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**The Importance of
the Theoretical Struggle
International T. U. Movement
Is "Prosperity" Returning?**

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The Importance of the Theoretical Struggle

By R. DIXON

October, 1935, will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the formation of the Communist Party of Australia. The Central Committee of the Party has decided to make the whole year one for the most intensive study of Marxism-Leninism and of the Australian labor movement and its problems. This decision is tremendously important, for the great and multitudinous problems which confront the Party, and which increase in complexity and size as the Party grows, will be solved only by studying more fundamentally Marxism-Leninism. This is not just an inner-Party question, as some people imagine. It is a question for the whole working class, for as the class struggle sharpens, so the struggle on the theoretical front becomes more intense and vital. The Communist Party has not sufficiently grasped this fact, and there is a tendency to underestimate its significance.

Engels and Lenin attached great importance to this question, and insisted that the struggle against capitalism must be "so conducted that its three sides, the theoretical, the political and the practical economic (resistance to capitalists) form one harmonious and well-planned entity" (Engels: "Peasant War in Germany").

In the earlier period of the labor movement, the struggle of the Australian workers was not conducted against capitalism in this manner. The economic struggles and political struggles were conducted, in the main, independent of each other, whilst the theoretical struggle was entirely neglected. The Australian labor movement developed without direction, spontaneously, and, to quote Lenin: "Subservience to the spontaneity of the labor movement, the belittling of the role of the 'conscious element,' of the role of socialism, means, whether one like it or not, growth of the influence of bourgeois ideology among the workers." In this country the working-class movement has always been extremely backward in theory, and consequently has been dominated by the ideology of the bourgeoisie.

Socialist consciousness is not something which arises spon-

taneously from the class struggle; it is "something introduced into the class struggle from without," and "can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge" (Lenin).

Until recently, but more particularly in the earlier period, socialism was not "introduced" into the class struggle in this country, and the struggles of the workers had the purpose of obtaining reforms within the confines of capitalism. There was marked indifference to theory, a fact which was contributed to by the peculiarities of the development of Australian capitalism. The working class had not to participate in the solution of social problems connected with the destruction of feudalism. Here a developed democratic system existed in a young capitalist country with extensive possibilities of growth. These factors pushed into the background the great social tasks confronting the proletariat in connection with capitalism, and the growth of the political consciousness of the masses was retarded. The economic factor, however, as already stated, was only a contributory one, the main thing being the absence of organisations to imbue the struggles of the workers with socialist consciousness. Lenin emphasised this when he wrote:

"When objective conditions prevail which retard the growth of the political consciousness and class independence of the proletarian masses, one must be able patiently and persistently to work hand in hand with them, making no concessions to principles, but not refraining from carrying on activities right into the heart of the proletarian masses."

In conditions similar to those which existed in this country, both Engels and Lenin insisted upon the tremendous importance of developing the economic struggles of the workers and through them raising the masses to a higher level of class-consciousness. In Australia, there was no organisation capable of this. The revolutionary organisations which appeared prior to the war were extremely sectarian, and stood aloof from the great mass labor movement. The Labor Party, completely saturated with bourgeois ideology, dominated the labor movement. The economic struggles were not used as vehicles to sharpen the class struggle and carry the class-consciousness of the masses to a higher level. They were organised and led by the trade union officials, who, in this country, to quote Lenin, were "altogether peaceful and purely Liberal capital-serving elements."

From this brief outline it is clear that the struggle against capitalism was not developed in the concentric manner which Engels indicated is necessary.

The formation of the Communist Party in October, 1920, did not bring an immediate improvement in this direction. It failed to connect itself with the mass movement of the workers, with the trade unions particularly, and for a long period remained a small and isolated sect.

Since 1929, however, the situation has changed fundamentally. The crisis of capitalism, the impoverishment of the masses, the danger of war and fascism has raised with tremendous force the great historical mission of the working class—the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Communist Party proceeded to shake off the opportunism which made it a small isolated sect. It has grown enormously, both organisationally and ideologically. It is becoming a real mass Party closely connected with the mass labor movement. It has become a great political force which is influencing considerably the whole development and direction of the working-class movement.

To-day it can be truly stated that the struggle against capitalism is being developed on all three fronts, the theoretical, the political and the economic, and that this struggle is closely connected. However, it has not reached the level demanded by Engels of "one harmonious and well-planned entity." The theoretical struggle is underestimated and neglected by many revolutionary leaders, who prate about the practical work they do and smugly suggest they have no time to study. It is time these people knew that it is they who are perpetuating the traditional neglect of theory which has made the Australian labor movement so subservient to bourgeois ideology. Both the ruling class and the Labor Party laud the contempt of the labor movement for theory, because this means the continued domination of bourgeois ideology. When Communists underestimate and neglect theory, then objectively they capitulate to the pressure of the bourgeoisie, they constitute those weak links through which bourgeois ideology penetrates also into the revolutionary movement. In other words, underestimation and neglect of theory is opportunism, and it must be ruthlessly resisted.

In dealing with the tasks of the revolutionists in connection with theory, Engels wrote:

"It is the specified duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer understanding of the theoretical problems, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old conceptions of the world,

and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, having become a science, demands the same treatment as every other science—it must be studied. The task of the leaders will be to bring understanding, thus acquired and clarified, to the working masses, to spread it with increased enthusiasm, to close the ranks of the Party organisations and of the labor unions with ever greater energy.”

In this statement of Engels is expressed that combativeness of bourgeois ideas which is the very spirit of Marxism-Leninism. The Communists must “free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old conception of the world.” This is the first condition, also, for freeing the masses from the “old” or bourgeois conception of things. In order to do this, socialism must be studied.

The struggle against the influence of ideas alien to socialism in the Party reached a turning-point in 1929, when the Right Wing Central Committee was exposed and removed. This leadership expressed in crass form the influence of reformism when it supported the Labor Party in the Federal elections in 1929.

In the years following the end of 1929, the struggle developed against the “Left” sectarian tendency, the policy which would have left the Party high and dry, isolated from the masses. It was in the struggle on these two fronts—against Right and “Left” opportunism—that the political line of the Party in its struggle for the masses was clarified and the advance of the Party in the labor movement was ensured.

The Party is now coming to very close grips with the Labor Party, and is connecting itself deeply with the masses. In these conditions more than ever will it feel the vacillations and pressure of backward groups and sections of the working class and which will also penetrate the Party through the weak links. In view of this, the struggle on two fronts, against Right and “Left” opportunism, must be strengthened.

The year 1934 has witnessed a rapid improvement in the Party. More than in any other year was there a correct working out of strategy and tactics and a clarification of the political line of the Party. The conditions have been created for a more rapid advance in 1935, which will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the formation of the Party. To ensure this, however, it is necessary to strengthen the struggle against capitalism on the theoretical front, so that, together with the political and economic, the whole struggle will “form one harmonious and well-planned entity.”

Questions of the International Trade Union Movement

Taken from a Speech Delivered to Communist Members of the
Red International of Labor Unions

By O. PIATNITZKI

Question: Is it now necessary to make special efforts in the work of the revolutionary trade unions to establish a trade union united front and trade union unity?

Answer: Undoubtedly yes. The Communists have always insisted on this necessity, but the new factor in the present situation is that the workers in the reformist, independent, Catholic and other trade union organisations are beginning to be convinced of this necessity also. This means that there is now a greater chance for the establishment of trade union unity than was formerly the case.

Great masses of the workers are now beginning to sum up the results of two distinct policies. The one is the policy of reformism, the policy of class harmony, the policy which has flung the working classes of a number of countries back half a century in their development, both economically and politically. The second is the policy of a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie as conducted by the Communists for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The first policy has led directly into fascist slavery, even in a country like Germany, where the working-class was particularly strongly organised. The second policy was the policy of the October revolution, and it has led to the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union.

The disappointment of ever greater masses of the working class in all capitalist countries with the first policy, the reformist policy, and the tremendous successes which have been gained by the revolutionary policy, have caused increasing numbers of workers to demand unity of action with their Communist fellow workers, to demand the establishment of a united working-class front and trade union unity.

Naturally it is much more difficult to obtain trade union unity than it is to set up a working-class united front. Already we have seen the united front in action in individual questions or groups of questions and for limited periods. However, trade union unity

demands organisational unity. It must also be taken into consideration that in any case the trade union movement is very split up, and that it takes on various forms and develops various tendencies in the various countries. The result is that it is quite impossible to obtain trade union unity according to a uniform plan applicable to all countries in the same fashion. We must proceed from the practical situation which exists in each particular country in order to carry on our struggle for trade union unity, both outside and in particular inside the reformist and reactionary trade union organisations.

Question: Have any essential alterations taken place in the objective situation influencing our application of the united front tactic and our fight for trade union unity, or are we now repairing errors in the previous application of our united front policy (tactic of the united front from below) and thus improving our leadership of the spontaneous movement of broad masses of the workers in favor of unity?

Answer: In comparison with the period of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International and the Fifth Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions, there have undoubtedly been great alterations in the working-class and in the working-class movement. After the temporary defeat of the working-class movement in Germany, in January, 1933, and the disintegration of the German social democracy, and in particular after the events of February, 1934, in Austria, a double process began in the ranks of the working class: Disappointment with the policy of reformism showed itself in the ranks of the workers, and many of them turned their backs on the social-democratic parties. In addition there developed a strong urge on the part of the workers towards the establishment of the united working-class front. In some cases this was seen in a demand for organisational unity, and in others in the going over of the most class-conscious sections of the reformist workers to the Communist Party.

Naturally, the social-democratic and trade union leaders are carrying out various manoeuvres in order to hold up this process, but are they in as favorable a position for that purpose now as they were in the years 1918 to 1920? They are certainly not; they no longer have such possibilities. This is above all the case because the changes which have taken place in the working-class and in the working-class movement have occurred under the conditions of severe economic crisis and of an intensifying crisis of capitalism.

How did the social-democratic and reformist trade union leaders succeed in manoeuvring in the period mentioned?

In Germany, where the Social-Democratic Party was in power in that period the social-democratic leaders let loose the reactionary soldiery on the workers. In 1920 the Noske guards turned machine-guns on the peaceful demonstration of workers, which took place in 1920 in front of the Reichstag to protest against the passing of the Factory Councils Law, but at the same time the Social-Democratic Party was able to hold up the development of the revolutionary movement by offering reforms which were of consequence to all workers: Tariff agreements, the eight-hour day, full civil rights, factory councils, with the right to say a word in the development of conditions within the factories, etc. After the war the workers in a number of countries were no longer completely without rights as they had been prior to the war, when the trade unions were still compelled to fight for their recognition on the part of the employers, etc.

Are the reformist leaders at present in a position to offer the broad masses of the workers anything at all? No, they are not. In recent years the bourgeoisie in all capitalist countries has been striving to pass the burdens of the economic crisis on to the shoulders of the workers, and in this it has had the support of the social-democracy. With social-democratic assistance the bourgeoisie has abolished or greatly worsened the laws which were passed immediately after the war. With the assistance of the social-democracy the bourgeoisie has considerably worsened the economic situation of the working-class. In many capitalist countries increasing masses of workers are recognising that the policy of the reformists for the achievement of socialism by peaceable means leads direct to fascism. For this reason the social-democratic leaders are no longer in a position to deceive the working-class as they did in the years 1918 and 1920. This situation makes it possible for the Communist Parties and for the revolutionary trade union movement to utilise the growing discontent of the masses with the policy of reformism and to utilise the growing urge to working-class unity.

This new factor in the situation makes it necessary to overhaul our tactics and to make certain changes, and to overhaul also the methods, form and content of the work of the Communist parties.

How must the united front tactic be applied? This formulation of the question might convey the impression that the Communists now intend to abandon the tactic of the united front from

below. That is naturally not the case. The united front from below must remain the basic form of the Communist united front tactics. However, this does not mean that the application of the united front from above is thereby excluded from our activities. It may possibly be seen that in some cases the application of the united front from below is the only possible tactic, but it can never be the case that the application of the united front from above is the only possible tactic.

Let us take the case of France, where an agreement has been reached between the leaders of the Socialist Party and Communist Party for joint action in a number of questions. It was not so long ago, at the beginning of this year, that the congress of the Socialist Party (although against the will of a strong minority) and the leadership of the Socialist Party were opposed to any negotiations in the question of a united front with the Communists. However, after this refusal, the lower organisations of the Communist Party again approached the lower organisations of the Socialist Party with proposals for a joint struggle against fascism, and the result was that the united front began to show itself in practice in Paris and in other industrial centres.

The pressure that was set up from below in this way proved to be so strong that the socialist leaders Faure and Blum were compelled to admit that against the will of the leadership of the Socialist Party the idea of the united front was gaining ground, and that the only way to prevent their own members establishing a united front of their own accord and without their leaders was for their leaders to take up negotiations with the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Is it possible under such circumstances to declare that the establishment of the united front in France was the result of an agreement from above? Certainly not.

There can be still less talk about the establishment of a united front only from above on account of the fact that in a number of countries (France and Great Britain, and still more Austria) a great section of the members of the reformist trade unions and of the Social-Democratic parties are not only beginning to insist on the establishment of a working-class united front, but are beginning to establish it themselves against the express decisions of their leaders.

The new element in the present application of the united front tactic is not therefore that the Communists have taken up a

fundamentally different attitude to this or that form of the united front tactic, but that the Communists are now applying this tactic more daringly and with greater elasticity by opening up a decisive attack on the social-democratic leaders and trade union bureaucrats who are sabotaging the struggle for the establishment of the united front.

Up to the present the united front has been established on the initiative of the Communists whereby two tactics have been applied.

In some cases a united front was established on various questions between the leaderships of the parallel political parties or trade unions whereby the Communists and the revolutionary trade unions at the same time addressed themselves to the members of these organisations and called upon them for a joint struggle.

In other cases where the central leaderships of the Socialist parties and the trade unions rejected the united front proposals the Communists and the revolutionary trade unions organisations addressed themselves directly to the lower organisations of the socialist and trade union bodies, thereby ignoring the decisions of the socialist and reformist trade union leaders.

It is a well-known fact that on February 9 and 12 great masses of the French workers demonstrated on the streets at the call of the Communist Party, and that many members of the Socialist Party and of the reformist trade unions took part in these demonstrations in defiance of the express instructions of their leaders not to take part in the demonstrations; in other words, a section of the workers amongst the following of the socialist and reformist trade union leaders and against the will of the latter were drawn into the struggle against fascism by the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions.

