

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION  
ANNIVERSARY NUMBER

*February*  
1921

# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

Vol. 2

SYDNEY, N.S.W.

No. 11

## FROM THE CONTENTS

Results of Socialist Construction in the Soviet  
Union (Manuilsky)

The Socialist Revolution and the Rights of  
Nations to Self-Determination (V. I. Lenin)

The Fight for Unity Against War in Victoria  
(J. D. Blake)

The Party and the Pastoral Workers

The Party, the Y.C.L., and the Youth  
(Harry Torr)

Pre-Congress Discussion

November Issue - - - Sixpence







gained and passed eight years ago, Socialist industry consisted of a few large-scale undertakings, and for the most part of numerous worn-out and backward small undertakings. There were still five social-economic forms in existence, from the patriarchal to the Socialist. The Socialist economic sector grew steadily, but the further advance of Socialist construction was hampered by the backwardness of agriculture. The form of agriculture still predominating was the scattered individual peasant farm. The rich landowners endeavored to sabotage Socialist construction by hindering the delivering up of the grain quotas. The capitalist elements within the country formed the social support of the hostile imperialist countries outside.

The choice had to be made between two paths of development: either retreat in the direction of a capitalist restoration or advance to the victory of Socialism. In the course of a violent struggle against Trotsky and the Zinoviev-Trotsky bloc, the Party under Stalin's leadership maintained the Leninist-Stalinist principle of the possibility of the victory of Socialism in one country. (Applause). This was at bottom a victory over the mutiny of the petty bourgeoisie, which fears the development of Socialist revolution. The Party then overcame the attacks of the Right opposition, used as mouthpiece by the rich-peasant elements in their attacks on the high speed of industrialisation and against the development of the Soviet and collective farms. The Right opportunists insisted that the big peasants would grow peacefully into Socialism, and frightened the working class with the starvation which would overtake them if there were no big peasants. But the genius of Stalin, at the head of the working class, led the country. The Party chose the path of fully developed offensive against the capitalist elements on the whole front. The path to the Socialist transformation of national economy, the path to industrialisation and collectivisation, of the liquidation of the rich peasantry as a class, of the uprooting of capitalism.

We fulfilled not only the first Five-Year Plan in four years, but we are fulfilling victoriously the second Five-Year Plan. All the hopes of the bourgeoisie of a capitalist degeneration of our country have proved vain. Under the leadership of the working class, the horny fists of the peasantry have destroyed the last remnants of capitalism, and have secured the victory of Socialism. To-day, victorious Socialism is collaborating more and more closely with the international Labor movement. But where the bourgeoisie is still in power, capitalist degeneration is

corroding the whole world. In the course of a hard class struggle we have transformed our country into an industrial country, into a highly developed country, independent of the caprices of foreign capital, into a land of collectivised agriculture, into a land with an unrestricted Socialist form of economy, into a land of maximum capacity for defence. (Prolonged applause). We have laid an unshakable foundation for Socialism. Socialist planned economy is no longer hampered by anarchist elements, survivals of capitalist economy. Now it is the human being, his untamable will, the organisation of his work, which decides everything. (Applause). The reality of our plan—is in the living human beings, as Stalin has said. And that which Kaganovich has accomplished in the railway system, overthrowing all the boundaries of outdated science with Bolshevik determination, is the best illustration of what Bolsheviks can accomplish. (Prolonged applause).

We can already record great successes in the fundamental improvement of the material and cultural situation of the toiling masses. These are not reforms such as the proletariat of the capitalist countries wrests from the capitalists by hard struggle, only to lose them again as soon as the economic situation worsens. They are changes which are possible only under the victory of Socialism. Our country knows **no unemployment**, and it will not know it in the future. (Applause). Since 1928 the number of workers and employees has doubled, and the sum total paid in wages has been quintupled. (Applause). Whilst in the capitalist countries wages have declined by almost half. Expenditure for **social insurance** has increased more than seven times, whilst in the capitalist countries social insurance is being reduced. Our peasants know no agrarian crisis, no impoverishment of the village. (Applause). Where the hand plough and the half-starved horse once laboriously tilled the ground, there are now 300,000 tractors at work, 50,000 mowing threshers and other machines. Communal economy is making rapid strides. The tumble-down huts of former days are replaced by light and airy houses. (Applause). The **ten-year plan for the reconstruction of Moscow**, which was recently resolved upon, outlines a city wonderful both in beauty and convenience, justifying the designation of the capital of the world. (Applause). The **cultural level** of the toiling masses is rising steadily; 25 million children are being taught by 600,000 teachers. The number of secondary schools has been multiplied by ten during the last six years; 1,300,000 students are studying in the colleges and technical schools. Already in 1933 there were 1½ million former workers



and workers' children in positions of factory managers, judges, lawyers, teachers, scientists, etc.

We have awakened the women to political and productive activities. (The speaker and the Congress honor the women party members present, Kirsanova and Stassova.) Every road to public life is open to them, and every means is used to aid them in the care of their children. Eight million children have already been taken into our creches and kindergartens. Our children are indeed the object of the greatest love, care and attention. Big volumes would be necessary to enumerate all the achievements of our country of victorious Socialism. But we are not satisfied yet. Neither the pre-war nor the capitalist level can serve as our measure. We want our workers and collective farmers to live still better, that all may become prosperous, so that health and comfort shall be provided for all, and man may never tire of enjoying life. (Loud applause). Only a few years will pass, and you will not recognise the country, just as to-day you cannot recognise in it the old tsarist Russia.

Lenin said that the Soviets represent the highest form of democracy, and beyond this the beginning of the Socialist form of democracy. The historical decisions of the Seventh Soviet Congress on the introduction of the equal, direct, and secret franchise represent a great stride forward on the way to the realization of Socialist democracy. This step was made possible by the consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship, by the fact that Socialist property has become the dominating form of property, and by great social changes which facilitate the transition to the classless Socialist state of society. The extension of the proletarian democracy consolidates at the same time the proletarian dictatorship, strengthens the feeling that social property must not be violated, facilitates the overcoming of capitalist survivals in economy and in the consciousness of human beings, and accelerates the building up of the classless state of society.

