Labour Government does not exclude, but on the contrary renders more than ever necessary the struggle for the election of Communists at the next election. The Party must expose the hypocrisy of the reformists who are forbidding local Labour Parties from adopting Communist candidates, splitting the local Labour movement, and then whining that the Communists are splitting the united front when they put forward candidates. The Communist Party cannot agree to any interpretation of the united front which means the withdrawal of all Communist candidates and the unconditional support of the reformist machine by Communists. There can be no united front unless the Communists put forward their quota of candidates and retain their full right of criticism. The Party must, therefore, put forward its candidates (1) in districts where a C.P. candidate has already contested; (2) in double-member constituencies where the Labour Party is only running one candidate; (3) as the candidate of a disaffiliated Labour Party; (4) in districts which are overwhelmingly proletarian so that a split vote would not let the capitalist candidates in. All members of the Party standing as candidates must declare themselves to be such and must fight for the Party policy.

Independence of the Party

26. The Party must, as in all past elections, issue its independent programme and explain its tactics fully to the electorate. Party support for official Labour candidates in areas where the Party has no candidates of its own, must be accompanied by an explanation of the Party policy and tactics and by the sharpest possible criticism of the Labour Party candidate, but even in the case of MacDonald, Thomas, Henderson and Co., (whom Lenin described in 1920 as "worse than Noske and Scheidemann," but whom he advised us to support because of the need for the "backward majority of the workers" to convince themselves by experience), the Party cannot (1) advise the workers to vote Liberal or Tory; (2) advise mere abstention; (3) put up a candidate who would let in the Liberal or Tory. The same tactics must apply to these notorious reactionaries as to the Labour Party leadership as a whole. To argue otherwise means to fall back on subjective instead of objective standards of political analysis.

27. If the above policy is adopted the Party candidates will only oppose Labour candidates (1) where Communists have already contested the seat; (2) where a disaffiliated Labour Party is the real representative of the local Labour movement, or (3) where Communist opposition to a Labour candidate would not result in a capitalist victory. We must maintain definitely the view, confirmed at repeated Plenums since the Labour Government, and as recently as May, 1927, that a policy of the above character at one and the same time (1) emphasises the independent role of the Party; (2) enables the Party as the proletarian vanguard to retain its connection with the active workers in the Labour Party; (3) creates the best possible conditions for mobilising the workers against the reformists, and thereby driving the reformists more and more to discredit themselves.

C.P.G.B. and Labour Party—continued

28. The proposition that the Party should run candidates against Labour candidates, even where the above conditions do not obtain, cannot facilitate the task of the Party in winning over the mass of the workers, but on the contrary will actually impede it. The Party in its policy has hitherto drawn a distinction between the rank and file, moving forward in opposition to capitalism, and the leadership engaged in utilising the Labour Party machine to impose a capitalist policy on the workers. To come out and oppose Labour candidates that have the backing of the Party, but will only have for its result the creation of an unnecessary barrier between the Party and the mass of the workers standing behind the Labour Party whom it is our duty to win for Communism. It is not a tactic calculated to strengthen the Communist Party against the reformists, but on the contrary, a tactic calculated to strengthen the reformist leaders against the Communist Party. The whole tactic of the reformists of recent years has been to provoke our Party into the premature employment of such tactics. At the Labour Party conference in 1924, the reformists' spokesmen, Frank Hodges and Herbert Morrison, recommended such tactics to our Party, knowing that the results would be in their favour. If our Party opposed Labour candidates on a wide scale, without winning the support of the local Labour movement, it would be regarded not as a blow to the reformist leadership, but at the Labour Party as such, and thus its working class supporters. The consequences of this policy would be to drive away support from our Party in the trade unions (for the mass of members of whom the Labour Party is their parliamentary machinery) as well as in the Labour Party and would, therefore, have the opposite result from what is intended.