In a number of countries the reformist leaders are continuing their old tactic of openly sabotaging the united front. In these countries working-class solidarity is being established by the adoption of the Communist united front proposals by the lower reformist and socialist organisations (Great Britain and Czechoslovakia).

What advantages does the united front in the struggle against capitalism and fascism offer to the workers? Above all it increases the strength of the workers in their struggle against the bourgeoisie. Secondly, it strengthens the fighting capacity of the workers and their confidence in their own strength. Thirdly, it

increases the authority of the Communist Party in the eyes of the masses, because it destroys the legend zealously encouraged by the socialist and reformist trade union leaders that the Communists are anxious to disrupt the working-class movement. Fourthly, it guides the social-democratic workers back to the class struggle. And, finally, it increases the influence of the Communist Party on the social-democratic workers by bringing about a rapprochement between the Communist and social-democratic workers.

The Communist parties are only at the beginning of their work for the establishment of the united front. Up to the present comparatively little in this direction has been done, but that little which has been done has proved itself to be an important step forward to a rapprochement between the Communists and the broad masses of the workers.

Question: What is the programme of the united trade union movement? What is its programme where it is already a matter of practical politics, i.e., in France and Spain?

Answer: The situation with regard to trade union unity in Spain is that there are central bodies of the revolutionary trade unions, of the reformist trade unions, and of the anarcho-syndicalist trade unions, and in addition there are a host of autonomous trade unions. However, the prospects for a unification of all these unions are thoroughly favorable. The members of all the existing unions took part in the recent strikes, even in cases where the reformist and anarcho-syndicalist unions did not appeal to their members to come out on strike.

The programme on which the revolutionary unions in Spain propose the establishment of trade union unity takes into account the revolutionary situation existing in the country, and comprises the following demands: The abolition of all anti-proletarian legislation, a struggle against reaction, for the right to strike, for the forty-hour week without wage-cuts, for increases in wages, for State insurance without contributions on the part of the workers, etc. And organisational guarantees such as proportional elections, the right of criticism and inner-trade-union democracy.

It must be pointed out that the struggle of the revolutionary trade unions in Spain has been hampered by the fact that the work in the committees for trade union unity was neglected, and that in consequence these committees have almost ceased to exist. Only recently has any real attempt been made to make good this mistake.

The situation is somewhat different in France. In France

practical life has created a new form of trade union unity. The reformist trade union bureaucrats are sabotaging trade union unity with every possible means at their disposal. Only recently the leaders of the reformist trade union federation (C.G.T.) answered the unity proposals of the revolutionary trade union federation (C.G.T.U.) with the demand that the unions affiliated to the latter should dissolve themselves and that their members should join the C.G.T. unions unconditionally. They go further even and declare that they are prepared to discuss the calling of a national trade union congress only after such an unconditional dissolution of the revolutionary unions. In other words, the reformists say to themselves, after the revolutionary workers have joined our unions we shall have a chance of seeing the relation of forces; if the revolutionary workers are in a minority, then we shall call the national congress and let it demonstrate our preponderance. If, on the other hand, the revolutionary workers should prove to be in the majority in any of the big unions, then we shall postpone the calling of the congress until we have "reorganised" the unions in question.

The way in which the reformist trade union bureaucrats treat the question of unity shows clearly that if the revolutionary unions were to accept their conditions, then the reformist bureaucrats would strain every effort to exclude the former revolutionary leadership under various pretexts from any part in the leadership of the united trade union federation. The French reformist trade union bureaucrats have already had a wide experience in this sort of thing. Prior to the split in the French trade union movement they expelled whole organisations which opposed their policy of class collaboration.

Can the revolutionary trade unions possibly accept such a proposal? They certainly cannot and they will not. Instead they are working for trade union unity on the basis of a programme of minimal demands, whereby they also demand guarantees that they will be able to work inside the proposed united trade union federation.

Must the idea of trade union unity be abandoned in France because the reformist trade union bureaucrats reject it? Certainly not, say the revolutionary trade unions, particularly in view of the fact that broad masses of the French workers, including many members of the reformist and autonomous trade unions, are already beginning to join the working-class united front.

By September 1 no less than 166 united trade unions had already been formed in France, 105 amongst the railwaymen, 27

amongst the tobacco workers, 12 amongst the transport workers of the Paris district, and 3 amongst the miners, etc. The movement is also beginning to affect the trade unions in other branches of industry.

This weapon of establishing unity must inevitably begin to exercise pressure on the reformist leaders, no matter how much they may try to win the workers for their own plan of trade union unity, i.e., unconditional surrender on the part of the revolutionary unions. Are the revolutionary trade unions evading this new weapon for the establishment of unity? Not at all. On the contrary, they are doing their best to bring the various unions together in this way in at least some definite branch of industry. These new united organisations which arise by the bodies concerned leaving the reformist C.G.T. and the revolutionary C.G.T.U. respectively, although in some cases the bodies in question continue to remain members of their old federations, may play a very important role in the struggle for the establishment of trade union unity.

Years had to be sacrificed to prove the necessity of work within the reformist trade unions. This necessity is now no longer denied in words, but in deeds little has changed since the Sixth Congress of the C.I. in this work and no fundamental improvement has taken place.

Why have the decisions of the C.I. and of the R.I.L.U. concerning the work in the reformist unions not been carried out?

The chief reason is that the Communist parties have not always been successful in applying these decisions to the circumstances which exist in their particular countries. For instance, the Communist parties in those countries where revolutionary trade unions exist, have failed to distribute their forces in such a way that both the work in the revolutionary and the reformist unions has received proper attention. In other countries poor or wrong leadership has caused the revolutionary trade union opposition to exert the major portion of its efforts outside instead of inside the reformist unions. In a third group of countries where the Communist parties have succeeded in forming illegal revolutionary trade unions which have led a number of strikes, but have failed, owing to the intense terror, to develop into mass organisations, the Communist parties have carried on no work at all in the official unions. For instance, in China the work in the Kuomintang unions was completely neglected, as also was the work in the fascist unions in Italy.

Very often the decisions were carried out purely mechanically,

and the slogans and agitation of the Communists were not always readily understood by the members of the reformist trade unions; the approach of the Communists to the masses was very often of a sectarian character.

In addition to the abovementioned reasons, it must also be pointed out that the decisions adopted with regard to a number of individual countries did not always take into consideration the concrete conditions existing in the countries in question or the difficulties with which any attempt to carry out the decisions must meet.

The failures and weaknesses of our trade union work caused some comrades to conclude quite wrongly that as the Communist parties had not attained sufficient success in their trade union work the trade union policy of the C.I. was therefore incorrect. These comrades are wrong. The work of the Communists in the reformist trade unions in Great Britain, Sweden, Poland and the United States has proved that where the Communist policy in the reformist unions is carried out with understanding and persistence undeniable successes can be obtained.

What sort of a new trade union policy do these comrades who are dissatisfied with the old propose? The policy they are said to propose is that the revolutionary trade unions should capitulate unconditionally, dissolve themselves and instruct their members to enter the reformist unions. It appears hardly likely that we should be able to obtain any improvement in our trade union work along such lines.

Must we reject always and under all circumstances the policy of the revolutionary trade unions unconditionally joining the reformist unions? In individual cases such a policy is possible—where the members of the red union which unconditionally joins the reformist union are given the chance of fighting inside the reformist union for the official posts and freedom to carry on their struggle in the interests of the workers.

Is it possible to take these individual and isolated cases and make out of them a policy to be followed by the whole of the Communist Movement? In my opinion that is not possible.

Why? First of all, because we have in general no reason to believe that the reformists will be prepared to give us such freedom of movement in their organisations if we enter them unconditionally. And, secondly, in a revolutionary crisis the Communist Party cannot do without mass trade unions under its influence, organisations which embrace greater masses of workers than the

Party itself and organisations through which the Party can exercise an influence on the masses of the unorganised workers also.

Is it advisable under these circumstances to let smaller revolutionary trade unions in France or Spain join their reformist opposites unconditionally? The revolutionary trade unions in these countries deny this. In France and Spain there are a number of smaller unions parallel to the big revolutionary trade unions, very often in the same town, and the unconditional transfer of these smaller unions might lead to a practical dissolution of the revolutionary unions and to a capitulation to the reformist demands.

At a moment like the present, when great events are maturing, is it possible for the Communist parties to stand alone without the support of broad and sound mass organisations influencing great masses of the workers? In my opinion that would be impossible. This is true above all of those Communist parties which are faced with big and decisive struggles.

I am reminded of an example taken from the history of the proletariat in Tsarist Russia prior to the October Revolution. On August 12, 1917, the provisional government and the representatives of all the bourgeois parties and the compromising parties had left Petrograd, where the revolutionary struggle had broken out. They journeyed to Moscow in order to hold a Council of State there. They fled from revolutionary Petrograd to "conservative" Moscow. The Moscow Committee of the Bolsheviks decided to organise a 24-hour general strike as a welcome to them. In Moscow and in many other centres throughout Russia, there already existed a broad mass organisation: the soviets of workers and soldiers' deputies. However, the Moscow Soviet decided against the proposed general strike, owing to the fact that the Mensheviks and the social revolutionaries had the majority in it. The Moscow Committee of the Bolsheviks then appealed to the trade unions, and the latter signed an appeal jointly with the Bolsheviks for a 24-hour general strike. Thus the Bolsheviks organised a general strike over the heads of the leaders of an existing mass organisation, the soviets, and with the assistance of the trade unions and the factory committees.

Such situations did not arise as the result of any particular national peculiarity of Russia, and they can arise in other countries also.

In general, therefore, the Communists do not think it desirable to dissolve the mass organisations which are already under

their ideological and organisational influence, and they will not recommend these organisations to join the reformist unions unconditionally and without having secured guarantees that the Communists and their supporters will have freedom of movement in the reformist unions. However, this does not diminish but rather enhances the importance of a determined and conscious struggle for trade union unity upon certain conditions whereby the Communists must carry on a persistent, patient and convincing campaign to show the reformist workers that the Communists are putting forward these conditions in the interests of the struggle of the whole of the working class.

Question: At the present moment in France the slogan for the independence of the trade unions from all political parties is in circulation. This slogan has been taken up by the Communist press as one of the conditions for the unification of the trade unions and without any critical comment. Lenin has continually condemned the slogan of the independence of the trade unions as a theory aiming at throttling the class struggle. Are not our French comrades distorting the fundamental principles of the united front and unity tactic right at the beginning of their mass movement for unity?

Answer: In my opinion, the comrades who formulate the question in this fashion are wrong. There is no such thing as a neutral trade union. We know that. The trade unions cannot be neutral towards the bourgeoisie if they are going to carry on a struggle against it. In consequence, the trade unions cannot be neutral towards that party which carries on the class struggle against the bourgeoisie. That is the Communist Party. That is clear. However, in this case it is not a question of the neutrality of the trade unions, but of their independence of the political parties. Let us take a look at the question from the standpoint of the concrete situation in France.

In France there are two big working-class parties, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, and two big trade union federations which own allegiance to the respective political parties. The Communist Party of France has taken on the task of unifying these two big trade union federations.

However, the Communists cannot agree to any unification of the trade unions so long as the unions follow the lead of the Socialist Party, and, on the other hand, the Socialist Party cannot agree to their unification so long as the unions follow the lead of the Communist Party.

One must not turn a correct thesis into a dogma, and to ignore the concrete situation which exists in France and in which the struggle for trade union unity is proceeding would be to make a correct thesis into a dogma.

The question of the leadership of the trade union movement is not a matter of a simple declaration, but a matter of the correct policy and tactics with which the Communists must win the masses for the leadership of the Communist Party. The unification of the trade union movement would offer the Communist Party the possibility of extending its influence to much larger masses of the workers than has been the case up to the present. For this reason, our French comrades are right when they have refused to make the question of trade union independence a hindrance to the unification of the trade union movement.

What does the independence of the trade unions mean? Perhaps that the Communists will not organise their fractions in the unions, and that they will cease pursuing their Communist policy in them? Nothing of the sort. The socialists will also not cease their work in the unions. In an article on trade union unity, the "Populaire" of August 25, 1934, writes:

"We are prepared to leave the deceitful slogan of 'no politics' to the reactionaries. In reality, all trade union work is based upon some definite political standpoint."

The French Communists, who are anxious to make some real advance towards trade union unity, have agreed to the slogan of independence without in the least having abandoned their fight to influence the activity of the trade unions through their fractions in the unions. For this reason, the French Communists do not put forward as one of the conditions of the unification of the trade union movement that the leadership of the Communist Party should be recognised formally in advance, but rather they are doing their utmost to convince the majority of the workers in the unions that Communist leadership is the only correct one.

Question: To what extent does the estimation made by the Communist International that the social-democracy is the main social prop of the bourgeoisie alter, and to what extent must this alteration be reflected in the trade union tactic of the Communist Party of Germany?

Answer: In my opinion, we must above all remember what was in Germany prior to the fascist dictatorship and what is there now. It is generally admitted that prior to the seizure of

power by Hitler in Germany the Social-Democratic Party and the reformist trade unions supported the bourgeoisie in every possible way, and that they supported one bourgeois government after the other. The trade unions were a hindrance, both to the political and the economic struggle of the working class. Let us take as an example the November strike of the Berlin passenger transport workers within a few months before Hitler's accession to power. After the seizure of power by fascism, the reformists handed over the trade unions to the fascists. On May 17, 1933, the whole social-democratic parliamentary fraction voted unanimously for Hitler's foreign policy.

At the moment there are neither reformist trade unions nor any other sort of trade unions. There are also no mass reformist organisations of any other nature. There is also no centrally organised Social-Democratic Party. Those groups of social-democrats which show any signs of life at all are undoubtedly against the fascists.

It is naturally not impossible that the bourgeoisie may turn back the wheel. It would appear even that the German bourgeoisie has made some approach to the reformist trade union bureaucrats by taking up negotiations through a mediary, as reported in the "Manchester Guardian." It is not impossible that there will once again be reformist trade unions, or mixed reformist-fascist trade unions, built up with the assistance of the reformist trade union leaders. If such organisations developed into mass organisations, then the reformists might once again, and to a certain extent, play the role of a social support of the bourgeoisie.

However, can one say that the small groups of social-democratic workers who are carrying on agitation against fascism, issuing leaflets and sometimes spreading Communist literature, and joining here and there in a united front with the Communists, not to speak of cases where they have joined the Communist Party, whereby they expose themselves to the risk of persecution and arrest, are a social support of the bourgeoisie? Certainly not.