The new generation, born and brought up on Soviet soil, has taken its place in Socialist construction. It has never known capitalists, land-owners, or slavery, exploitation, and oppression; it knows and recognises only the interests, tasks, and aims of Socialism. It loves its country just as it has been loved by the older generations who have gone through the school of revolution. It does not love it on account of its extent or natural beauties, but because the general human aims of this country are so great, because our seas, forests, mountains, and valleys

are Soviet. It loves it because it has accomplished the beginning of the proletarian world revolution, because its history shows a century-long struggle against tsarism, because in the midst of capitalist barbarity it is the bearer of Soviet Humanism, and because this humanism surpasses everything that the bourgeoisie has ever achieved even at the height of its prosperity. (Loud applause). It loves its country because it is Socialist, loves its people because it is the most revolutionary people in the world, because its land and its people are the stronghold for the emancipation of the whole of toiling mankind. (Enthusiastic applause).

The victory of Socialism in the Soviet Union gives the Communist Parties a powerful weapon for influencing the broad masses and those categories of toilers who have hitherto vacillated between capitalism and Socialism. Therefore, our old methods of propaganda for the Soviet Union are inadequate to-day. We must appeal to broader strata of the toiling population, and show them by the practical example of the Soviet Union what will happen to them under Socialism. We must make the defence of the Soviet Union the starting point of a broad **People's Front**, both of the classes, and of the organisations and political parties, which are prepared to give active support to the Soviet Union in its peace policy, disarmament proposals, etc. The old form of the organisation of the "Friends of the Soviet Union" is inadequate. There are millions who are friends of the Soviet Union, and not only thousands as reached by the F.S.U. We must attack the enemies of the Soviet Union by calling them before the tribunal of the broad masses. The victory of Socialism demands a more active policy on the part of the Communist Parties towards the main masses of the peasantry, towards the lower middle classes of the towns now facing ruin, towards the intelligentsia, etc. The victory of Socialism in the Soviet Union makes it possible, not only to neutralise these strata, but to extend greatly the circle of those who can be completely won over for the proletariat.

The part played by the Soviet Union as the stronghold of the peace of the nations is increasing. (Loud applause). It needs no wars in order to change the world. The peoples rising against their oppressors will do this for themselves. The Soviet Union needs no wars, for the Socialist system is daily proving its superiority to the capitalist system in the competition between the two world systems. (Loud applause.)



If the international bourgeoisie would leave our country in peace for ten years, the Soviet Union would convince millions of human beings all over the world, by means of its Socialist achievements, of the advantages of the Socialist system, and would convert into revolutionists the most "peaceful" people now living under capitalism. But the capitalist world has no intention of looking on and letting the Socialist system develop peacefully. At highest speed it is driving the toiling masses towards a fresh war. Confronted by the threatening danger of this fresh disaster, the peoples are looking toward that country whose mighty defensive powers are holding the war-mongers in check at the moment. (Applause). All those who do not want war are gathering around the Soviet Union, not only the millions of the toiling masses in town and country, not only parties and organisations whose independence is threatened by war, but even the bourgeois governments of imperialist great Powers which do not want war at the present time. (Applause). Their motives for opposing war are of secondary importance at the moment. Supported by the achievements of the Soviet Union, the proletariat of every country will form the broadest possible People's Front in the struggle against war, and will extend the People's Fronts into the united front of the peoples against the war-mongers. (Loud applause.) This means that the Communists must replace the primitive methods of isolated brief anti-war campaigns by a broad-scale co-ordinated struggle against war, in which all anti-war forces are enlisted, nationally and internationally, on the basis of the struggle of the Soviet Union for peace, and every form of action is combined. The Communists will exert their utmost efforts for the popularisation of the successes of the Stalinist peace policy as a policy which has proved brilliantly how the predatory plans of the war-mongers can be frustrated and defeated. They will overcome the fatalist idea that war cannot be prevented.

Millions are gathering round the Soviet Union, the fatherland of the toiling masses of all countries, and are recognising ever more clearly that their interests coincide with the consolidation of the Soviet Union, both in peace and in war. Those who want the victory of Socialism all over the world must be on the side of the Soviet Union. (Loud applause). The protection of the Soviet Union and the promotion of its victory over all its enemies must determine the actions of every revolutionary organisation, of every Communist, every Socialist, every sincere democrat, every non-party worker, every peasant, every office

worker, and every intellectual. (Enthusiastic applause.)

We must advance—Stalin declared—in such a manner that the working-class of the whole world can look to us and say: There it is, my vanguard; there it is, my shock brigade, my workers' power, my fatherland. They are working for a cause which is also our cause—good, let us aid them against the capitalists, let us arouse the world revolution! (Stormy applause).

—OO—

## *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*

THESES

By V. I. LENIN

### **1. Imperialism, Socialism, and the Liberation of Oppressed Nations**

Imperialism is the highest stage of development of capitalism. Capital in the advanced countries has outgrown the boundaries of national States. It has established monopoly in place of competition, thus creating all the objective prerequisites for the achievement of Socialism. Hence, in Western Europe and in the United States of America, the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the overthrow of the capitalist governments, for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, is on the order of the day. Imperialism is forcing the masses into this struggle by sharpening class antagonisms to an immense degree, by worsening the conditions of the masses both economically—trusts and high cost of living, and politically—growth of militarism, frequent wars, increase of reaction, strengthening and extension of national oppression and colonial plunder. Victorious Socialism must achieve complete democracy, and, consequently, not only bring about the complete equality of nations, but also give effect to the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, i.e., the right to free political secession. Socialist parties which fail to prove by all their activities now, as well as during the revolution



and after its victory, that they will free the enslaved nations and establish relations with them on the basis of a free union—and a free union is a lying phrase without right to secession—such parties are committing treachery to Socialism.

Of course, democracy is also a form of State which must disappear when the State disappears, but this will take place only in the process of transition from completely victorious and consolidated Socialism to complete Communism.