A Luxury

To contest the seats of reactionary leaders, without having won the local workers to our support, would not only result in the crushing defeat of the Party, but would consolidate the rank and file workers (who are growing increasingly critical of the bureaucracy) against us throughout the country, and would ensure the complete defeat of those Party candidates who are running under more favourable conditions elsewhere. Such an action the Labour Party Executive has been seeking, is seeking, and attempting to provoke, as a means of proving to the workers that we (and not they) are the splitters and disrupters of the Labour movement. The relative strength of our Party in relation to the Labour Party and the tasks we have set ourselves prohibit such a luxury at present, whatever the future may hold.

29. In order to carry out this policy, the Party, the left wing and the disaffiliated Labour Parties will require to intensify their day to day propaganda work in the constituencies selected for contest. As but little has been done in this direction so that while the influence of disaffiliated Parties amongst the active men in the Labour movement is great, the case of the disaffiliated parties against the Labour bureaucracy is not as well understood as it might be amongst the mass of the workers. Without the systematic and extended employment of Party and left wing forces in the constituencies

selected it would be impossible to gain a workers' victory over the capitalists and scab Labour candidates.

30. Only by such a policy will it be possible to build up the strength of the Party and the left wing workers organised in the left wing movement within the Labour Party. At the moment this movement as a consequence of the organised attack made upon it by the bureaucracy, has been cleared of all left wing phrasemongers and is composed of the most resolutely left wing workers who are not afraid to stand alongside the Communists in their struggle against the pro-capitalist policy of the bureaucracy. In a period when the whole movement is passing through a period of depression (the consequences of the defeat of the General Strike and the miners' lock-out and the subsequent betrayal of the bureaucracy) the bureaucracy has been able to force this movement on to the defensive and is struggling desperately in the attempt to eliminate it as an active power. As the movement recovers, however, it will become increasingly difficult for the bureaucracy to stifle the growth of this movement provided it continues to stand on its present platform of fighting for a change in the policy and leadership of the Labour Party. The advent of a Labour Government and the inevitable exposure of reformist bankruptcy will further strengthen this movement. If, however, the Communist Party were to engage in a policy of opposing Labour candidates (as distinct from scab candidates and reactionaries manipulating the local Labour Party machine so that it fails to give honest reflection of the attitude of local workers) it would inevitably weaken the left wing movement by splits, give the bureaucracy an excuse for expulsions and lead to the possibility of a revival of a sham left wing movement when the rank and file of the Labour Party on the basis of experience of the bankruptcy of reformism, intensify the struggle against the bureaucracy.

Minimum Left Programme

31. The programme of the National Left Wing Movement, together with its resolutions on such questions as the Blanesburgh Report, the Trade Union Bill, the war danger, the break with the U.S.S.R. constitutes a minimum programme which Communists can support, and around which with persistent work, the Left Wing Movement can rally the workers in the Labour Party, winning whole Labour Parties to its point of view, enabling the local workers to remove reactionary Labour candidates and substituting for them left wing fighters and Communists. Experience has shown that when left wing Labour Parties are disaffiliated they can, by mass activity, retain the support of the local workers, even against the Ecclestone Square machine.

32. In order to secure the effective development of the left wing, the Communists must assist the National Left Wing Movement both to extend and deepen its influence with the local Labour Parties by (1) assisting in the formation of a left wing group in every local Labour Party; (2) working to increase the influence of the left wing in localities where a left wing group already exists by visitation of trade union branches and ward Labour Parties, carrying out of intensified propaganda, etc.

C.P.G.B. and Labour Party—continued

33. The National Left Wing Movement should be encouraged to put the question of changing the personnel of the Parliamentary Labour Party to the forefront of its activity. More and more Eccleston Square is endeavouring to transform the local Labour M.P. from a representative of the local workers to a servant of the Labour Party bureaucracy dictating to the local workers. The left wing should recognise that it is not enough to secure the adoption of a left wing point of view by the local Labour Party, if that Party does not send to Parliament an M.P. adequately expressing its point of view. The local Labour Parties should in all cases insist that the M.P. is their representative by instructing him as to how he should vote in the Parliamentary Labour Party, and by insisting on receiving from him a regular report on his activities.