In Germany, the Communists have now set themselves the task of reconstructing the old free trade unions in the best traditions of the pre-war period, in order that they may, above all, organise the struggle against the law of January 20, 1934, which robs the German workers of all the rights won in fifty years of working-class struggle. At the same time, the German Communists are working within the fascist mass organisations.

Report to No. 1 District Conference

December 28, 1934

By S. PURDY

Comrades.—The reports last night, Comrade Cramm's report to-day, and the resolution, all indicate that there has been certain developments within our Party; that there has been an improvement in our United Front work; also, that since the commencement of the present campaign a number of trade union branches and mass job meetings have passed resolutions endorsing our united front proposals to the A.L.P.

Further, I think comrades recognise that there has been an improvement of our leadership within the trade unions. This will be brought out more clearly when we deal with them individually.

However, the response to the united front campaign, the development of united front activity is still very weak and has not approached anything like the standard we require. The main reason for this is because it is treated in a narrow, practical manner. Comrades look at it from an organisational point of view and do not understand the political significance of correct united front work; they do not understand the possibilities of same; they have not got a correct perspective of what can be accomplished when it is tackled properly.

Some comrades still think it is impossible to get a united front with the A.L.P. workers. These comrades accept the united front in theory but not in practice. Our political leadership and understanding of the question must be improved if we are to get better results.

The very important fact that our Central Committee had to emphasise the question of the United Front indicated a serious lagging. Even after this was done, most sections treated the matter as just another task, and although the District Committee

sent copies of the C. C. letter throughout the Party apparatus, when we checked up, very few copies could be found.

This fact showed clearly that our comrades did not understand the political importance of the campaign, therefore they treated the circular as so much waste paper, whereas it should have been kept as a guide to the whole of our activities during the ensuing period.

As far as the united front from below is concerned, the fact that we emphasised it does not mean that there is anything new here. It is always our main tactic for mobilising the masses.

The C. C. 4th Plenum resolution reads: "The main tactic of the Party to carry the strike wave to a higher level and to win over the Labor Party workers is the united front from below." The D.C. Congress resolution of last June reads: "To proceed to a more careful and systematic application of the united front from below."

So you can see that the only new thing is the approach to the A. L. P. executive and its branches.

It is no use just sending out directives. It is necessary to carry our campaign right throughout the Party apparatus, to enable our members to understand the question. Only then will we get the results that objective conditions make possible.

Why did the C. C. decide that the Labor Party executive and its apparatus should be approached at this moment?

If comrades have been studying the situation here and abroad, they will know why. Events in Germany, Austria, France, Spain, U.S.A., etc., all indicate the tremendous desire for unity. The international working class has learnt many lessons from Germany and Austria, which are accelerating the drive to unity on the part of the masses.

In France and elsewhere, due to pressure from below, the Social-Democratic leaders have been forced to accept the Communist Parties' proposals for a united front struggle against fascism. So, whilst the movement from below can force the Social-Democratic leaders to struggle with us, the importance of this is that it brings into the struggle with us the more backward workers, who will not move until advised to do so by their "leaders." I think comrades will all agree that the drive for unity in struggle also applies to Australia.

Take the Kisch-Griffin campaigns. How many of our Sections, and the Party apparatus generally, had a correct perspective here? Actually, the Sections never responded at all, the leader-

ship of the campaigns being confined to the C.C. and D.C. If our Section comrades were giving correct political leadership, they would have commenced preparing the moment it was announced that Kisch was coming here, as it was apparent that the Federal Government was likely to take some action. You can imagine what kind of a mass movement would have developed had our whole Party responded.

Further, we have the growing strike wave, particularly amongst the miners and unemployed. Take the present movement amongst the seamen and railmen. In view of the absence of strike struggles in these two industries for a considerable period, the very fact that strike action is being discussed has tremendous significance for us. In the building trades, the workers are favorable to one union in the industry, and preliminary steps in this direction have **already** been taken.

We could discuss many other examples to prove the growing desire for unity amongst the Australian toilers—a desire which places on all Communists the responsibility of immediately improving their united front activity amongst the A.L.P. and non-party workers. The C.C. letter, in referring to our approach to the Labor Party, reads: "In approaching the Labor Party, our purpose is to procure the more rapid mobilisation of the masses to hasten the further unfoldment of the strike wave and resistance to fascism and war, and in the process of doing this to transform into activity the desire of the masses for unity." That is the essence of the question.

Further, we have also to recognise that our approach to the Labor Party is a valuable weapon at the moment, in view of the line of the whole reformist machine, which is aimed at deepening the split in the working class, per medium of the trade unions. When we recognise the mass character of the unions, which, generally speaking, are at present united, the treacherous role of the Labor Party leaders in attempting to split same becomes more clear.

During the miners' ballot for Central Executive, the reformists indulged in wholesale lying, slander and misrepresentation for the purpose of creating antagonism against the Communists and other militant trade unionists. During this campaign, the "Labor Daily" suggested that the Northern Districts branch was strong enough to break away from the rest of the Miners' Federation. The campaign of slander culminated in Lang's speech at Cessnock, the essence of which meant that attempts

would be made to drive out of the trade unions those people who were not prepared to blindly accept the domination of the A.L.P. "inner group." Since then, this has been the line of the reformist machine, per medium of its politicians, trade union officials and the "Labor Daily."

In answer to this, we must not allow ourselves to be provoked, but within the unions and on the jobs prove our sincere desire for unity by being the best leaders and organisers in defence of living standards, maintenance of award conditions, etc. If the A.L.P. leaders should succeed with their plans, it would be a tremendous blow to our class, throwing it back for a number of years. On no account must we allow this to happen. We must convince workers that we have a sincere desire for unity. We want unity in action, because it will strengthen our class.

When we are successful in getting A.L.P. branches to elect delegates to meet us, we must go along to the meeting with very concrete plans. At such meetings we will do everything possible to reach agreement, even if it necessitates a compromise. So long as we ensure that our proposals are based on struggle, there will be little danger of falling into opportunism.

Whilst approaching the Labor Party branches, we must recognise that this is not a substitute for day-to-day activity amongst the masses, and here our efforts must be intensified tenfold. We must concentrate our main attention where the workers are organised, and that is, above all, in the trade unions. In the basic industries, the overwhelming majority of the workers are trade unionists. People who imagine that we can organise the majority of the working class apart from the unions do not know what they are talking about. It is in the unions that the workers place their confidence, and no other organisations can be a substitute for same.

Further, if our fraternal leaders wish their organisations to get a mass basis, this can only be achieved per medium of mass affiliations from the trade union movement. It is here that we must mobilise the masses for successful struggle against the capitalist offensive, war and fascism—for the establishment of Soviet power and socialism.

It is in the trade unions that the workers are disciplined. If the union gives a call for strike, the members respond. Take, for example, the instance when the miners' leaders were summoned before the court. The lead was given for a one-day

stoppage on the South Coast, and every miner stopped work. On the other hand, at Lysaght's, despite a desire to struggle, which had already commenced, at the instructions of Denford and Co., who used the threat of union discipline, the strikers were driven back to work. The C.C. 4th Plenum, District Congress and the present resolutions all lay particular stress on these questions. We must recognise that it is not meant that the resolutions be read and then put by. Comrades must study our resolutions as a guide to future activity.

If we take the lessons of the Miners' Federation, we can prove all the statements that have appeared on the importance of the trade unions to the revolutionary struggle. The leadership of the Miners' Federation has been won for a militant policy. It has been changed from a reformist to a militant trade union. It is true that there are still many reformists in higher and minor positions, but in general the policy of the Miners' Federation is a militant one. To-day, the militants are a majority and the reformists a minority. This is because the leaders of the Miners' Federation have understood how to carry out real united front work. Orr and Nelson have been able to prove their ability to do things, thus consolidating support around them. During the Central Executive ballot, numbers of higher and minor officials were drawn into a united front with Orr and Nelson against the reactionary "inner group."

Let us briefly touch on the importance of winning the leadership of the trade unions. We can win influence over the majority of trade unionists, even though we do not win the leadership of the unions themselves, but by achieving the latter also, we consolidate our influence organisationally, which, of course, is very important.

If we study events in the Miners' Federation, we will see the importance of winning these higher trade union positions. In the past twelve months, since Orr has been secretary, more strikes have occurred in the mining industry than among the rest of the workers combined. Why is this so? Because the miners feel that they have a leadership that is prepared to help them win their strikes and give them correct leadership—that their leaders desire to see them successful against the attacks of the coal barons.

In most other unions this is not so. For instance, at Lysaght's a high degree of militancy was apparent. The workers elected their own strike committee, and showed a real desire to carry on the struggle, but the leadership of the Ironworkers' Union, in

which the majority of the strikers were organised, came out and threatened the strikers for breaking the rules of the union, breaking the discipline, etc., and practically ordered them back to work. The strikers felt they would not have the support of their union in a prolonged struggle, and consequently went back to work.

Then take the struggles in the Miners' Federation. You will find that practically every struggle that has taken place, in which the leadership participated, has resulted in a total or partial victory. Here we have the leadership of the strikes.

This also applies in relationship to the unemployed to a great degree. In this sphere, we have planned the strikes and led them. Of course, unemployed strikes are harder to win.

Then, take other industries where we have certain influence in the leadership, but where the reformists are in control. Here you will find that they end in partial victory, or, sometimes, in failure. On the other hand, take those strikes that break out where we have no influence and no connection. The workers are out for a couple of days and then, in 99 cases out of 100, go back to work defeated.

So, you see, on the leadership depends the success or otherwise of the strikes.

In the Miners' Federation, due to the fact that Orr and Nelson have proven themselves on smaller questions, the campaign for the six-hour day, five-day week, £5/10/- minimum wage, etc., is now being developed, and is receiving wide support from the miners.

Then, take also the question of the general strike. At the A.C.T.U. Congress, due to the fact that we had the leadership of the miners' delegation, our comrades could get the other miners' delegates to agree that the question of general strike be raised. This was done, and received support from a large number of delegates representing the most important unions covering the basic industries.

Comrades Orr and Nelson, inside the Miners' Federation, have done things and not merely talked. They have been better organisers and leaders than the other fellow. To do this is absolutely necessary if we are to meet with success. It must be recognised that, whilst the workers, particularly in the basic industries, may support this or that political party, this is a secondary consideration to their trade union. The person who can build and strengthen the union is the person who will get their support, irrespective of any campaign that the reformists

may conduct against them. That is apparent from the Miners' Federation ballot. Per medium of activity such as this, we direct our main blows against the social-fascists.

The main blow must be directed against the Social-Democrats, because they are the chief social bulwark of capitalism, the enemy within the ranks of the working class. We do not go out and abuse them, but through proving the best organisers, the leaders of our class, do we achieve our aims.

Many of our resolutions have stressed the fact that it is in struggle, above all, that we build. Whilst we may conduct agitation and propaganda, which is most necessary, it is only when the workers go into struggle that they realise in masses the class nature of society, and far more quickly come over to our Party and militant leadership. Let us take some figures in connection with the miners' ballot returns from individual lodges which had been on strike and in which either Nelson or Orr had directly participated in the leadership. [Figures quoted showing absolute majorities for Nelson and Orr, as high as 8 to 1.]

We have discussed the importance of minor officials. They are a transmission belt, per medium of which the ideology of the leadership, either militant or reformist, is transmitted to the masses. They have great authority with the union membership. It will not be out of place to quote some more returns from individual miners' lodges where militants are in official positions. [Figures quoted showing absolute majorities for Nelson and Orr, in one instance as high as 49 to 1.]

Comrades, those figures speak for themselves. They are the complete verification of our theories in connection with the importance of struggle and the winning of the minor officials. To win further successes, we must improve the level of our leadership and our work generally. If we are to win not only minor official positions, but higher positions also, for militant leadership, we must realise it is not just a question of conducting wordy fights with the reformists. This gets us nowhere, and should be overcome as quickly as possible. Where our comrades do prove the best leaders and organisers around the apparently "minor" questions, we get results. For example, in the A.E.U. a militant was elected shop steward. Since his election, he has been able to take up several questions on the job, and the workers have had meetings and thanked him for what he did on their behalf. His influence has improved in the shop and in the union generally, because he is a minor official doing the work of the union in a proper manner.

Then we have the Plasterers' Union. Here the militants were to the fore in the fight to maintain award conditions, etc. They were able to prove themselves the best union builders. A militant was recently elected unopposed to the union presidency.

Then there is —, of —. He is not very developed, politically, but has an inherent desire to resist any filching of conditions, even the most elementary. Because he has led the fight around these questions, he was recently elected secretary of his trade union branch by a big majority.

Then there is the work of the railway shop committees, where our comrades, because they have been the driving force in building organisation and securing improvements on the jobs, are more and more being looked upon as leaders.

We have to keep in mind, and recognise, the importance of these "minor" questions—to be the best union organisers for 100 per cent. financial unionism, to be the best fighters to maintain the militant traditions of unionism and abolish the idea of relying on backward workers who take up an anti-union attitude. This latter tendency must once and for all be liquidated. We have to depend on the trade unions for our support from the best trade unionists, those workers who have the most faith in the trade union movement, trade union activists who look upon the union as their fortress.

We have raised the slogan in our class material and in our papers of "trade union unity." This slogan is wrong. The correct slogan is "closer trade union unity," because in this country the unions are not split. Generally speaking, dual unionism does not exist. Here there is trade union unity. The slogan is "closer trade union unity," which means amalgamation of craft unions, industrial unionism, etc.

This is very important, because, by having a correct perspective of the slogan, then we get a correct organisational approach. Further, most unions in this country, unlike most other countries, are more or less democratic, so the possibilities of winning the leadership are greater.

We have to fight to maintain the present unity and to build closer unity—to maintain union democracy and introduce greater democracy. Where possible, we must win the leadership, the trade union apparatus, for a militant policy.

In so far as amalgamation, industrial unionism, industrial councils and direct negotiation are concerned, we have indulged in quite an amount of propaganda. The workers are very favor-

able to these questions. It now becomes a matter of concretising our propaganda. Our members must display more initiative, studying their particular industry and union more thoroughly, in order that plans can be worked out to the minutest detail, so that our slogans can become a reality.

Immediately following this conference, the District Committee will work out plans for the various industries, particularly the railways.

It will be our aim to get mass meetings on the jobs to elect closer unity committees, these committees to go deeply into the problems of securing closer unity and to report their findings and recommendations back to the workers. This will help to create a real movement from below, which will penetrate all craft unions. It will make the task of establishing closer unity far easier.