## 2. The Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Democracy

The Socialist revolution is not one single act, not one single battle on a single front, but a whole epoch of intensified class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., battles around all the problems of economics and politics, which can culminate only in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a fundamental mistake to suppose that the struggle for democracy can divert the proletariat from the Socialist revolution, or obscure, or overshadow it, etc. On the contrary, just as Socialism cannot be victorious unless it introduces complete democracy, so the proletariat will be unable to prepare for victory over the bourgeoisie unless it wages a many-sided, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy.

It would be no less mistaken to delete any of the points of the democratic programme, for example, the point of self-determination of nations, on the ground that it is "impossible," or that it is "illusory" under imperialism. The assertion that the right of nations to self-determination cannot be achieved within the framework of capitalism may be understood either in its absolute, economic sense, or in the conventional, political sense.

In the first case, the assertion is fundamentally wrong in theory. First, in this sense, it is impossible to achieve such things as labor money, or the abolition of crises, etc., under capitalism. But it is entirely incorrect to argue that the self-determination of nations is likewise impossible. Secondly, even the one example of the secession of Norway from Sweden in 1905 is sufficient to refute the argument that it is "impossible" in this sense. Thirdly, it would be ridiculous to deny that, with a slight change in political and strategical relationships, for example, between Germany and England, the formation of new states, Polish, Indian, etc., would be quite "possible" very soon. Fourthly, finance capital, in its striving towards expansion, will "freely" buy and bribe the freest, most democratic and republican government and the elected officials of any country, however "independent" it may be. The domination of finance capital, as of capital in general, cannot be abolished by any kind of reforms

in the realm of political democracy, and self-determination belongs wholly and exclusively to this realm. The domination of finance capital, however, does not in the least destroy the significance of political democracy as the freer, wider and more distinct form of class oppression and class struggle. Hence, all arguments about the "impossibility of achieving," economically speaking, one of the demands of political democracy under capitalism, reduce themselves to a theoretically incorrect definition of the general and fundamental relations of capitalism and of political democracy in general.

In the second case, this assertion is incomplete and inaccurate, for not only the right of nations to self-determination, but all the fundamental demands of political democracy are "possible of achievement" under imperialism, only incompletely, in a mutilated form, and as a rare exception (for example, the secession of Norway from Sweden in 1905). The demand for the immediate liberation of the colonies, as advanced by all revolutionary Social-Democrats, is also "impossible of achievement" under capitalism without a series of revolutions. This does not imply, however, that Social-Democracy must refrain from conducting an immediate and determined struggle for all these demands—to refrain would merely be to the advantage of the bourgeoisie and reaction. On the contrary, it implies that it is necessary to formulate and put forward all these demands, not in a reformist, but in a revolutionary way; not by keeping within the framework of bourgeois legality, but by breaking through it; not by confining oneself to parliamentary speeches and verbal protests, but by drawing the masses into real action, by widening and fomenting the struggle for every kind of fundamental, democratic demand, right up to and including the direct onslaught of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, i.e., the Socialist revolution, which will expropriate the bourgeoisie. The Socialist revolution may break out not only in consequence of a great strike, a street demonstration, a hunger riot, a mutiny in the forces, or a colonial rebellion, but also in consequence of any political crisis, like the Dreyfus affair, the Zabern incident, or in connection with a referendum on the secession of an oppressed nation, etc.

The intensification of national oppression under imperialism makes it necessary for Social-Democracy not to renounce what the bourgeoisie describes as the "utopian" struggle for the freedom of nations to secede, but, on the contrary, to take more advantage than ever before of conflicts arising also on this ground,



for the purpose of rousing mass action and revolutionary attacks upon the bourgeoisie.

### 3. The Meaning of the Right to Self-Determination and Its Relation to Federation

The right of nations to self-determination means only the right to independence in a political sense, the right to free, political secession from the oppressing nation. Concretely, this political, democratic demand implies complete freedom to carry on agitation in favor of secession, and freedom to settle the question of secession by means of a referendum of the nation that desires to secede. Consequently, this demand is by no means identical with the demand for secession, for the partition and for the formation of small states. It is merely the logical expression of the struggle against national oppression in any form. The more closely the democratic system of state approximates to complete freedom of secession, the rarer and weaker will the striving for secession be in practice; for the advantages of large states, both from the point of view of economic progress and from the point of view of the interests of the masses, are beyond doubt, and these advantages increase with the growth of capitalism. The recognition of self-determination is not the same as making federation a principle. One may be a determined opponent of this principle, and a partisan of democratic centralism and yet prefer federation to national inequality as the only path towards complete democratic centralism. It was precisely from this point of view that Marx, although a centralist, preferred even the federation of Ireland with England to the forcible subjection of Ireland to the English.

The aim of Socialism is not only to abolish the present division of mankind into small states, and all-national isolation, not only to bring the nations closer to each other, but also to merge them. And in order to achieve this aim, we must, on the one hand, explain to the masses the reactionary nature of the ideas of Renner and Otto Bauer concerning so-called "cultural national autonomy" and, on the other hand, demand the liberation of the oppressed nations not only in general, nebulous phrases, not in declamations devoid of content, not by "postponing" the question until Socialism is established, but in a clearly and precisely formulated political programme which shall particularly take into account the hypocrisy and cowardice of the Socialists in the oppressing nations. Just as mankind can achieve the abolition of classes only by passing through the transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, so mankind can achieve the inevitable merging of nations only by

passing through the transition period of complete liberation of all the oppressed nations, i.e., their freedom to secede.

### 4. The Proletarian-Revolutionary Presentation of the Question of the Self-Determination of Nations

Not only the demand for the self-determination of nations but all the items of our democratic minimum programme were advanced **before us**, as far back as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by the petty bourgeoisie. And the petty bourgeoisie continues to this day to advance all these demands in a utopian way, without seeing the class struggle and the fact that it has become intensified under democracy, and believing in "peaceful" capitalism. The idea of a peaceful union of equal nations under imperialism, which deceives the people, and which the Kautskyists advocate, is precisely of this nature. As against this philistine, opportunist utopia, the programme of Social-Democracy must advance the thesis that the fundamental, essential and inevitable division of nations under imperialism is that between the oppressing nations and oppressed nations.