34. While pursuing the above tactics as those best qualified to win the workers to its standard at the present stage of development, the Party cannot exclude the possibility of having to change its tactics in the event of a sharp change in the situation such as would be occasioned by (1) the formation of a Liberal-Labour electoral bloc; (2) bye-election during the period of life of a Liberal-Labour Parliamentary bloc; (3) the entry of the Labour Party into a national coalition government if Great Britain were engaged in a war or in the suppression of a colonial insurrection.

Further, if the channels were closed through which Communists could enter the Labour Party by the (1) wholesale refusal of Communists as trade union delegates; (2) the expulsion of Communists from unions; (3) expulsion of unions which fell under Communist leadership, meanwhile having won by the application of its present policy, the sympathy and support of thousands of left wing workers, and having forced the petty bourgeois leadership to expose themselves completely.

5. Defects in Party Work.

35. While the Party's present policy is, in the main, correct, it cannot be said that everything possible has been done to make it effective. A number of mistakes and omissions have been made both at the centre and in the localities.

36. In the thesis on the national and international battlefield, the independent role of the Party in the event of a general election was insufficiently stressed, even if this thesis is taken as it ought to be taken, alongside the resolution on the general election.

"The Party must, therefore, struggle energetically to secure the resignation of the Baldwin Government pursuing a working class policy, under the control of the Labour movement. To that end it must (a) encourage the workers' resistance to the capitalist offensive, and explain the role of the Baldwin Government and the capitalist State in regard to that offensive, connect up every wage struggle with the struggle for power, and explain the setting up of a Labour Government as a stage in the workers' struggle for power; (b) fight for the suspension of the Liverpool decisions, and the re-entry of the dis-affiliated Labour Parties into the Labour Party;

(c) fight against the watering down of the present reformist programme and demand the adoption of a more definite socialist programme and by a special Labour Party Conference as the basis for the work of the next Labour Government; (d) fight for the control of the next Labour Government by the Labour Party E.C. acting on the instructions of the special Conference, and the election of the Labour Cabinet by the Labour Party E.C.; (e) fight for the development and consolidation of the National Left Wing Movement in order to achieve these ends; (f) combat the leftist tendencies amongst disappointed workers."

It was wrong to put the policy of pushing a Labour Government into office in such a way that it gives the impression that the Party will not draw a distinction between a Labour Government and a workers' Government.

Mistakes Made

While it was wrong to push forward the slogan of a Labour Government under the control of the Labour movement, in such a way as to give the impression that it was the central slogan of our electoral policy, we still consider that in view of the fact that the Labour Party is based on the trade unions, whose members as distinct from leaders are moving to the left, that in the event of a Labour Government being returned the slogan of the control of the Labour Government by the Labour movement would still have a certain value, though the form of control which we should advocate would be one exercised by the mass organisations of the workers and not by the bureaucracy.

It was further wrong not to raise the question of changing the leadership of the Labour Party. The centre relied too much on correspondence with a view to inducing districts to an intensified participation in the municipal elections, when visits to the various districts would have been more effective than correspondence.

The campaign in the Party press and in the country before the Labour Party Conference was weak. In particular, many districts failed to appreciate the importance of the campaign leaflets on affiliation, and did not distribute them speedily or as effectively as was necessary for the success of the campaign.

37. The Party has not devoted as much study and agitation with regard to the operations of reformism in the Labour Party as it has in the trade unions. This defect requires to be remedied.

38. While an improvement in the parliamentary work of a few districts has recently taken place, it remains true that this is generally very backward, and this requires to be remedied.

39. The best utilisation of Party forces for work in the constituencies demands more planned activity than hitherto. The Parliamentary Department of the Agit-Prop Department should work out a plan of campaign extending throughout this year and should arrange for the best possible concentration of Party forces in the constituencies to be contested, even if this involves a diminution of Party activity in other spheres.

The Chief Lessons of the Civil War in Finland

TEN years have elapsed since the Finnish workers followed the example set them in Russia's great October. The workers' revolution in Finland was drowned in the blood of thousands of workers. Since that time the Finnish workers have recovered to a considerable extent and are now utilising the lessons of their revolution by organising a mass movement. These lessons have been instructive not only for the workers in Finland, but also for the whole international workers' movement.