To come back again to the minor officials. Many are still under reformist influence and opposed to us, but are honest in their beliefs, whilst there are others who are conscious opportunists and reactionaries. The majority belong to the first category. Our approach to them must be improved. When we have a difference, our criticism must be levelled in a comradely manner. We must not antagonise them unnecessarily, but do everything possible to help them find their way to us. We must end, once and for all, the sectarian classification of them as social-fascists, bureaucrats, etc. In relation to the conscious opportunists, we must, by better leadership, displace them.

The Section Committees must improve their leadership of the fractions within the trade union branches. This applies particularly to the miners' lodges, A.R.U. and A.E.U. branches.

What is the main task facing our committees and members in the particular areas where the mines are, that is, on the South Coast and in the West? Here it is a question of our members developing their initiative and leadership to a far higher level than previously, so that when strikes break out, our members will be able to take hold of the leadership of same, and not wait on Orr and Nelson, as at present. The latter are worked to death.

The mining industry must receive the main attention of the committees in the south and the west. Our members in the Miners' Federation, and our committees, have to be the driving force for application of the militant policy of the Miners' Federation.

These are our tasks for the comrades in the mining industry—to develop their leadership to that point where the union

apparatus does the work previously done by the militant groups, but to a far higher degree. This necessitates the building of strong Party units in each pit. Our comrades in the mining industry must study the leads in "Common Cause" and develop job correspondents for same.

In connection with the railways. We have to see a further development of the shop committees. Undoubtedly there has been a big development in the shop committees already. The old ones have consolidated, and new ones have come into existence. The Central Council of Shop Committees has been broadened, and it now has more influence and carries out far better work than previously. However, we cannot be satisfied, but must drive ever forward.

Also, we have to bring about an improvement within the unions covering the railway industry, strengthen our work so that the possibilities of the reformists standing in our way will be lessened. The central A.R.U. militant fraction must strengthen itself, improving its leadership and functions as a co-ordinating centre.

On the waterside there is a strong, active M.M. group in the Waterside Workers' Federation. Three months ago, no M.M. group existed. Now there is a militant group of 44 members, 90 per cent. of whom are active and regularly paying dues. A strong Party unit is also being built. The leading comrade there plans his work. It seems to me that the next step is to concentrate on improving our position in the leadership of the W.W.F.

Amongst the seamen an improvement can be noted, but not to a very marked degree, and much hard work still lays before us.

In the rubber industry the shop committee movement has just commenced. To consolidate and spread this movement, our position in the union needs to be considerably strengthened, and a central M.M. union executive must be established, with representatives from each factory.

A movement towards amalgamation and closer unity is already proceeding in the building trades. This must be developed still further, with improved work on the part of our fractions in each craft union. This applies particularly to the Carpenters' Union, where the militants have allowed themselves to be provoked by the reformists, with the result that their work has been of a negative character.

Our position in the district leadership of the A.E.U. is, comparatively, fairly strong, but down below, in the branches, there

is room for considerable improvement. This can be achieved per medium of a leading and co-ordinating centre, together with more attention from the Section Committees to the local fractions.

Within the tramways, certain comrades are very active, but due to the fact that Party units do not meet, there is very little planned activity; our more backward members are not drawn into Party life, with the result that a few members are trying to do everything. This means that progress can go so far and no further. Shift work certainly creates difficulties, but this can be overcome if tackled in a determined manner. The recent ballot for the tramway union elections returned a big militant vote. However, there was no progress on the election figures held twelve months previously. The results were claimed by our tramway comrades as a victory. We suggest to them that they learn to use the weapon of Bolshevik self-criticism.

In a number of other industries and unions we have organisation and contact, but progress is too slow. A rapid improvement must take place everywhere. Whilst support for militant trade unionism continues to increase, we have not been able to raise the militant policy as the alternate to reformism in a clear enough manner. We must secure an improvement here.

Our Party units and members are faced with the responsibility of being the driving force to achieve the development of regular job and union correspondents for "The Red Leader" and to ensure a continual increase in the sales of same.

Comrades, if a rapid turn is made towards improving the level of our trade union leadership—if more attention is paid to awards, immediate demands, etc., as the starting-point to secure support for our general demands and campaigns—if the particular problems in each union and industry are studied more concretely, together with an intensification of the study of Marxism-Leninism in a concrete sense, which will mean the development of new cadres—I am sure that we will meet with greater successes in the near future. We will soon become a mass Party, with a considerably increased mass influence, aiming our main blows more ably at the reformist betrayers, isolating them, and winning the toilers for struggle in a mighty united front against fascism, war and the capitalist offensive—for general strike to win the six-hour day, £5 minimum wage and double dole—for Soviet power and socialism.

Is "Prosperity" Returning?

By R. CRAMM

"All the efforts of the capitalist class to overcome the crisis in Australia have failed. The slight improvement of production in some industries, the small reduction of unemployment, the increase in prices of wool—factors which have called forth much demagoguery and praise from the capitalist class and its politicians—do not mean that the crisis is passing. On the contrary, it can be stated, with all certainty, that the upward tendency which commenced in 1933 and is continuing into 1934, cannot be maintained so that capitalism will find an economic way out of the crisis. The improvement taking place can only pave the way for a greater crash."
—Fourth Plenum Resolution.

Is the above analysis of the Central Committee correct? Is the line of the Party in relation to the economic and political situation in Australia wrong? Many workers are asking these questions in view of the "prosperity" propaganda and the superficial improvement manifested in certain industries.

We must agree that there is an improvement in some directions. Building expansion for 1934, when compared with 1933, shows a sharp upward trend. The total amount expended on new buildings in Sydney and suburbs during the course of the year 1933 was £2,214,503 as against £3,112,278 for 1934, being a net improvement of £897,775. This improvement is being carried into 1935, as the recent returns of the Water and Sewerage Board indicate. But the improvement is not so flattering when compared with building construction in Sydney and suburbs for the year 1914 (£6,775,548) and the peak year 1929, when £16,500,000 was expended on new buildings!

Real estate turnover has increased in value from £12,200,000 in 1933 to £18,300,000 for the corresponding period of 1934. ("S.M.H." 5/1/35, real estate column.) Freight tonnage on the railways in N.S.W. has improved, according to the Railway Commissioner's figures, from 4,568,000 tons for the first five months of the 1933-4 financial year to 5,260,000 tons for the corresponding months of 1934-5, an increase for five months of 692,000 tons. ("S.M.H." 9/1/35.)

The master builders predict a "boom" year, "almost normal,"

etc., by the end of 1935, and Mr. Stevens talks of "back to normal prosperity by Xmas 1935." Many lesser fry add their voices to the chorus, and city firms claim increased turnovers for the latter half of 1934.

This demagogy run riot, this window-dressing for an early State election, aiming at the return of the Stevens Government to power, conveniently forgets to paint the other side of the picture, the side that reflects the general decay of Australian capitalism.

The working-class do not want to be deceived. The Party line is correct. "Prosperity" is not returning. The crisis of capitalism is not being overcome. Stabilisation of Australian capitalism is not being effected.

Let us show the other side of the picture. What were the factors giving rise to the visible improvement in certain directions? We can place them under three headings:

- (1) Increased prices for wool and other primary products during 1933, when compared with 1931-2.
- (2) Government loans and attacks on the workers' conditions.
- (3) War expenditure, this latter having a direct bearing on the increased wool prices from an international standpoint.

Wool exports for the months July to October 1933 were estimated at 805,136 bales as against 524,887 bales for the same months in 1934. This tremendous decline of 280,249 bales represented a net loss of income to the wool barons of £7,504,530 when compared with the £14,344,380 received in the corresponding months of 1933!

When we view the wool situation over the five months' export season 1933-34 and compare it with the same months of 1934-35, a worse picture is presented. During the five months 1933-34 394,450 thousands of lb. of all classes of wool were exported, representing £24,083,532 Australian, as compared with only 256,390 thousands of lb., equalling £11,751,170 Australian, for five months 1934-35. ("S.M.H.," 10/1/'35.) At the same time, whilst slight increases took place in the exports of meat, citrus fruits, wheat, flour, timber, tallow and gold, over the last five months of 1934-35, sharp decreases were noticeable in butter, milk products, currants, raisins, wine, hides, skins, copper, zinc, tin, silver, lead, and leather. Like the wool, the decrease in quantity exported was also made worse by a sharp decline in the price obtainable. We must expect a further decline in wool exports and prices when the German-South African reciprocal agreement commences to operate. Germany agrees to take

£2,400,000 sterling value of wool from South Africa by May 30, 1935, South Africa taking a similar value of German manufactures. ("S.M.H." 2/1/'35.)

The Australian wool capitalists reply to this situation by proposing an almost similar agreement with Germany. ("S.M.H.," 9/1/'35.) Such a suggestion is fraught with great difficulties for the wool capitalists, as it will be bitterly opposed by the "mother" country and manufacturing and financial interests in Australia, which will see in such an agreement a curtailment of the import of British manufactures and a shrinking of the home market for Australian secondary goods. The bonds of "Empire" are certainly being strained.

The factors which give rise to a greater volume of wool exports during 1933 have now partially disappeared. When Hitler took power, great quantities of wool were bought by that country to equip storm troops and supply the needs of the army as a part of the intense preparation for war that commenced after Hitler took charge.

Japan, also, was a large buyer during that period, to equip the army in Manchuria and to build up large supplies of tunics, etc., in preparation for intervention against the U.S.S.R. Further, but to a lesser degree, this was true of the war preparations of Australia, Great Britain and others. Whilst war preparations have not ceased, the internal economic situation of the European countries has become worse, the drive to economic nationalism has intensified, substitutes are being used for wool (Woolstra, Germany), and the great mass of the people are so impoverished that new woollen garments are out of the question.

As the basis for the 1933 improvement in wool exports is rapidly disappearing, we must look for a worsening of the situation in connection with our staple industry. There is only one alternative as far as the Australian capitalists are concerned, not only for wool but all primary exports, and that is to find other markets in the East. Other countries are looking for markets also, and the clash of interests will be intensified, competition will grow apace, attacks will be made on the workers and small farmers of this country in an attempt to lower already low living standards to compete; Fascism will gain impetus and a more vigorous drive will be made towards war as a solution.

Exports of meat, which showed an upward trend during 1933

and 1934, are being restricted. The agrarian capitalists view this situation with alarm, and see in it the forerunner of general restriction of primary products on the English market. Grounds for these fears are only too plentiful. South Africa proposes to export 1,000,000 pounds of butter to the already glutted London market, Danish supplies are particularly heavy and prices are tending to decline. Eggs, despite the Xmas period, were practically unsaleable in England due to excessive supplies and the inability of the masses to buy. And the policy of British Imperialism in building up a home agriculture in preparation for war, combined with an economic rapprochement between England and Ireland regarding cattle, gives little hope for the future.

Temporarily, with certain provisions, the British Government by bringing pressure to bear on the Lyons-Page Cabinet, and by using Bruce as a lever, has succeeded in getting the Australian primary industries to agree to what is termed "temporary restriction" until the end of March.

The shaky character of this agreement, the explosive material the restrictions are generating within the various capitalist parties and groups, including the "Labor" Party, is developing towards a disintegration of the leading bourgeois parties.

This danger is clearly realised by the bourgeois press, which has never ceased, since the meat restrictions were mooted, to point out to Page and the big country interests that this question was not one merely affecting them, but carried within it all the explosive material for a first-class political crisis.

This potential crisis has not been averted, it has only been postponed. That Lyons realises this is evident from his remarks to the Hobart Chamber of Commerce, published in the "S.M.H." of 16/1 '35, wherein he stated, *inter alia*:

"The efforts of the Government," he said, "would be directed towards the expansion of the demand for foodstuffs and raw materials rather than the restriction of supply.

"If efforts to extend the demand fail," said Mr. Lyons, "and restrictions are imposed on the importation of Australian products into the United Kingdom, it will be necessary for Australia to direct her own efforts, by all means in her power, towards the sale of surpluses in foreign countries. At the same time, it will be necessary to recast our national economy so as to reduce imports from countries which do not buy from Australia sufficient to enable us to pay interest on our debts to them, and at the same time pay for imports."

The above remarks contain two points: Firstly, a threat to

Great Britain in the event of general restriction to make agreements with other countries irrespective of "Empire" interests, and, secondly, that Australian policy would be directed with more vigor towards penetrating other markets with cheap goods.

Such an attitude reflects the deep-seated opposition existing within the capitalist groups over the question of the meat restrictions. Further, it heralds the approach of greater attacks on the workers' conditions so that production costs can be lowered to compete in markets already extensively exploited by other cheap-labor countries. This situation calls for a strengthening of all the forces of the working-class to resist the coming attacks and the drive towards Fascism and war.

Sufficient has been said about the primary industries, although much more could be said if space would allow, in connection with this, the principal factor which makes for "prosperity" and stabilisation in Australian capitalist economy, to show that, on this, the main point, there is very little hope of a future prosperity.

Let us briefly touch on Government loans. In an effort to overcome the crisis the Australian bourgeoisie, through their governments, have raised millions for relief work. Further millions have been raised by attacking the workers' wages per medium of wages tax, etc. Expenditure arising from these loans has given impetus to brick-yards, pottery works, timber yards, cement firms, joinery businesses, etc., because the work carried out has been building of schools, repairing government buildings, loans to property-owners to build, etc., sewerage schemes, and so on. Furthermore, the relief worker, instead of having a paper coupon limiting him to certain things, has, through receiving a shilling or two more on relief work, been able to spend ready money, be it ever such a small quantity. This has seen a distinct tendency take place amongst the unemployed, namely, where two and three families were living in the one house 18 months ago to save rent expenses, great numbers have now gone out on their own again and are attempting to pay rent. The result has been in some suburbs an actual shortage of cheap houses, causing a rise in rent, and being one of the factors causing investment to take place in real estate. The main determining factor, however, in connection with property investment giving cause to a building "boom" is the fact that the bourgeoisie cannot find any other profitable undertakings in which to invest the surplus value derived from the working class. This in itself is indicative of

stagnation, and does not point to any permanent improvement. If further evidence in this question is needed, we only have to study the decline in the number of sheep in Australia. During 1934, the number of sheep declined by 1,940,000 head and there were 2,784,000 fewer lambs for 1934 when compared with 1933. Then, it is estimated that tens of thousands of pounds would be needed to renew the wheat farms with machinery and so on. All this shows, not a return to "prosperity," but a decay, a further worsening of the general economic situation of Australian capitalism.