The proletariat of the oppressing nations cannot confine itself to the general hackneyed phrases that may be repeated by any pacifist bourgeois against annexations and for the equal rights of nations, in general. The proletariat cannot evade the question that is particularly "unpleasant" for the imperialist bourgeoisie, namely, the question of the frontiers of states that are based on national oppression. The proletariat cannot but fight against the forcible retention of the oppressed nations within the boundaries of a given state, and this is exactly what the struggle for the right of self-determination means. The proletariat must demand the right of political secession for the colonies and for the nations that "its own" nation oppresses. Unless it does this, proletarian internationalism will remain a meaningless phrase; mutual confidence and class solidarity between the workers of the oppressing and oppressed nations will be impossible; the hypocrisy of the reformist and Kautskyan advocates of self-determination who maintain silence about the nations which are oppressed by "their" nation and forcibly retained within "their" State will remain unexposed.

The Socialists of the oppressed nations on the other hand, must particularly fight for and maintain complete, absolute unity (also organisational) between the workers of the oppressed nation and the workers of the oppressing nation. Without such unity it will be impossible to maintain an independent proletarian policy and class solidarity with the proletariat of other countries



in the face of all the subterfuge, treachery and trickery of the bourgeoisie; for the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations always converts the slogan of national liberation into a means for deceiving the workers; in internal politics it utilises these slogans as a means for concluding reactionary agreements with the bourgeoisie of the ruling nation (for instance, the Poles in Austria and Russia, who entered into pacts with reaction in order to oppress the Jews and the Ukrainians); in the realm of foreign politics it strives to enter into pacts with one of the rival imperialist powers for the purpose of achieving its own predatory aims (the policies of the small States in the Balkans, etc.).

The fact that the struggle for national liberation against one imperialist power may, under certain circumstances, be utilised by another "Great" Power in its equally imperialist interests should have no more weight in inducing Social-Democracy to renounce its recognition of the right of nations to self-determination than the numerous cases of the bourgeoisie utilising republican slogans for the purpose of political deception and financial robbery, for example, in the Latin countries, have had in inducing them to renounce republicanism.\*

##### 5. Marxism and Proudhonism on the National Question

In contrast to the petty-bourgeois democrats, Marx regarded all democratic demands without exception not as an absolute but as a historical expression of the struggle of the masses of the people, led by the bourgeoisie, against feudalism. There is not a single democratic demand which could not serve, and has not served, under certain conditions, as an instrument of the bourgeoisie for deceiving the workers. To single out one of the demands of political democracy, namely, the self-determination of nations, and to oppose it to all the rest, is fundamentally wrong in theory. In practice, the proletariat will be able to retain its independence only if it subordinates its struggle for all the democratic demands, not excluding the demand for a republic, to its revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

\* Needless to say, to repudiate the right of self-determination on the ground that logically it means "defence of the fatherland" would be ridiculous. With equal logic, i.e., with equal shallowness, the social-chauvinists of 1914-16 apply this argument to every one of the demands of democracy (for instance, to republicanism), and to every formulation of the struggle against national oppression, to justify "defence of the fatherland." Marxism arrives at the recognition of defence of the fatherland, for example, in the wars of the Great French Revolution and the Garibaldi wars in Europe, and at the repudiation of defence of the fatherland in the imperialist war of 1914-16, from the analysis of the specific historical circumstances of each separate war, and not from some "general principle," or some separate item of a programme.

On the other hand, in contrast to the Proudhonists, who "denied" the national problem "in the name of the social revolution," Marx, having in mind mainly the interests of the proletarian class struggle in the advanced countries, put into the forefront the fundamental principle of internationalism and Socialism, viz., that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations. It was precisely from the standpoint of the interests of the revolutionary movement of the German workers that Marx in 1848 demanded that victorious democracy in Germany should proclaim and grant freedom to the nations that the Germans were oppressing. It was precisely from the standpoint of the revolutionary struggle of the English workers that Marx in 1869 demanded the separation of Ireland from England, and added: "although after the separation there may come federation."

Only by putting forward this demand did Marx really educate the English workers in the spirit of internationalism. Only in this way was he able to oppose the revolutionary solution of a given historical problem to the opportunists and bourgeois reformism, which even now, half a century later, has failed to achieve the Irish "reform." Only in this way was Marx able—unlike the apologists of capital who shout about the right of small nations to secession being utopian and impossible, and about the progressive nature not only of economic but also of political concentration—to urge the progressive nature of this concentration in a non-imperialist manner, to urge the bringing together of the nations, not by force, but on the basis of a free union of the proletarians of all countries. Only in this way was Marx able, also in the sphere of the solution of national problems, to oppose the revolutionary action of the masses to verbal and often hypocritical recognition of the equality and the self-determination of nations. The imperialist war of 1914-16 and the Augean stables of hypocrisy of the opportunists and Kautskyists it exposed have strikingly confirmed the correctness of Marx's policy, which must serve as the model for all the advanced countries; for all of them now oppress other nations.\*

\* Reference is often made—recently, for instance, by the German chauvinist Lentsch, in "Die Glocke," No. 2-3—to the fact that Marx's hostility to the national movement of certain peoples—for example, the Czechs in 1848—refutes the necessity of recognising the self-determination of nations from the point of view of Marxism. This is incorrect, for in 1848 there were historical and political grounds for drawing a distinction between "reactionary" and revolutionary democratic nations. Marx was right when he condemned the former and defended the latter. The right to self-determination is one of the demands of democracy which must naturally be subordinated to the general interests of democracy. In 1848 and subsequent years those general interests were concentrated primarily in the struggle against Tsarism.



### 6. Three Types of Countries in Relation to Self-Determination of Nations

In this respect, countries must be divided into three main types:

First, the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the United States of America. In these countries the bourgeois, progressive, national movements came to an end long ago. Every one of these "great" nations oppresses other nations, the colonies and within its own country. The tasks of the proletariat of these ruling nations are the same as those of the proletariat in England in the nineteenth century in relation to Ireland.\*

Secondly, Eastern Europe: Austria, the Balkans, and particularly Russia. Here it was the twentieth century that particularly developed the bourgeois-democratic national movements and intensified the national struggle. The tasks of the proletariat in these countries—in regard to the consummation of their bourgeois-democratic reformation, as well as in regard to assisting the Socialist revolution in other countries—cannot be achieved unless it champions the right of nations to self-determination. In this connection, the most difficult but most important task is to merge the class struggle of the workers in the oppressing nations with the class struggle of the workers in the oppressed nations.