The next revolution to follow on the Russian October was the revolution in Finland. Involuntarily we raise the question why the revolution broke out two or three months later in Finland. For Finland was a part of the Tsarist empire and had a powerful Labour movement. In 1917 the Finnish social-democrats were in control of the Parliament and had a government majority. And, what is more important still, the situation in Finland in November, 1917, was definitely revolutionary. The whole country was in the throes of a general strike, which was led by the social-democrats and the Trade Union Alliance; the workers' organisations were in control. Why then was power given back into the hands of the bourgeoisie?

The answer to this is that there was no Bolshevik Party. Finland was the only country of all the enormous Tsarist territory that had no Bolshevik Party, nor even an organised left fraction. The reason for this was to be sought in the fact that the Finnish social-democrats, through national narrowness, had held aloof from the Russian revolution and had consequently become isolated from questions of great world importance.

Such was the type of social-democrat that was destined to take over the conduct of the revolution. As a matter of fact the civil war was thrust upon them. The choice lay between an irretrievable capitulation to the bourgeoisie or joining the offensive together with the revolutionary proletariat. The Party decided in favour of the latter policy, but was lacking in political preparation; after struggles which lasted three months the revolution was defeated and the Party smashed.

Another important factor which contributed to the failure of the struggle of the Finnish workers was that, as a result of the disarmament of Finland which took place 15 years previously, the Finnish workers were without any kind of military training. It was not possible to make good this shortcoming by the military training which was undertaken in the last moment by Russian volunteer instructors.

The White Army squads were also devoid of military experience. But the Whites, under the supervision of Finnish officers who had served in the Tsar's army, had taken measures in good time to form and train their Defence Corps. The expert military command of the Whites was assisted by an influx of Russian, German, and Swedish officers. Furthermore, the Whites were in an exceedingly advantageous position through

having 2,000 irregulars at their disposal; these were composed of petty bourgeois elements who had received military training during the war with Germany. In the early stages it was the intention of these irregulars to train themselves for the struggle to liberate Finland from the Tsarist yoke, but now this movement was used by the bourgeoisie to strengthen the ranks of the White Guards and to slaughter the Finnish workers. In this manner petty bourgeois nationalist illusions were exploited by the bourgeoisie.

Yet, in despite of all this, the counter-revolution was obliged to procure reinforcements from abroad; a Swedish volunteer force and a German "auxiliary expedition" came on the scene. With such heavy odds against them the Finnish workers were defeated in spite of the fraternal aid given by their Russian class comrades.

The Finnish revolution provides the following main lessons for the international proletariat:

1. **The lesson of internationalism.** Workers in small States must break away from their national narrowness, recognise the true nature of imperialism and take an active part in the common struggle of the international proletariat.

2. **The lesson of the methods of the proletarian revolution.** The democratic illusions which clung to the social-democrats greatly hampered the complete development of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Workers should seek no petty, half-way measures in the revolution, but must avoid all compromise and lack of decision; workers must become complete masters of the Marxist-Leninist teachings on revolutionary strategy.

3. **The importance of the correct solution of the national question.** In Finland the national question was a very complicated one. The disbanding of the former Tsarist army in Finland provided the Finnish bourgeoisie with a good opportunity for an excessive display of chauvinism and demagogy. The social-democrats were incapable of carrying out a correct Leninist national policy in the face of this.

4. **The significance of the peasant question.** The half-measures of the Finnish social-democrats in this respect resulted in large sections of the toiling peasantry joining forces with the class enemy. Many of our Communist Sections have not yet fully grasped this lesson.

5. **The main lesson is the lesson of the Party.** The Finnish revolution demonstrated the fact that only a Bolshevik Party can lead the revolution successfully.

The Finnish revolution proves the correctness of Lenin's words that although the workers are forced to make their way through vacillations and errors, still they will gain their aim in the end.

The dearly-bought lessons of the Finnish revolution must especially now receive the close attention of the international proletariat.