The expenditure on war preparations has also influenced the metal trades. It has caused the building and extending of present steel works, the erection of munition plants, research in connection with oil and so on. This reflects itself in other industries, and so a temporary improvement is shown, but it is not an indication of stabilisation. On the contrary, it is a sign of worse to come, as the money being used to cause this improvement is money which in the ordinary course of events would be put into new industry and for the purpose of repairing old plant.

In other words, we are living on the national wealth, which is not increasing, while big sections of the plants and farms are rotting away because there are no profitable markets. This situation must come to an end very soon.

The Australian National Bank, in its review of 1934, says:—

"If the various improvements in local trading conditions were based upon higher prices for our main export commodities, the outlook would be much more pleasing," the bank adds. "As it is, there is no substantial addition to the sum of national wealth, and it would seem that, apart from the temporary rise in wool prices last season, the gains of trade are mainly due to the distribution of money borrowed by governments, and to larger individual spendings of money derived either from savings or by diverting income which normally would be used to preserve the value of existing assets or to provide for future needs." ("S.M.H." 14/1/35.)

The above statement puts the position in a nutshell. We are not returning to stabilisation, but to further decline unless a rise takes place in export prices and a market is found to absorb the surplus commodities.

It is interesting to note what our C.C. said about this situation as far back as April, 1934; "In Australia there is improvement of a kind. We said there had been a slight improvement in the posi-

tion of the Australian bourgeoisie, achieved primarily at the expense of the workers and small farmers. Much of the improvement is taking place behind tariff walls, and some of the improvement is due to war preparations—increased supplies of wool to Germany, also other countries." ("C.R." April-May, p. 7.)

In conclusion we think sufficient has been said to demonstrate that the Party line is correct. We must learn the lessons derived from a perusal of the above figures, must draw the necessary conclusions, and prepare our class for the coming gigantic struggle in the future, against Fascism, war and the capitalist offensive. This is the duty of every militant worker.

—oOo—

The Convention of The American Federation of Labor

By BOSSE (New York)

The 54th Convention of the American Federation of Labor met in San Francisco during the first two weeks of October, and in spite of the best efforts of its leadership it had to report more progress in certain directions than any other gathering in years. It endorsed the principle of industrial unionism and that of organisation of the unorganised, under pressure of the revolt of the masses against the attacks of the N.R.A., though it will do its best to castrate these formally progressive steps, as far as possible.

On the other hand, the convention was conducted in the most reactionary fashion of any of its history, the most elementary aspects of trade union democracy being violated in an orgy of steam-rolling. The bureaucracy further tied up the federation to the chariot of the N.R.A., and, unless the influence of the "Left" wing and the militancy of the workers hold it back, it will degenerate into a semi-governmental apparatus.

The report of the Executive Council to the convention showed the average membership for the year ending August 31 to be 2,608,000, a gain of less than half a million over the previous year. It was the lowest figure since 1920, except for 1932 and 1933. Last year Green had predicted a gain of ten million, and at the end of this convention he again promised a gain of a million for next year. During the year of the N.R.A., over

5,000,000 workers, or twice the total of the A.F.L. membership, were forced into company unions, while Green and his brethren sabotaged their organisation. The new federal (industrial or plant unions) number 1800, with 90,000 members, largely in the basic industries. Many more could have been organised had the bureaucracy desired.

The income for the past year was 1,070,000 dollars, and the balance from the previous year 400,000 dollars. Expenses for the year were 907,000 dollars, including such items as 324,000 dollars for organisers' salaries and expenses, 31,000 dollars for officers' salaries and expenses, 135,000 dollars for printing the monthly American "Federationists," 134,000 dollars for the Gompers' memorial fund, etc. In the defence fund was 466,000 dollars, but for strike and lock-out benefits there was spent only 1084 dollars during the entire year.

The Executive Council commended itself for having favored the following legislature: Appropriation of 660 million dollars for war ships and planes; appropriation of three million dollars (!) for vocational education; continued opposition to Japanese immigration; approval of the Philippine Independence Act, which enslaves the Filipinos more securely to American imperialism; etc. On unemployment insurance, the Executive Council reported that 25 State legislatures have Bills before them; but none has been passed. The Council takes the viewpoint of the employers in opposing genuine unemployment and social insurance: "It is definitely understood that Congress cannot enact a federal unemployment insurance law." The A.F.L. endorses the fake Wagner Bill, on which hearings have not even been held.

The speakers before the convention were, as usual, members of Roosevelt's cabinet, archbishops, mayors, legionnaires, ex-labor fakers and present ones, domestic and foreign. Those who broke the San Francisco general strike were given places of honor on the speakers' list. The leading issue before the convention for some time was a bitter jurisdictional struggle in the building trades, with the open threat of a split. Some 800,000 carpenters, electricians, and bricklayers, the largest unions in the industry, fought with an equal number in minor unions who had expelled them from the building trades department of the A.F.L. The basis for the crisis was the 75 per cent. unemployment in this trade. The convention supported the three big unions, and the matter is settled, on the surface.

The most important issue taken up was that of industrial

unionism, and the convention for the first time endorsed it unanimously. It was forced upon the leadership by the militancy of the membership in the local unions, a large number of resolutions having come from all over the country demanding it. The New York "Times" labor correspondent summed it up so:

"Yielding to the ceaseless demands for a clear and definite statement of policy with regard to its attitude on forming industrial unions embracing every group of workers in the basic and mass production industries . . . the convention confessed that it was impossible to organize craft unions in these industries." The issue was critical: "It was no secret that the members of the federal unions were discouraged and were beginning to fall away. . . . Action could not be postponed for another year."

These workers, most of whom organized spontaneously, despite the efforts of the A.F.L. to keep them from doing so, were beginning to fall away to the "Left" wing, to independent or to company union influence. The convention admittedly supported the resolution calling for industrial unionism to combat the "Left" wing's growing influence ("to keep them from organizing under some other banner").

The "Times" correspondent went on to say that the workers in the federal unions "feared that the old-line craft unions would seek to divide them up and dismember the industrial unions when organization was completed." This is just what the old guard hopes to do.

The resolution adopted hamstrings these new unions in the auto, radio, cement, aluminium, etc., industries by instructing the Executive Council to appoint the officers and decide the policies and finances of the new industrial unions as long as it wished to do so.

John L. Lewis, head of the miners and the worst reactionary in the A.F.L., sponsored the fight for the industrial unions. Howard, of a craft printers' union, who betrayed the San Francisco strike by keeping the printers at work, the newspapers going, etc., also championed it, saying frankly that otherwise the Reds would get the new unions. The interests of the craft unions were amply provided for, as the majority of the A.F.L. are craft unions. Since everyone admits a number of large strikes are likely this winter, especially in these unorganized, mass-production industries, the A.F.L. leaders are already providing for betraying them. Lewis has his eyes on Green's job, and so poses as a progressive and defender of the new ideas.

The convention wanted a curb on company unions, but merely asked the government for it—it did nothing to fight them and win away their workers. It asked the N.R.A. National Labor Relations Board to ban them from the factory ballots when the workers voted for the kind of union they wanted to represent them. This was in line with the policy of considering the N.R.A. a boon to labor. As the U.S. has joined the International Labor Office, the A.F.L. is considering doing the same, just as it goes along with the government in every step!

The convention demanded representation on N.R.A. codes, defeated a resolution demanding withdrawal of A.F.L. officials from N.R.A. boards, "requested" enforcement of clause 7a (allegedly permitting unionisation). As Green put it, "Labor must be made an active partner in the supposed partnership of government, industry, and labor."

The Executive Council stated that under the N.R.A. "minimum wage rates in the codes have been set so low that the purpose of the N.R.A. has been completely nullified in a large part of industry." Consumption has not been increased nor the standards of living raised under the N.R.A. In the year ending July, 1934, average weekly wages increased 6.4 per cent., while the cost of living gained 6.3 per cent. "In many industries codes have meant a very real decrease in wages" (textile, newspaper, petroleum, wholesale trade, etc.). Many codes include "meaningless and unenforceable provisions for an adjustment in wages." The shorter working week has been so manipulated as to mean lower wages and a much longer working week, in some cases as much as 54 hours.

The Compliance (complaint) Boards are taking care of "only a negligible portion of all violations." Workers joining unions are being fired, company unions being created under the N.R.A. Its agencies "were either unwilling or unable (!) to enforce the law, or delayed so long that unions were weakened or even destroyed. . . ." Yet, despite this damning indictment, the members of the A.F.L. are urged to have faith: "The decisions of the labor boards reassure the rights written into the National Recovery Act."

The Negro question came into the open with a bang at this convention. A resolution to expel unions discriminating against Negroes was adopted by an oral vote, over-ruling the Resolutions Committee. Green ignored it, and had the question referred to the Executive Council for further study for a year. The great pressure exerted upon the reformist Negro leaders by the mass

campaigns around the **Scottsboro** issue and around the Negro sharecroppers and metal miners in the South caused the successful raising of the question for the first time.

The fight of the bureaucrats not in the inner council was a main issue on the floor, Lewis and his pals battling Green to a standstill after a number of efforts at previous conventions. By a deal made behind the scenes, and tied up with the industrial unionism issue, they were given places on the Executive Council, which was increased to 18. **Gorman**, hero of the textile strike betrayal, came by aeroplane to speak on the strike. He called it an "amazing victory," because it won many new members (he was careful not to say how many); because, while it did not win union recognition, it won "the nearest thing" to it. The stretch-out was being settled by "investigation." The blacklisting of scores of thousands, company unions, and other aspects of the defeat were not mentioned.

Ninety per cent. of the delegates were not representatives of the membership, but top officials of the unions. The rank and file showed some progress, having had no delegates in 1932, one last year, and 15 this year. All their resolutions were reprinted in the official proceedings, summarised in the San Francisco press, and came up on the floor. It is true they were railroaded to the scrap heap in the worst orgies of Red-baiting and downright terrorism. Rank and file delegates were refused the floor consistently, and were howled down by Green and his clique.

The six "Left" wing resolutions included the following: Condemnation of Green for his betrayal of the San Francisco strike; a national 24-hour strike in January to support the unemployment insurance bill; against expulsions for political beliefs; withdrawal from N.R.A. posts; release of the **Scottsboro** boys, **Mooney**, and **Thaelmann**; protest against German fascism and growing fascist tendencies in the U.S.; condemning the use of militia in strikes; against gangsterism in the unions; giving a speaker time to report on the U.S.S.R., etc.

The rank and file conference met simultaneously with the regular convention. The mass meeting opening it was attended by 1500, with delegates from rubber, coal and metal mining, meat-packing, building, auto, machinist, marine, clothing, textile, shoe, food and other unions. **Weinstock** and other leaders reported, reviewing the struggles in their locals and the experiences gained from them. A national conference was called to meet in **Pittsburg** on October 27-28, and local conferences were being held meanwhile.

The widening of the sphere of influence of the rank and file

is shown by the large number of unions defying Green's ukase of September 11, which ordered the expulsion of all Communists and militants from the A.F.L. The following city central bodies either filed the letter without action, rejected it, or answered it caustically: St. Louis, Seattle, Chester, Everett, Newark, Kalamazoo, etc. In Cleveland three locals took similar action; in Chicago, the painters; Grand Rapids, the painters and metal polishers; Seattle, the machinists and boilermakers; Boston the paperhangers and food workers; Butte, the copper miners; New York, the cleaners and dyers, etc.

The 1917 Strike—Some Lessons For To-Day

By "NUGAFONOS"

(Continued from December issue)

The growth of the influence of the I. W. W., the decline of confidence in the Political Labor Party, and the widespread belief in the efficacy of industrial and direct action, can be ascribed to the disillusionment that the bankruptcy of that Labor Party created. Failure and betrayal were the fruits of that tree which labor pioneers and stalwarts nurtured and made to grow. Instead of the desired and hoped-for fruit of workers' emancipation, there was only the bitter dead-sea fruit that the McGowen and Holman Governments offered. The first Labor Government (McGowen) came into office in October 1910 on a wave of protest and indignation which swept away the Leg-iron Wade Government, which had sent the leaders of the Northern Miners' Strike in irons to prison. That McGowen Government remained in office until June 1913, when it was succeeded by the Holman Government, which remained a "Labor" Government until the middle of November 1916. One day in that month it was a "Labor" Government—the next day it was a Nationalist-Win-the-War Government. Such metamorphosis was quite simple to accomplish—else it could not have taken place in so short a time. The difference between Lib. and Lab. was, after all, only the middle letter! The careers of the Labor Governments culminating in the final acts of betrayal: attacks on workers' conditions, economic conscription for service in the war, support of conscription, were worthily continued by the subsequent Nationalist Governments—"Nationalist" being "Liberal" writ large" to include "Labor"; Disgust with all this

turned the attentions of the workers again towards industrial organisation and action, and the leadership in the first anti-conscription campaign (1916) which the I. W. W. supplied, helped to turn this new interest of the mass of the workers in the direction of action.

And in 1917 there was the direct necessity for action. The workers were already paying for the war in which thousands of their class were laying down their lives—had been slaughtered in 1915 on Gallipoli by the criminal blunderings of their leaders, blunderings to be repeated in the following year in France, to result in the slaughtering of more thousands and to culminate in the charnel-house of Ypres in October, 1917! This wholesale and continuous slaughter made necessary the trapping of more and more men to fill up the ranks. Not only were reinforcements to be got, but the criminal Federal Government and William Birdwood, who wished to raise his own rank and authority, were, in 1917, creating a sixth division—another division for the slaughter. The fact that such a division was being created was officially denied here in Australia, but, at that time, the writer was in England in a unit from which members were being taken as recruits for the new division! In Australia, in the meanwhile, workers were paying for the war. The cost of living was soaring, leaving wages far behind. Unemployment was increasing. Returned soldiers, already back from the front, were unable to find positions, and many of them and their families were on the bread-line. Poverty was widespread. Said the "Sun": "Many pitiful scenes among the poor and needy are to be witnessed almost daily at the Sydney Municipal Markets. From early morning from 75 to 100 women and as many children are to be seen turning over the refuse in the open garbage tins in the search for vegetables. Many carry dilapidated hampers, and others sugar-bags, into which they put potatoes, onions, pumpkins, cabbage, and other vegetable matter, thrown away as bad by the salesmen." And this occurred not in the middle of the Great Depression but in the midst of the Great War!—the Great War for a Better World!