Thirdly, the semi-colonial countries, like China, Persia, Turkey and all colonies, which have a combined population amounting to a billion. In these countries the bourgeois-democratic movements have either hardly begun, or are far from having been completed. Socialists must not only demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without com-

\* In some small States which have remained out of the war of 1914-16—for example, Holland and Switzerland—the bourgeoisie strongly urges the slogan "self-determination of nations" to justify participation in the imperialist war. This is one of the motives which induce the Social-Democrats in such countries to repudiate self-determination.

In this case, the correct proletarian policy, namely, the repudiation of "defence of the fatherland" in an imperialist war, is defended by wrong arguments. What results is a distortion of Marxian theory, while in practice we have a peculiar small-nation narrow-mindedness, which forgets about the hundreds of millions of the population of nations that are enslaved by the "Great Power" nations. Comrade Horter, in his excellent pamphlet, "Imperialism, the War, and Social-Democracy," wrongly rejects the principle of self-determination of nations, but correctly applies it, when he demands the immediate granting of "political and national independence" to the Dutch Indies and exposes the Dutch opportunists, who refuse to put forward this demand and to fight for it.

pensation—and this demand in its political expression signifies nothing more nor less than the recognition of the right to self-determination—but they must render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their rebellion—and if need be, their revolutionary war—against the imperialist powers that oppress them.

### 7. Social-Chauvinism and Self-Determination of Nations

The imperialist epoch and the war of 1914-16 have particularly brought to the forefront the task of fighting against chauvinism and nationalism in the advanced countries. On the question of the self-determination of nations, there are two main shades of opinion among the social-chauvinists, i.e., the opportunists and the Kautskyists, who embellish the reactionary imperialist war by declaring it to be a war in "defence of the fatherland."

On the one hand, we see the rather frank servants of the bourgeoisie who defend annexations on the ground that imperialism and political concentration are progressive, and who repudiate the right to self-determination on the ground that it is utopian, illusory, petty-bourgeois, etc. Among these may be included Cuno, Parvus, and the extreme opportunists in Germany, a section of the Fabians and the trade union leaders in England, and the opportunists, Semkovsky, Liebman, Yurkevich, etc., in Russia.

On the other hand, we see the Kautskyists, including Vandervelde, Renaudel, and many of the pacifists in England, France, etc. These stand for unity with the first-mentioned group, and in practice their conduct is the same as its, in that they advocate the right to self-determination in a purely verbal and hypocritical way. They regard the demand for the freedom of political secession as being "excessive" ("zu viel verlangt"—Kautsky in "Die Neue Zeit," May 21, 1915); they do not advocate the need for revolutionary tactics, especially for the Socialists in the oppressing nations, but, on the contrary, they gloss over their revolutionary duties, they justify their opportunism, they make it easier to deceive the people, they evade precisely the question of the frontiers of a state which forcibly retains subject nations, etc.

Both groups are opportunists who prostitute Marxism and who have lost all capacity to understand the theoretical significance and the practical urgency of Marx's tactics, an example of which he gave in relation to Ireland.



The specific question of annexations has become a particularly urgent one owing to the war. But what is annexation? Clearly, to protest against annexations implies either the recognition of the right of self-determination of nations, or that the protest is based on a pacifist phrase which defends the status quo and opposes all violence, including revolutionary violence. Such a phrase is radically wrong and incompatible with Marxism.

### 8. The Concrete Tasks of the Proletariat in the Immediate Future

The Socialist revolution may begin in the very near future. In that event the proletariat will be faced with the immediate task of capturing power, of expropriating the banks and of introducing other dictatorial measures. In such a situation, the bourgeoisie, and particularly the intellectuals like the Fabians and the Kautskyists, will strive to disrupt and to hinder the revolution, to restrict it to limited democratic aims. While all purely democratic demands may—at a time when the proletarians have already begun to storm the bulwarks of bourgeois power—serve, in a certain sense, as a hindrance to the revolution, nevertheless, the necessity of proclaiming and granting freedom to all oppressed nations (i.e., their right to self-determination) will be as urgent in the Socialist revolution as it was urgent for the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution—for example, in Germany in 1848, or in Russia in 1905.

However, five, ten and even more years may pass before the Socialist revolution begins. In that case, the task will be to educate the masses in a revolutionary spirit so as to make it impossible for Socialist chauvinists and opportunists to belong to the workers' party and to achieve a victory similar to that of 1914-16. It will be the duty of the Socialists to explain to the masses that British Socialists who fail to demand the freedom of secession for the colonies and for Ireland; that German Socialists who fail to demand the freedom of secession for the colonies, for the Alsations, for the Danes and for the Poles, and who fail to carry direct revolutionary propaganda and revolutionary mass action to the field of struggle against national oppression, who fail to take advantage of cases like the Zabern incident to conduct widespread underground propaganda among the proletariat of the oppressing nation, to organise street demonstrations and revolutionary mass actions; that Russian Socialists who fail to demand freedom of secession for Finland, Poland, the Ukraine, etc., etc.—are behaving like chauvinists, like

lackeys of the blood and mud-stained imperialist monarchies and the imperialist bourgeoisie.

### 9. The Attitude of Russian and Polish Social-Democracy and of the Second International to Self-Determination.

The difference between the revolutionary Social-Democrats of Russia and the Polish Social-Democrats on the question of self-determination came to the surface as early as 1903 at the congress which adopted the programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, and which, despite the protest of the Polish Social-Democratic delegation, inserted in that programme Point 9, which recognises the right of nations to self-determination. Since then the Polish Social-Democrats have never repeated, in the name of their Party, the proposal to delete Point 9 from our programme, or to substitute some other formulation for it.

In Russia—where no less than 57 per cent., i.e., over 100,000,000 of the population, belong to oppressed nations, where those nations mainly inhabit the border provinces, where some of those nations are more cultured than the Great Russians, where the political system is distinguished by its particularly barbarous and mediaeval character, where the bourgeois-democratic revolution has not yet been completed—the recognition of the right of the nations oppressed by tsarism to free secession from Russia is absolutely obligatory for Social-Democracy in the interests of its democratic and Socialist tasks. Our Party, which was re-established in January 1912, adopted a resolution in 1913 reiterating the right to self-determination and explaining it in the concrete sense outlined above. The orgy of Great-Russian chauvinism raging in 1914-16 among the bourgeoisie and the opportunist Socialists (Rubanovich, Plekhanov, "Nashe Dyelo," etc.) impels us to insist on this demand more strongly than ever, and to declare that those who reject it serve, in practice, as a bulwark of Great-Russian chauvinism and tsarism. Our Party declares that it emphatically repudiates all responsibility for such opposition to the right of self-determination.

The latest formulation of the position of Polish Social-Democracy on the national question (the declaration made by Polish Social-Democracy at the Zimmerwald Conference) contains the following ideas:

This declaration condemns the German and other governments which regard the "Polish provinces" as a hostage in the forthcoming game of compensation and thus "deprive the Polish people of the opportunity to decide its own fate." The declaration says: "Polish Social-Democracy emphatically and solemnly



protests against the recarving and partition of a whole country . . ." It condemns the Socialists who left to the Hohenzollerns "the task of liberating the oppressed nations." It expresses the conviction that only participation in the approaching struggle of the revolutionary international proletariat, in the struggle for Socialism, "will break the fetters of national oppression and abolish all forms of foreign domination, and secure for the Polish people the possibility of all-sided, free development as an equal member in a League of Nations." The declaration also recognises the present war to be "doubly fratricidal" "for the Poles." (Bulletin of the International Socialist Committee in Berne, No. 2, September 27, 1915, p. 15.)

There is no material difference between these postulates and the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination, except that their political formulation is still more diffuse and vague than the majority of the programmes and resolutions of the Second International. Any attempt to express these ideas in precise political formulae and to determine whether they apply to the capitalist system or only to the Socialist system will prove still more strikingly the error committed by the Polish Socialist-Democrats in repudiating the self-determination of nations.

The decision of the International Socialist Congress held in London in 1896, which recognised the self-determination of nations, must, on the basis of the above-mentioned postulates, be supplemented by references to: (1) the particular urgency of this demand under imperialism; (2) the politically conditional nature and the class content of all the demands of political democracy, including this demand; (3) the necessity of drawing a distinction between the concrete tasks of the Social-Democrats in the oppressing nations and those in oppressed nations; (4) the inconsistent, purely verbal, and, therefore, as far as its political significance is concerned, hypocritical, recognition of self-determination by the opportunists and Kautskyists; (5) the actual identity of the chauvinists and those Social-Democrats, particularly the Social-Democrats of the Great Powers (Great Russians, Anglo-Americans, Germans, French, Italians, Japanese, etc.), who fail to champion the freedom of secession for the colonies and nations oppressed by "their own" nations; (6) the necessity of subordinating the struggle for this demand, as well as for all the fundamental demands of political democracy, to the immediate revolutionary mass struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeois governments and for the achievement of Socialism.

To transplant to the International the point of view of some

of the small nations—particularly the point of view of the Polish Social-Democrats, who, in their struggle against the Polish bourgeoisie which was deceiving the people by nationalist slogans, were misled into repudiating self-determination—would be a theoretical error. It would be a substitution of Proudhonism for Marxism and in practice would result in rendering involuntary support to the most dangerous chauvinism and opportunism of the Great Power nations.

—Editors of "Sotsial-Demokrat," Central Organ of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party.

**Postscript.**—In the latest issue of "Die Neue Zeit," dated March 3, 1916, Kautsky openly extends a Christian hand of reconciliation to the representative of the filthiest German chauvinism, Austerlitz. He rejects the freedom of secession for the nations oppressed by the Austria of the Hapsburgs, but accepts it for Russian Poland, thus rendering lackey's service to Hindenburg and Wilhelm II. A better self-exposure of Kautskyism could not be desired!

March 1916.

## The Fight for Unity Against War in Victoria

By J. D. BLAKE

Italian Imperialism has already begun its war of plunder against Abyssinia; thousands of lives have been lost; and still the Labor Party in Australia persists in its policy of splitting the forces of the toilers, who are opposed to war. In Victoria, the Communists and the anti-war fighters in the Victorian Council Against War have done everything possible to achieve unity, but the reformist leaders continue their splitting policy. At the same time, this does not mean that we are no nearer to the united front in Victoria, as we shall see later.

During recent months the struggle for unity against war has been particularly acute. The widespread demand for unity in the ranks of the workers and their organisations has now reached such a high level that it is commencing to break through the wall of silence and passivity created by the reformist leaders. It was this growing demand for a united front against war and Fascism which forced the Victorian A.L.P. Executive to a realisation of the fact that it could no longer attempt to placate the workers by telling them that the Labor Party is the only real



opponent of war and that its ranks are wide enough to include all people who are opposed to war. It became more and more difficult to convince the workers with such talk when from day to day it became increasingly evident to the workers that the Labor Party leaders were doing nothing to develop any organised resistance to war, whilst the only organisations which in practice showed themselves to be the genuine leaders of the struggle against war were the Communist Party and the Victorian Council Against War and Fascism.

Hence the reformist leaders were forced to the obvious conclusion that either they must accept the united front proposals of the Communists or they themselves must show some outward appearance of anti-war activity in order to prevent large numbers of workers who were opposed to war passing over directly to the Communists. The path of continued splitting was the path chosen, and so began the display of anti-war activity coupled with the most violent campaign of abuse against the Communists and the V.C.A.W. It was announced that a conference of unions and A.L.P. branches was to be held on October 6, a conference of Metropolitan A.L.P. branches on October 13 and a public meeting against war in the Melbourne Town Hall on November 11; all of these under the Labor Anti-War Committee. Simultaneously the beginning of a more virulent splitting campaign was heralded by the resolution carried by the Labor Party Executive, which extended the black ban to the V.C.A.W. on the grounds that it was a "Communist subsidiary."