On the other hand, profits were increasing. It was about this time that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company increased its capital in a wholesale manner—just as it is doing to-day. In 1915, the White Star Line declared a dividend of 65 per cent., and then increased its capital from three-quarters of a million to 3½

millions and on this, in 1917, declared a dividend of 20 per cent. (Sydney "Sun," 25/7/'17.) The Nippon Yusen Kaisha, engaged in Australian trade, made a profit in 1917 of about 2½ millions. The Australian shipping firms reaped rich harvests. Capitalism had brought the workers to this pass: that they died or were half-starved when mountains of profits were being built up. From the beginning of the century, the workers had been continually increasing the wealth they created. In 1901, according to Commonwealth Statistician Wickens, the value of primary and manufacturing production was (in terms of money values of 1927) £40 per head of the population, while in 1927 it was £73 per head. The attack on the workers that the above facts and figures index show the urge to action.

We have already given the figures of strikes (see Sept. "Communist Review")—the 1917 Strike was a culmination of that strike movement and we have seen how it grew spontaneously, pushing in front of it the "leaders" who did all they could do to hold it back. There can be no doubt, on the other hand, that the Government welcomed the strike. The employers and the press had been crying for action against the strike wave. The Government determined that the battle would be fought to the finish. The Press and the employers' organisations backed it. The Orange Lodge, the churches, the Masons, were mobilised in its support. The fact that we were at war enabled the Government and the Press to make use of jingoism and patriotism, and the pro-German taunt was directed at the strikers. Finally, the potent factor was the sabotage and treachery of the leaders of the strike and of the Labor politicians.

The 1917 Strike must be seen in a long perspective. The Maritime Strike of the early '90's led to the establishment of the Political Labor Party. The militancy of the workers then was turned into the blind alley of Parliamentarism. Thence dated the long process of building up the Labor Party until it achieved power in 1910 with the hope in the breasts of the workers that final emancipation was near. In the meantime, disillusionment was beginning. The Labor Party was earlier in power in the Federal Arena and the futility of relying on Parliaments was making itself manifest. As a result the revolutionary movement began to grow—but with its life-blood poisoned by sectarianism. On the industrial field there were the beginnings of that dualism which has done so much harm to the American working-class movement. 1917 showed the necessity for unity on the in-

dustrial field. In the years immediately following, the idea of the O.B.U. grew and spread. It was the period of fine paper-schemes: cart-wheel plans for organisation. But they were planned from the top downwards instead of in the reverse direction, so that what beginnings were made passed into the control of the reactionaries. It is not generally understood to-day that the O.B.U. does exist **on paper**: the Workers' Industrial Union of Australia, of which only one section is functioning—the Miners' Federation. The lesson is that even if an O.B.U. is 100 per cent. organised, it is dead unless its veins be filled with the life-blood that throbs from the heart of the mass of the workers through local and unit organisation and rank and file representation and control. The lessons that the growth of the Minority Movement to-day has to offer have been learned from the failures of the past and the defeats that sectarianism brought in its train.

In 1917, too, the victorious Russian Revolution furnished lessons to the whole of the world proletariat. The teachings of Lenin, the experiences of the various sections of the Communist International, and the triumphing march towards Socialism in the U.S.S.R. under the leadership of tried revolutionists have given us lessons so that the follies of the sectarianism that spelt the ruin of the revolutionary parties of the past have been laid aside. Germany, Austria, France, Spain, have shown the necessity for unity in the struggle against capitalism. The French, Austrian, Italian and Spanish workers appear to have learned the lesson. Shall we learn them here? Wonthaggi and the victories of the militants in the Miners' Union reflect the correct and efficient methods of organising struggle that we now have learned. The advance of the Communist Party is alike proof that the sin of sectarianism has been got rid of. If we learn from mistakes and failures of the past, then they have not been in vain. But let us not rest on our laurels!

THE END

Note on Authorities.—The following have been used in the preparation of these articles:—"Social Unrest—The Story of the 1917 Strike," by "Arius"; "How Labor Governs," by V. G. Childe; "Unity Debate" (1917), Judd and Reardon; "Political Power Debate" (1920), Judd and Reardon; Files of "The International Socialist," "The People," and "Direct Action."

The Growth of Monopoly

By T. ENSFIELD

The period of crisis has seen an enormous development of monopoly within Australian capitalism. So clearly is the process of monopoly formation working out that, beyond question, finance capital is playing the leading role in the economic and political life of Australia.

Finance capital is a fusion of industrial and bank capital, and does not, as the Douglas Social Credit and Labor Party theoreticians maintain, derive its sustenance from dealing in money alone. It draws its sustenance from direct participation in the whole range of economic activity—industrial, commercial, and banking—deriving its strength from its dominating economic position and its corrupt connections with the capitalist State.

The connections between finance capital and the State are becoming very clear with the growth of monopoly in one branch of industry after another, especially as each step in the general growth of monopoly is accompanied by the lowering of the living standards of the masses and by the crushing out of small-scale enterprises.

At the present moment the struggle for monopoly is being waged in two important food industries—bread and milk, the two most vital foods of the Australian masses, of which the latter is the sole nourishment of our prolific infant life.

A complete monopoly of milk distribution already exists in Sydney and Melbourne, the former having been established with the direct aid of the Lang Labor Government and the latter with the aid of the present Nationalist Government. So identical were the methods of the two governments that it becomes perfectly clear that they were merely the bribed tools of the forces of monopoly.

The milk monopoly in Sydney has command of approximately £3,000,000 worth of milk and £1,000,000 worth of cream and butter a year and, by all kinds of adulteration and swindling in addition to what capital regards as legitimate profit-making, is able to rake in a high rate of profit.

The establishment of this form of monopoly would have been impossible without the direct aid of the State which, under the guise of protecting the public health on the one hand, and stabilis-

ing the milk industry on the other, introduced the legislation which gave monopoly power to a small group of distributing companies and drove hundreds of small and medium-sized vendors out of business.

In Perth and Brisbane, where Labor governments are in power, milk monopolies are being aided to power in exactly the same way as in Sydney and Melbourne—under the hypocritical pretension of "protecting public health and stabilising the milk industry."

The monopolistic ambitions of the gangs of bread thieves are not being so easily realised. The attempt to pass the flour tax on to the price of bread has brought this young octopus up to the surface from the hidden depths where its tentacles have been steadily growing and reaching out into the baking industry and distribution of bread.

The monopoly forces in the bread industry have encountered a number of great difficulties and have suffered a number of severe set-backs due to the tenacity with which the masses defend their bread, in the face of which neither the Nationalist nor the Labor governments dare risk exposing their connections with a bread monopoly.

For a number of years the flour tax has been successfully passed on to the price of bread in spite of the anger of the masses. But this year the mass resentment is directed against the Government and, in view of the pending State elections, the N.S.W. Government is forced to make a pretence of combating the master bakers. In this situation the position of the anti-monopolist interests in the baking industry is strengthened. The anti-monopolist interests, comprising a large number of small and medium enterprises, have always been a thorn in the side of the monopolists.

Baking is an industry adapted to small scale, handicraft, or even domestic, production, which entails but little overhead expense. Because of this, small-scale enterprise has been able to survive and compete against the big concerns which are loaded down with tremendous overhead expenses.

In Sydney the four largest baking companies represent a total investment of over £1,000,000. They possess sufficient plant to supply the whole of Sydney if the Day Baking Act was abolished.

But the day baking law, although it is being further and further encroached upon, prevents the big concerns from fully utilising their plants, so that they are striving to meet their tremendous overhead expenses, and at the same time make the average

rate of profit, with their plant running at half capacity.

Even under these difficulties the big concerns have made a considerable advance towards monopoly. By a consistent policy of buying out small enterprises, and conducting a sustained price war in selected localities to drive others out, they have captured the larger part of the bread market. But the procedure of buying out has proved a very costly one to the big concerns, because a number of small bakers developed the art of establishing small enterprises for the special purpose of being "bought out." Mr. Kirkland, president of the Master Bakers' Association, when recently indulging in a vehement tirade against this practice, which he described as blackmail, admitted that from £7,000 to £8,000 a year had been spent in this way. No doubt it would have been good business for the monopolists had the small bakers stayed out, leaving them to raise the price of bread and actually show a profit on their £8,000.

After their failure to establish a monopoly by the direct route the big bakers turned to the Government for aid. In the "Australian Baker," July 31, 1934, page 61, appears a very concise expression of their desires:

"A BREAD CONTROL BOARD

"For some time both employers and employees have discussed the question of controlling the trade through a Government appointed board, and the present has been considered a suitable occasion to take some action. The **Breadcarters' Union**, in its natural fear of the effect of increasing shop trade upon its members, placed before the Government a comprehensive scheme which has already been discussed in these columns. Now the Melbourne Master Bakers' Council is proposing to approach the Government along the same lines, viz., the licensing of bakeries, the abolition of re-sale of bread through shops, or, alternatively, the licensing of bread-selling shops, the fixation of minimum prices, and the general control of the trade by a representative board, comprising Government officials, master bakers, employers, consumers, etc. It is considered very unlikely that anything can be done at the moment."

This proposal is based upon the experiences of the Sydney Milk Board, which provided a short-cut route to monopoly. But unfortunately for the bread thieves the Government has had too much trouble over its dirty work in connection with the Milk Board to risk a repetition. And as for the support of the Breadcarters' Union, which is made to appear as the originator of the

scheme, the issue has been definitely settled by the expulsion of the organising secretary, MacPherson, by the executive for collaboration with the employers.

But although great danger for the Government is involved if it assists to establish a bread monopoly in the same way as it assisted the milk swindlers, this does not guarantee that it will not assist in a less direct manner. It appears already that the Government is searching for new methods, and it is probable that the Commission headed by Sir Herbert Gepp, to inquire into the baking industry, will not only formulate proposals on similar lines to the Milk Board, but will attempt to relieve the Government of responsibility for its concessions to monopoly.

But even this course must tend to expose the monopolist policy of the Government, because royal and other State commissions are no longer treated with the respect they once received. Very few people now look upon them as what they pretend to be—impartial arbiters between contending interests, free of governmental influences in making recommendations. Commissions, royal or civil, are subservient to the Government, and when their decisions are accepted by the Government, it must bear responsibility for putting them into effect.

In summing up the position in the bread-baking industry, we can say that the monopoly forces, in spite of many set-backs, now hold a fairly strong position and that only a widespread mass campaign can prevent the Government from assisting the monopolists to complete victory.

The connections between finance capital and the State in the exploitation of agriculture have reached a high degree of perfection. During the post-war period of capitalist development in Australia this process has gone on unnoticed by the masses of workers and small farmers, and the Communist Party has been the only political force attempting to expose and organise a struggle against it.

Although, from time to time, agitation has been directed against various manifestations of monopoly, chiefly against the C.S.R., the Nationalist, Country and Labor parties have been able—turn about—to safely secure the position of finance capital in the industrial, banking and commercial spheres.

There is not space here to deal fully with the question, but we can, at least, present some facts which vividly illustrate the legislative aid given by all governments to the monopolies.

In connection with the tobacco industry, we will take an extract from the official organ of the Farmers' Unity League, "Call

to Unity," December 8, 1934:

"The British Tobacco Company has made a profit of £585,000 this year for the third year in succession."

A grower sends 2080 lb. of leaf to the Combined Growers' Tobacco Manufacturing Co., Ltd., of Brisbane, and receives £5/16/-. And yet tobacco is retailed to the consumers at from 9d. to 12d. per ounce!

Of the income from the tobacco trade the Federal Government takes 4/6 a lb. in excise duty, which helps to pay the interest to the bondholders who have over a billion pounds invested in the national debt.

But the outstanding feature of the tobacco industry is the legislation passed by the Federal Government making it a crime for a tobacco grower to manufacture his own tobacco. In the above case the grower, by a simple process, could have taken 25 lb. of his own leaf, made it into smoking tobacco, and sold it in his own locality for 5/- a lb., and got as much for it as he received from the company for 2080 lb.

In the face of these facts, who can say that State-aided monopoly does not exist in the tobacco industry?

And what is the difference between this particular case and the general marketing legislation pioneered by the Queensland Labor Government, which has now extended to national proportions in the form of the Commonwealth Butter Stabilisation Act? There is no difference whatever, because the dairying industry has been placed firmly in the hands of the exploiters! The price of butter and cheese is fixed by Government enactment; the proportion allowed for home consumption is fixed likewise; and whilst the great majority of dairy farmers are forced down to a starvation income, the banks, shipping companies, merchants, landlords, etc., are able to secure their booty.

In Queensland this Act is still further strengthened by the existing State Marketing Act, which enables the exploiters to confiscate even the by-products of the dairying industry. A dairy farmer who kills and eats his own pig has to pay a levy to the Pig Marketing Board.

These few facts indicate the general trend of capitalist policy in agriculture which, taken in conjunction with food processing, follows the line of State-aided monopoly.

Of particular significance to the working-class is the fact that these developments have gone forward uninterrupted by any of the Labor governments. The Labor Government in Queensland, which has enjoyed a greater measure of stability than any other

government in Australian history, has indeed been the most faithful and able servant of finance capital.

Furthermore, the policy enunciated by Beasley, on behalf of the Lang Federal Party, indicates that the Labor Party is willing to render further aid to finance capital in the above direction. Beasley offers to not only complete the above process of State control of marketing by setting up Commonwealth wheat and wool pools, but actually proposes to finance them through the Commonwealth Bank.

But the time has not yet arrived for this lickspittle of Australian capitalism to be taken into service in an inflation adventure. For the time being Australian capitalism is satisfied to proceed along the foregoing lines of systematic attack against the living standards of the toiling masses—persistently beating down the wages and conditions of the workers and the income of the small and middle farmers on the one hand and of step by step developing monopoly in food production and distribution as a further means of lowering the living standards of the masses and crushing out of small enterprises on the other hand.

Perhaps when the crisis plunges Australian capitalism into a more serious position, and the mass movement of the workers and small farmers rises to a greater height, Beasley, Lang and Co. will be called upon to introduce their policy of nationalisation of the banks as a further means of guaranteeing the dividends of the big exploiters at the expense of the toiling masses and the petit-bourgeoisie.

The Communists must study this question of the growth of monopoly and raise a consistent agitation against monopoly in all spheres of activity. The greatest clarity on this question is necessary, especially in our work among the petit-bourgeoisie, whom the Douglas Credit and A.L.P. are frantically striving to win as a mass basis for their future political adventures on behalf of decadent capitalism.

Appeal of The Central Committee of The C.P. of Spain

The following appeal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain was published in October after the revolutionary fights. It contains a criticism of the tactics of the united front organs, the "Workers' Alliances," which in some localities, in addition to communists and socialists, also comprised anarchists.