This resolution was then submitted to the Trades Hall Council as a recommendation from the Executive of that body. Not for many years has the Trades Hall Council experienced such a bitter debate as that which took place when this recommendation was discussed. By the crowded appearance of the council chamber it was evident that the executive had gathered up every little union official who could possibly assume the label of an accredited council delegate, to vote for the executive recommendation. The truth of this is shown by the numbers voting; at the previous council meeting, when a large vote was recorded, the number of delegates voting was 92; whilst in the vote on the question of the V.C.A.W. no less than 140 voted, or 48 more than a generally accepted high vote for the Melbourne Trades Hall Council. Thus the executive was not by any means sure of itself.

The debate revealed that the supporters of the V.C.A.W. were the only people who had a constructive line to put forward while the reformists could only resort to the vilest forms of

abuse; typical of this latter was the statement of Lovegrove, today of Crofts and Monk, who said:—

"This debate has shown up a number of rats in the Labor Movement, and the Railways Union is the biggest rat of the lot." "The Anti-war Movement is merely an instrument of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and was only set up because of the danger of an attack on the Soviet Union by Japan."

In contrast to this form of abuse, which caused an uproar on the Council, the statement made by Delegate Franklin of the Locomotive Enginemen stands out sharply. He said:—

"We waited in our Union for years for the Labor Party to do something against war, and we hung on, hoping against hope that something would be done, until in sheer exasperation we decided to affiliate with the Victorian Council Against War, and we have found this organisation to be composed of sincere and energetic people who have done a great job."

When the resolution was put to the vote 94 voted for the resolution of the Executive and 46 against, but the numbers do not give a real picture of the relationship of forces. Amongst the 46 delegates voting against the Executive recommendation were included the delegates of the A.R.U., A.F.U.L.E., Seamen, and Tramways Union; in other words, the whole of the big transport unions voted against the splitting tactics of the Executive. In addition, all the large and most powerful unions were among the 46, so that if the voting had been recorded on the basis of the number of workers represented, instead of on the basis of delegates, the vote would have been overwhelmingly against the Executive. There can be no doubt that the Executive sorely needed those additional 48 delegates who were roped in for the purpose.

### Workers Resent Splitting

As soon as the Council vote became known a storm of protest came from the workers everywhere. Sub-branches and divisions of the A.R.U. everywhere carried resolutions of protest against the action taken by the reformist leaders—and congratulating M. Blackburn on the stand he had taken for unity. Blackburn was the subject of particularly vile abuse from the reactionary leaders of the Labor Party, who attacked him through the capitalist press and by every other means at their disposal, but despite this barrage and threats of expulsion from the A.L.P., Blackburn continued to stand for unity.



A stop work meeting of the Wonthaggi branch of the Miners' Federation carried the following resolution unanimously, in spite of a twenty minutes' speech in opposition from McKenzie, the local Labor M.P. and member of the Executive:—

"That this meeting of the Miners' Federation (Wonthaggi Branch) protests to the A.L.P. Executive on the attitude to the Council Against War and Fascism, and the this branch forward a telegram of congratulation to Mr. M. Blackburn on the stand he has taken."

Ballarat Trades Hall Council resolved:—

"That we demand that the A.L.P. Executive make a further attempt at banning or expelling members until a rank and file conference of the Labor Party has considered it."

Council decided to re-affiliate with the Ballarat Council Against War, and took up a collection to assist the Anti-War Council. Ballarat A.L.P., at its meeting, carried a similar motion. The resolutions carried at Wonthaggi and at Ballarat were both moved by prominent members of the A.L.P. in these towns.

The A.F.U.L.E., which was conducting its annual conference at the time, asked both Blackburn and Monk (T.H.C. secretary) to address the conference on the decision to ban the V.C.A.W. After hearing both speakers, the conference decided, by 24 votes to 7, to affiliate to the V.C.A.W. Large numbers of other unions have replied to the ban in similar terms.

This storm of protest is not confined to the unions, and the A.L.P. branches are expressing their opposition to the ban in no uncertain terms. The Essendon branch of the A.L.P. carried the following resolution:

"This Essendon branch of the A.L.P. considers the V.C.A.W. and F. is not a subsidiary of the Communist Party, but is doing a useful work in bringing together people of all opinions in anti-war propaganda. This branch therefore declares its disagreement with the resolutions of the Central Executive of the A.L.P. and the T.H.C. and re-affirms its affiliation with the V.C.A.W. and F. Further, this branch has every confidence in Comrade Blackburn, as he has always been consistent, and we consider he is earnestly striving in the best way for the abolition of war, and his word means more to this branch than the word of those on whose word the V.C.A.W. and F. was banned."

The Coburg A.L.P. branch has also sent a resolution to their

Central Executive protesting against "the unfair ban placed on A.L.P. members who also belong to the V.C.A.W. and F." The resolution further states:

"The Central Executive is degrading the A.L.P. and helping the war-mongers. We demand that the ban be immediately lifted, and that the matter be dealt with at the next Easter Conference of the A.L.P."

In addition, the Carnegie Branch, the Kingsville Branch, the Wonthaggi, Ballarat, Melbourne and East Malvern Branches have already carried similar resolutions.

In the press M. Blackburn made a clear statement in support of the united front and opposed the spitting tactics of the Labor Party and T.H.C. Executives, he said:

"The publication of the opinion of the joint Labor anti-war committee that the Victorian Council Against War is a subsidiary organisation of the Communist Party compels me to publish the opinion held by myself and by many Labor men and women whose activity and sincerity cannot be challenged. We have been associated with the V.C.A.W. from its beginning. It was the first attempt to organise in this State a comprehensive and specialised anti-militarist body. It remains the only body so organised. It comprises anti-militarists of all shades of religious and political opinions. Christians and rationalists, Communists, money reformers, and Laborites work together. It is concerned with one line of activity—the immediately urgent activity of propaganda against war and the war spirit.

"We believe this co-operation to be right and necessary. In a similar emergency—the anti-conscription campaign of 1914—Labor men co-operated with non-Socialist pacifists and with revolutionary Socialists. No one—even now—complains that we teach anything but Labor principles. The objection to that is that in advocating Labor principles we have associated with people who accept those principles, but disagree with us on other points. As these other points are outside the scope of our associated effort, we deny that the objection has any substance. If it has, it strikes equally at the participation of Labor men with non-Labor men in agitations for the abolition of sweating and of slums."