To All Workers and Peasants of Spain, Catalonia, the Basque Provinces and Galicia:

The provocation of the exploiting class of Spain, which set up the Vatican-fascist government, called forth an outburst of popular indignation which has shaken the regime of the bourgeoisie and landowners to its very foundations.

Tired of suffering hunger, exploitation and terror, the workers rose in order to take up the fight for bread, land and freedom. In very many places, especially in Asturias and Biscaya, the red flag of revolution and Soviet power fluttered in the breeze as a symbol of a new Spain, freed from misery. The heroism of the workers in the fight reached its highest point in the glorious epoch of red Asturias, where the socialist republic of the workers and peasants was proclaimed, which is still being maintained to-day, defended with the breasts and weapons of the slaves of the pits, in the midst of a hell of blood and machine-gun fire let loose by the fascist dictatorship government of Lerroux-Gil Robles, who sent their brutes of the Foreign Legion and the colonial troops to murder the brave mine-workers, to massacre their wives and children with artillery, to burn down their dwellings and to violate the proletarian women.

Long live the courageous proletariat of Asturias!

The battle which has been fought is not the decisive battle. The executioners of the working people should not exult too early at their victory. We have returned to work, but we are ready to gather our forces again, to take up the fight again at a more favorable moment, and with greater confidence in victory than ever before. Let us learn from events and make use of the experience. That will strengthen us on the sure way to victory.

The Communist Party, which flung itself into the fight with

all its forces, although it did not agree altogether with the tactics and methods of organisation of the fight, which did not spare itself any effort nor shrink from sacrifices in order to place itself at the head of the fighting masses, now invites all workers to draw the lessons from this fight not only in order to solve the doubts and questions which to-day confront thousands of proletarians, but in order to arm them with the theory and correct tactics which will lead us to victory in the coming fights.

Why did we not win the victory?

Among all the exploited there was no lack of will and courage, determination and firmness, devotion and sacrifice. Why, then, did we not win the victory? Because, as our Party has repeatedly declared, there was not sufficient political and organisational preparation for the revolution, because its programme was not brought to the knowledge of the whole of the working masses, because the advantages which the revolution will bring to the workers, the peasants, the soldiers and all the exploited had not been popularised. The fact that the revolution cannot be simply made but must be organised, that the organisation of the revolution cannot be confined to groups of volunteers who are "ready for everything," but that all the forces of the working class and the immediate allies of the revolution, the peasants, must be drawn into the fight—all this was ignored.

The resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, published in the "Mundo Obrero" ("World of Labor") of September 17, stated: "The Workers' Alliances, as their name implies, arise as the organ of one of the main driving forces of the revolution, namely, the proletariat, which is a guiding force—but they fail to recognise the second main driving force, represented by the peasantry, without the alliance with which there can be no guarantee of the socialist revolution." This is the reason why the army, except in a few isolated cases, did not also join in the fight on the side of the workers.

The overwhelming majority of the soldiers are peasants, and they will only go over to the side of the revolution if it satisfies their requirements. As they did not know what the revolution would give them, the tremendous forces of the village, for the far greater part, did not join the fight.

The problem of power, the main question of every revolution, was not presented plainly and clearly to the proletariat and the masses of the peasantry. The greater majority of them therefore did not know into whose hands and to what organs they had to place power, and what power meant for them. There was

lacking a programme—this force which, when it becomes embodied in the masses, causes them to defy death in order that the programme shall be realised in life. In the above-mentioned resolution of the C.C. of the C.P. it is stated: **“The fight to smash the regime of the bourgeoisie and landowners and for the power of the workers and peasants presupposes the political and organisational preparation of the masses for the achievement of this aim. Therefore, the propaganda of the programme of the workers and peasants’ government, setting forth that which the victorious revolution will give to the working people, must be intensified among the working masses in town and country.”**

The facts have confirmed the correctness of this estimate. In order to throw the whole mass of the toiling people into the fight, it is necessary that they be previously permeated with the programme, which must become the flag of the advance-guard, summoning them to the fight. As this was not the case, the enormous forces represented by the proletariat in every factory, in every mine and every field, were untapped. For this reason neither factory committees nor committees of peasants nor the Alliances were set up in every place where exploitation took place—in which workers, peasants and soldiers should be directly represented—that is to say, **organs for preparation of the armed revolt, embryonic organs of power of the victorious revolution (Soviets).** The fact that all this was lacking is not due to chance. It was in accordance with an unclear view of tactics. There was lacking both the theory and practice of the revolution. **There was lacking the unity and iron discipline which must characterise the party of the revolution.** Within the socialist party there are to be found devoted revolutionaries together with elements which do not conceal their hostility to any revolutionary action. This fact was bound to be reflected in a number of vacillations in regard to directions and some confused and contradictory instructions. **This was the reason for the terrible mistake that the general strike was not carried out before the formation of the hangmen’s government of Lerroux.** This meant that the initiative was left in the hands of the enemy.

Another terrible mistake was to entrust the issue of the fight to such vacillating persons as Companys and his like, who out of fear of the development of the people’s revolution capitulated to the forces of the enemy, or to the Republican army commanders, instead of the united masses of the workers. In order to ensure the victory of the revolution it is necessary that the leadership of the revolution shall remain in all its forms in the hands of the exploited. That is the only guarantee of victory. Our heroic

comrades in Asturias and the Basque province have proved this. **“The emancipation of the working-class can only be the work of the workers themselves” (Marx).** This fact was not realised in its whole significance.

Comrades anarchists, take note!

The Communist Party endeavored in good time to correct these errors, and persisted in its endeavors in the course of the fight. Nevertheless, in spite of the seriousness of the errors, the situation would not have developed in favor of the monarchist-fascist canaille if, above all, the anarchist leaders of Barcelona and Saragossa had not committed their shameful act of betrayal of the revolution at the very moment when all the exploiters of Spain were fighting like lions with weapons in hand.

It is not merely the civil guards and storm guards, not only the monarchist and fascist officers, not merely the machine-guns which for the moment decided the battle in favor of the blackest reaction. **To the everlasting shame of the anarchist leaders, it was their appeals, which they issued from the general headquarters of the fascist Batet in Barcelona.** The leaders of the Anarchist Federation prevented the victory of the revolution. They sold their own anarchist comrades who, in Asturias, Madrid and other places, realised their duty to their class and fought bravely together with their Communist and socialist brothers.

It is these anarchist leaders who are chiefly responsible for the present situation. Do not forget this, comrades anarchists!

From what has already been said it is evident why the peasants did not seize possession of and defend the land, uniting with the proletariat in the fight, and why the great majority of the soldiers did not fraternise with the workers and go over to the revolution. Therefore the counter-revolutionary pack was able to tear down the red flag of the revolution and hoist **the black flag of the death penalty,** suppress all the democratic liberties of the working people, pounce like jackals on to the defeated districts in Catalonia and in the Basque province, entrust power into the hands of the fascist monarchists and return to the monarchist-militarist-jesuit past.

Everything that is reactionary and backward in society, the whole combined forces of counter-revolution, are hastening to celebrate their triumph. **But they are in too much of a hurry.** They can shoot, imprison, increase the misery and hunger among the working people still more, but the hungry will not become satisfied by fasts, the pains and tears of the mothers and women of the people will not be stopped by the whips and blows of the civil and storm guards. It is impossible to satisfy the people with

blows of the butts of rifles and bayonet stabs, nor to hold back with the voice of command of the arrogant generals the disaster to industry and agriculture which the Lerroux regime has brought.

The workers want bread and work; the peasants want land; the whole people want freedom. In the heart of every worker and every peasant there lives the will to fight and take revenge. The class hatred against this regime of hunger, misery and terror is spreading—below the surface, and sullen hatred is germinating in the depths of the working masses, which will break out—and this not before long. Taught by these events, these masses are being better steeled for the fight, better organised to march forward to victory under the leadership of their class advance-guard.

The fight is not yet at an end.

This is proved by the fact that the band of clerical-fascist hangmen are far from having mastered the situation. In Asturias the proletarian legions are continuing their heroic fight. The same can be said of the mining district of Biscaya. To-day the proletarian forces are retreating, but at the same time are preparing to employ new fighting tactics based on a new organization. The great battle for bread, land and freedom has not yet been fought. The Workers and Peasants' Alliances are being formed in the working-class centres. We shall convert every factory into a stronghold of the revolution. We have fought unitedly and we shall advance unitedly more firmly than ever. We shall discuss in a brotherly manner the experiences, the positive sides and the mistakes of the past fight, but nothing can destroy the unity of action of the communist and socialist workers. And we shall continue in our endeavors to draw to our side the anarchist workers who have so clearly perceived the shameful attitude of their leaders in this movement.

We shall continue unitedly to defend tooth and nail the heroes of red Asturias and the Basque provinces, to prevent reprisals by the fascist employers. We shall continue united in the fight against the government, against the death penalty and against the monarchist-clerical-fascist reaction; united in order to support the prisoners, to fight for land for the peasants, for freedom of the press, of meeting and the trade unions, for the freedom for the people of Catalonia and all suppressed nations, for the disarming of the fascist hordes and for the arming of the workers and peasants; united to form a single anti-fascist bloc and for the power of the workers, peasants and soldiers.

Socialist and anarchist workers!

The facts have shown the correctness of our political line, of our tactics and our revolutionary fighting tactics. They have proved once again that there can be only one party of the revolution, and that this party is the party which bases its activity on the tremendous experiences of two glorious and victorious revolutions, of Russia and Soviet China. Everywhere where our forces predominate, as in Asturias and the Basque provinces, the form of organization and tactics made possible glorious achievements which to-day are the pride of all revolutionaries of Spain. Our Party, in spite of the reactionary storm which is raging around it, remains at the head of the fight of the oppressed masses. More than ever their firm hands are grasping the flag of socialist revolution against the cowardly calumniators and against the lackeys of capital. And thus, as in the past, they are holding aloft this flag on which is inscribed the battle cry for land, bread and freedom, the battle cry of the Soviets, for the triumph of socialism.

For the first time in the history of the Spanish revolution the flag of the Soviets has been raised and defended in the revolutionary fight against the bourgeois-landlord regime. In Asturias the Socialist Republic lived and still lives on the basis of the Soviets. A new chapter has commenced in the history of the proletariat and of the peasant masses of Spain. To-day the proletariat knows from its own experience that only under the flag of the Soviets can it conquer. The future fights will be waged under this sign, and we shall be victorious.

Comrades all, keep a stout heart! To-day let us more than ever maintain faith in victory! Let us close our ranks firmly, courageously and calmly, collect our forces, maintain discipline! Let us extend our battalions! Strengthen the advance-guard of the fight, come into the Communist Party! Workers, peasants, soldiers, gather round our flag and let us march in firm ranks to victory!

Long live the workers and peasants' government!

Long live the Soviets!

Long live the proletariat united in the Alliance of the workers and peasants!

Long live the world revolution and its general staff, the Communist International!

Long live the Communist Party of Spain!

COMMUNIST PARTY OF SPAIN.

For Unity in Action of Communists and Social Democrats

UNITED FRONT OFFER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GERMANY TO ALL SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC GROUPS AND LEADERSHIPS

The Central Committee of the Communist Party has repeatedly, especially in the last few weeks and months, addressed appeals to all social-democratic workers, functionaries and groups, offering to set up the united front of action against the capitalist offensive and against the common enemy, Hitler Fascism. This call for fighting unity has met with a big response and warm approval among the masses of social-democrats and trade unionists, as well as among the whole of the working-class. In various parts of the Reich it has been possible, by means of discussions and agreements between the Communist Party, social-democratic members and functionaries, groups and organisational units, to realise unity of action for putting through definite demands. This united front movement was introduced with particular success in Saxony, Berlin, Thuringia and in some towns in the west. The bold step towards realising the united front taken by the district Party committees of the C.P.G. and the S.P.G. in the Hesse-Frankfurt district—which issued a joint platform of concrete demands, furnishes a model example to the German working-class of how to set up the united front in practice.

The C.C. of the Communist Party of Germany states that, as a result of this drive for unity on the part of the workers, a number of social-democratic leaders have issued a platform in which they express their readiness to set up the united front for the purpose of carrying out certain demands of the workers. The Communists, who in the Saar district, in France, in Danzig and other places have eagerly and successfully seized the initiative for realising the united front, who, through the Communist International, approached the Second International with a proposal to set up the united front in all capitalist countries for support of the heroic workers and peasants of Spain, have no more ardent desire than to realise the united front of struggle on the broadest possible basis also in Germany.

The C.C. of the C.P. of Germany, in brotherly unity with the Spanish workers and peasants, also made a united front offer to

the social-democratic leaders, groups and organisational units and to those social-democratic leaders who have declared their readiness to set up the united front with the Communists, and proposed to them to initiate solidarity actions for the Spanish class comrades and to connect these actions with the increased fight against the Fascist enemy in their own country, against Hitler Fascism. In order to expedite the arrival at an understanding regarding joint fighting measures, the C.C. selected from its midst a comrade with full powers who is instructed to conduct negotiations with the representatives of groups and organisations of the social-democratic party who are ready to realise unity of action, for the realisation of the following fighting demands:—

- (1) Joint fighting measures against the Fascist terror, against the carrying out of death sentences, for the release of Thaelmann, Mierendorff and all anti-Fascist prisoners.
- (2) Joint fighting measures against the Labor Law, Fascist factory regulations and the displacement of the Youth.

It is, of course, understood that the supporters of unity of action mutually refrain from irrelevant attacks on each other, and it is equally a matter of course that a sober discussion of all differences of opinion regarding the theory and tactics of the Labor Movement must not be hindered. The C.C. of the C.P.G. submits its united front offer to the workers of Germany with the urgent appeal to do everything to secure the victory of unity of action against the capitalist offensive and the Fascist dictatorship.

The Frame-Up Against Thaelmann

The International Release Committee continues in the following article the publication, in popular form, of the results of the juridical examination of those "crimes" which the Fascists are inventing in order to be able to frame-up a case against Thaelmann. The article is an appeal to the masses and the press to support the particularly difficult work of the lawyers in the release action and for the preparation of the International Conference of Jurists. The article therefore deals solely with the legal aspect of the matter, while the international tasks of the general release action are set forth in the brochures written by Henri Barbusse (International Release Committee), Georgi Dimitrov (World Committee

Against War and Fascism), and William Pieck (International Red Aid), as well as in former articles in the International Press Correspondence.

"INDIVIDUAL TERROR"—A TYPICAL NAZI METHOD

The Nazis have used buckets of ink and reams of paper in accusing the Communist Party of Germany of having planned murderous attacks, dynamite outrages, bomb attacks on railways; that there existed special "Terrorist Troops," "Murder Detachments" of Communists, etc.

"Keep on spreading calumnies, some of the dirt will sure to stick." Even this plan of the political desperadoes proved a failure. The world has too good a memory. It remembers the following facts:—

What a cry there was of "the Communists have done it" when the half-crazy Matuschka derailed railway trains and blew up bridges in Germany and Hungary. This campaign ended ignominiously, when Matuschka himself declared that he was an anti-Bolshevist, that he wanted by means of his crimes to encourage the police to proceed more drastically. His connection with fascist organisations was plainly established. During the trial at Budapest, Matuschka gave the court the Hitler greeting.

What a miserable and precipitate retreat Goering and Goebbels, together with their whole court of law, had to make on account of their slander that Dimitrov had taken part in the blowing up of the Sofia Cathedral. How brilliantly Dimitrov proved that this outrage was the work of the fascist provocateurs in Bulgaria.

Everyone will remember how, in the Buelow Square trial, even the special fascist court was compelled to acquit the chief accused, Albert Kunz, member of the C.C. of the C.P.G.

Why? Because the main point of the accusation, namely, that the C.P.G. had organised terrorist groups and murder detachments, and employed individual terror, absolutely collapsed and turned out to be a pure invention of Goebbels. The fascist Public Prosecutor himself had to move that Kunz be acquitted.

The "saviors of Europe from Communism" have no time to glance through the history of the workers' movement. They want to cause anti-fascist "heads to roll." For this purpose, every means is justified. But their thirst for blood does not alter the fact that everybody with the least knowledge of politics knows that Karl Marx conducted a ruthless fight against Bakunin; that Lenin fiercely fought the social-revolutionaries as

agents of Tsarism; that the Russian revolution has swept away the anarchists and social-revolutionary assassins. The case of the Tsarist provocateur Asev will be a warning example to all Marxists for decades. It is equally well known that the Communist International, under the leadership of Stalin, conducts an energetic openly-proclaimed fight against police spies, provocateurs and terrorists.

What, therefore, was the attitude of Ernst Thaelmann, who is a disciple of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, to individual terror? A report delivered by him was printed in February, 1932, in a 100,000-edition pamphlet, and reprinted in newspapers with a total circulation of 300,000. In this report, Thaelmann stated:

"There are people who are of the opinion that the Central Committee adopted this decision against individual terror solely for tactical reasons, in order to secure the legality of the Party. Comrades, in face of such views, we must make it perfectly clear that our decision against individual terror is meant quite seriously, and that we are not afraid to draw the organisational consequences from it. **The Party does not tolerate any social-revolutionary tendencies in its ranks!**

"By ruthlessly fighting against acts of individual terror and against thoughtless and adventurist putchist tendencies in general in our movement, we at the same time see to it that the bourgeoisie is not given an easy pretext for prohibiting the Party.

"Lenin taught us quite clearly that we Communists are opposed to individual terror, not because of any servile, cowardly attitude towards the bourgeoisie, but because this attitude of ours corresponds to the real interests of the **revolutionary mass fight.**"

"Thaelmann's high treason" is proved to be pure demagogy. The "C.P.G.'s plan of insurrection" has proved to be a patchwork of forgeries. Now a further main pillar of the "case" for the prosecution, the charge of "individual terror," has collapsed.

We declare quite openly and plainly: It is no use your trying to besmirch Ernst Thaelmann with your own shame and disgrace. **It is you who are the individual terrorists!**

You have fascist murder-detachments in every Brown Shirt Troop, in every police presidium, in every concentration camp!

You beat the member of the Reichstag Schutz in Konigsberg into a mass of bleeding pulp which could only be carried away in a sheet.

You flung the member of the Reichstag Funk out of the

window of the High Court so that he was smashed to pieces on the pavement below.

You beat **Stelling**, a member of the Reichstag, to death, sewed his body up in a sack and sank it in the water.

In the Columbia House, in Generalpapestrasse, in Oranienburg, in Brandenburg, Dachau and Papenburg, you set up torture chambers in comparison with which the Inquisition was a paradise.

You sent out murder detachments who shot down not only General Schleicher, but also his wife, and also killed the Catholic Klausner.

You tortured **John Scheer** to death and arranged a shooting competition, using his body as a target, in order to "shoot away" the traces of your terror.

THAELMANN THE "TRAITOR"

The fascists, who realise the weakness of their position in the Thaelmann trial, are dragging in a further "crime": Treason! This charge may, in certain circumstances, even mean a death sentence if the Nazis succeed in taking international public opinion by surprise.

Ernst Thaelmann fought passionately against the danger of war, in defence of peace, against imperialist armaments, against the plundering of Germany by the dictated peace of Versailles.

Like vultures the Nazis have seized upon the speech delivered by Thaelmann on October 31, 1932, to the workers of Paris against competition in armaments and in defence of peace.

Seizing on his demands that the huge sums expended on the upkeep and arming of the German Reichswehr and the French army should be used to ameliorate the suffering and misery of the war victims, the unemployed, the pensioners, small peasants, small holders, fishermen and the middle class—demands which are raised in all countries by all opponents of war—the Nazis want to charge him under the sedition laws: with spreading disaffection in the army, destroying the defensive power of Germany. Thaelmann's fight for peace does not fit in with the plans of the international war-mongers.

Here we have an obvious and shameful twisting of the law. The speech delivered by Ernst Thaelmann in Paris, four million copies of which were distributed in Germany, did not offer even von Papen or General Schleicher any grounds for prosecuting Thaelmann. Hitler, Goering, Goebbels, however, want to attempt this two years later.

Against this outrageous intention, we cite a man known to

the whole world, Karl Liebknecht:—

"Gentlemen, if that is treason, if to champion the idea of peace is treason, if the proclamation of the international proletarian class struggle is treason, yes, gentlemen, then I repeat: **It has become an honor to be branded as an international traitor.** ('Hear, hear,' from the socialists; laughter from the Right.)

"But do not the judicial authorities realise that it is the height of self-mockery by present-day society when **work for peace against the murder of the people is described as high treason?** Is there equal rights for all? For peace demonstrations and peace propaganda one is persecuted with fire and sword. On the other hand, war propaganda and incitement to mass murder is regarded as the duty of every patriotic man."—Liebknecht's Reichstag speech, March, 1916.

The murdered Karl Liebknecht rises up as a witness on behalf of Thaelmann.

To all those who have still any illusions regarding fascist "administration of justice," regarding "justice" as Hitler, Goering and Goebbels understand it, we must say:—

Thaelmann is to be brought before the second senate of the so-called People's Court of Justice. What is the composition of this Court? In addition to reliable S.A. leaders, there sit on the judges' bench flight-commanders, majors, captains, and naval officers—people to whom war is a profession, representatives of the War Ministry, representatives of the aircraft industry, those groups of capitalists who make millions of profits out of armaments, who are driving headlong to war. The so-called People's Court is a court of militarists and war contractors. It is in a double sense of the word, a military court against the defenders of peace.

Does the world now realise the great danger threatening Thaelmann in the shape of the People's Court? Herr Jorns, the Public Prosecutor, who acquitted the murderers of Karl Liebknecht, has been selected by Hitler and Goering to appear for the Prosecution.

We, however, must not only protect Ernst Thaelmann against the Military Court, but wrest him from the clutches of the fascist betrayers of their country. For if the sentence does not satisfy the war inciters, Thaelmann will be in danger of being foully murdered by fascist assassins.

The United Front in Britain

By R. BISHOP (London)

At the Southport Conference of the Labor Party, the struggle of the Spanish workers was "welcomed" as evidence that "the workers' organisations are prepared to resist the threatened attempt to establish a fascist regime."

It was omitted to mention the fact that in Spain the heroic resistance of the workers had only been made possible by the broadest united front between Communist and Socialist organisations, such a united front as the Labor Party chieftains had done their damndest to prevent maturing in Great Britain.

At Southport, and at the twin gathering of the Trades Union Congress, the united front was outlawed with bell, book and candle. All those who fraternised in any way with united front bodies were warned of the consequences of their actions—ex-communication and exile to outer darkness.

No sooner were the conferences out of the way than the officials of the reformist labor movement drafted their circulars to trade union executives, to local Labor Parties, to trades councils and similar organisations, instructing them that (as far as trades councils and Labor Parties were concerned) no Communist must be admitted to membership or as a delegate, nor must any persons suspected of association with united front bodies, and (as far as the trade unions were concerned) the rules must be altered to prevent such persons being elected to hold any official position.

Those leading laborites who had participated in the work of such bodies as the Committee for the Relief of the Victims of Fascism, the Committee Against War and Fascism, etc., were solemnly warned that any future activities of such a character would lead to condign punishment—expulsion.

Some delegates wanted to know why the Communist Party and bodies of which Communists were members were singled out for such treatment. If Labor members could appear on League of Nations Union platforms with Tory and Liberal politicians, if others could hold office in industrial peace organisations, why was it a crime to consort with Communists? The answer was obvious before the question was asked. The united front with capitalism is preferred to the fighting united front of the working class. And the answer was given by no less a person than Mr. Herbert Morrison—the "Prime Minister of London," as the "Daily

Herald" refers to him—the most likely tip as Premier of the next Labor Government. Mr. Morrison did not beat about the bush. He said bluntly:

"The Communist Party is singled out for exceptional treatment because it is an exceptional political Party. It is the only political Party that sets out to make trouble for the Labor Party, the trade unions and the co-operative movement."

Tories and Liberals do not do so. The basic enemy is the Communist Party. Here we have the capitalist outlook of the Labor Party chieftains clearly outlined. Here we have it clearly stated that the purpose of the Southport Conference, in the minds of the bureaucracy, was to consolidate capitalist control in the Labor Party, and bring an end to the period of "Left" talk and confusion which followed the debacle of 1931.

But, despite their threats, the reformist chieftains are not finding their struggle against the united front to be all plain sailing. Many trade unions and trades councils have not yet considered the splitting circular from Transport House, yet enough have done so to show that strong resistance is to be offered to the tactics pursued, as well as to the capitalist policy that has been adopted.

Two great national trade unions—the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers and the National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association—have flatly refused to be brow-beaten as to whom they shall choose to hold office in the union and to represent it on outside bodies.

The letter from the Furnishing Trades was particularly definite. Alex. Gossip, the general secretary, and a fine old fighter, replied to the General Council that:

"On no account whatever are we prepared to discriminate in the manner suggested. It is a matter for our branches to select the particular member or members who, in their wisdom, they consider best suited to fill any particular official post in the union, or as a delegate to trades councils, etc."

Many of the most important trades councils in the country have taken similar decisions, as have many trade union branches. Whilst a number of leading laborites, who previously collaborated in united front work, have held back since Southport from similar activity, it is a nasty rebuff for the pundits that two such well-known figures as the Earl of Listowel and Ellen Wilkinson should have gone on a mission to Spain on behalf of the Com mit-

tee for the Relief of the Victims of Fascism, and should be addressing a meeting in London this week for the same organisation, which has for its purpose the furthering the campaign for sending a food ship to the Spanish workers—an idea promulgated by the Communist Party and the I.L.P., but turned down by the Labor Party Executive. It is significant that the Labor Party's attitude has strengthened the attitude of many non-party intellectuals, such as Professors H. Levy and J. B. S. Haldane (two of the best-known names in British science), and that people like David Low (the well-known cartoonist) and Joseph McCabe should have been persuaded to participate in the work of the Fascist Relief Committee, from which Labor Party members are excluded, unless they defy the ban of the reformists.

The Communist Party of Great Britain is preparing for its Thirteenth Congress, and in the discussion that has already started in the Party press the question of the united front has been brought well to the fore. The statement opening the discussion declares:

"In the two years since the Twelfth Congress the advance of fascism, the temporary victory of fascism in Germany and Austria, the wide fascist offensive in France, Spain and other countries, including Britain, has become the burning issue before the working class.

In the international sphere the reformist bureaucracy are finding it as difficult to avoid the issues of the united front as are the Labor Party and the T.U.C. at home. The "Daily Herald" admits how near the Labor and Socialist International was, at its recent executive meeting, to a split on the question. Heaving a deep sigh of relief, the "Herald" leader-writer chronicles how such a split was avoided and "it was even found possible to achieve unanimity on a letter which is to be sent to the delegates of the Communist International."

The British reformist representatives were hoping that at the Paris meeting they would be able to push still further back the cause of unity by banning the united front agreements already entered into in France and elsewhere. But they were defeated in the international field. Now they are back in England, pursuing their splitting game here.

The new decision of the Paris executive meeting will give renewed impetus to the united front fight in Britain. It exposes more clearly than ever before the real motive of the British Labor leaders in standing aloof and hostile to all moves that make for unity.

The British Labor Party looks forward to once more becoming the governing party—a prospect which many of the most loyal of their supporters view with grave anxiety, not to say perturbation.

With their eyes on the Government benches, the "statesmen" of the Labor Party are anxious to remove any lingering doubts that may exist among the less intelligent members of the bourgeoisie as to their fitness for, and reliability in, high office.

This is their chief reason for the drive against the Communists and all who show themselves as organised militants. They hope to still the voice of militant working-class struggle in all organisations associated with the Labor Party.

But inside the Labor Party that voice will still be heard—it must not be forgotten that one-third of the constituency Labor parties represented at the Southport Conference cast their vote one way or another for united action front activity, and that an overwhelming majority vote was largely cast in huge blocks by the officials of the big unions who dominated the conference. Even more than in the Labor Party, the voice of the militants will be heard in the trade union branches, on the trades councils, in the factories and at the labor exchanges—calling for united action against war, against fascism, against wage-cuts, against the Sedition Act, against slave camps for the unemployed, against capitalism.

Inside and outside the Labor Party and the trade unions the fight must go on. Despite the bludgeonings, the bans and the prohibitions of the reformist leadership, heartening successes are being won, but still on too small a scale.

The Thirteenth Congress of the C.P.G.B. will do much to clear the issues. Already active workers all over the country are pouring in their views to the Party organ. From the Congress will emerge a clear and concrete programme of action, an essential to the fulfilment of which will be the building of a broad mass united fighting front despite all the obstacles put in its way by the open enemies of the working class and their agents in the workers' ranks, the reformist leaders of the Labor Party and the Trade Union Congress.

To this task all efforts must be bent, for in its successful achievement lies the key to success in the struggle against war, the struggle against fascism, against wage-cuts and all the evils of capitalism, the struggle for the establishment of a free Soviet Britain.

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