This statement by Blackburn is extremely important as a clear declaration by a Labor Party M.P. and member of the Victorian Executive for unity in the anti-war struggle: it shows how deeply the conception of the united front has penetrated.

#### Further Striving for Unity

As a further step in its struggle for unity, the V.C.A.W. sent to the Labor Anti-War Committee the following letter:



"The Victorian Council Against War and Fascism deploras the present disunity in the ranks of the forces opposed to war. The need for complete unity of thought, organisation, and action on the part of all forces fighting for peace was never as great as to-day, when the menace of imperialist war is far more grave than at any period since 1918. To bring about this unity, the V.C.A.W. & F. makes the following proposals to your executive:—

"(1) That at the conference summoned by the Labor anti-war committee for October 6, the V.C.A.W. & F. be represented by two members and the 18 local Councils Against War and Fascism by one member each (these being the Coburg, Brunswick, North Carlton, Carlton, Footscray, South Melbourne, St. Kilda, Caulfield, McKinnon, Kew, Camberwell, Northcote, Reservoir, Heidelberg, Ballarat, Creswick, Shepparton, and Wonthaggi Councils) and our affiliated bodies (with the exception of the trade unions, which already have representation under your plan) by one member each (these being Richmond, Malvern, Fitzroy, and Footscray unemployed, Preston Invalid and Old Age Pensioners, Social Science Forum, University Council Against War, Italian Group Against War, Communist Party, International Labor Defence, and Youth Council Against War and Fascism).

"(2) That the Conference determine a policy against war and the form of anti-war organisation to be adopted, and elect a committee to organise and control thereafter the activities of all bodies participating in the conference.

"(3) That the procedure at the Conference be agreed upon by a prior meeting of two representatives each from the A.L.P. Executive, the T.H.C. Executive, the L.A.W.C., and the V.C.A.W. and F.

"The V.C.A.W. and F. declares its readiness to place itself completely in the hands of such a conference and to abide by its decisions. It is also prepared to discuss any additional or alternative proposals that your executive may desire to make. Comrades, we appeal to you, for the prevention of the terrible calamity which faces mankind and in the great cause of peace, to assist us in securing among all sincere opponents of war that co-operation and unity of action which make them invincible. If you cannot see your way clear to accept our proposals for the Conference on Oct. 6, we suggest that the matter be discussed at the Conference, with the view to calling an all-in Conference at a later date. A copy of this letter is being forwarded to the Trades Hall Council and the Labor Party."

Nothing could more clearly express the sincerity of the V.C.A.W. in its fight for unity than this letter, yet the reply received simply stated that the proposal could not be accepted.

At the beginning of the conference on October 6, Crofts, the chairman, stated that conference would not be permitted to dis-

cuss any matters concerning policy, but could only discuss methods to be adopted to carry out the existing policy of the Labor Party in regard to war; on this basis all resolutions moved by delegates on vital questions concerning the struggle against war were ruled out of order by the chairman, but, even so, the conference revealed a strong following for the militants. One vote on the chairman's ruling resulted in 100 voting for and 79 voting against; another motion moved by Comrade Thornton that the points on the embargo on exports to any country going to war and on industrial action against any war-making nation contained in the Labor anti-war manifesto be particularly stressed in anti-war propaganda resulted in 62 voting for and 94 against; these votes show a very powerful minority of delegates from the unions and A.L.P. branches who stand for unity and a policy of militant struggle against war.

All of these events demonstrate how far the demand for the united front has penetrated amongst the trade union and A.L.P. workers; the wave of support for the united front is gathering increased momentum, with the result that the Labor Party leaders are forced more and more to manoeuvre. Their inveterate hostility to the united front compels them to attempt to convince the workers that the Labor Party machine is doing something to combat war, but the Labor Party policy of "Defence of Australia" and its "policy" of neutrality in the present war of Italian Fascism against Abyssinia makes it impossible for the Labor Party to develop any genuine anti-war activity—"defence" and neutrality preclude a real struggle against war in almost any concrete war situation—hence the talk about the fight against war is only demagogy so far as the Labor Party leaders are concerned.

But the important thing is that large numbers of workers have already gone far ahead of the Labor Party executive—united action is already taking place in practice in a number of places—and as the activity of the workers becomes greater the limitations on the manoeuvring capacity of the Labor Party leaders increase in proportion. Thus the developments of the last few weeks have brought about a great increase in the anti-war activity of the masses, together with a growing appreciation of the vital importance of the united front in the struggle against war. Secondly, the position of the Labor Party executive has weakened considerably, and its manoeuvres take on a more desperate character as shown in the deliberate attempt to smash the V.C.A.W. Thirdly, the main weight of the influence



of the Communists comes from the unions and from the A.L.P. branches, instead of from outside as formerly.

It remains for the Victorian Communists to overcome the lack of flexibility and initiative which still exists to some extent in the development of the united front. The fear of contamination by contact with A.L.P. workers which exists widely in the ranks of the Party must be broken down at all costs in order that the initial successes in united front work can be built into an irresistible wave which will bring the reformist leaders into line or isolate them, and around the united front be developed the people's front against war and Fascism.

## PRE-CONGRESS DISCUSSION

### *The Situation in the N.S.W. Railways*

By R. DIXON

Since 1932 an increase in production has taken place in Australia. This improvement has not been accompanied by an improvement in the position of the masses; on the contrary, it has been realised at the expense of the masses, and whereas profits have increased, an absolute worsening of the position of the working class has taken place. Under these conditions, discontent has gathered, and is reaching breaking point.

These facts must occupy the central point in the discussions of the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party of Australia. The Congress must open up before the eyes of the masses in a simple way the growth of poverty and the increase in profits, the methods being employed by the ruling classes to make the rich richer and the poor poorer; it must bring forward a constructive policy for improving the position of the workers; it must call the masses into the struggle against capital.

\* \* \*

The situation in the N.S.W. Railways affords a clear example of what is happening and what tasks confront the revolutionary movement.

The total earnings of the N.S.W. Railways for the year ending June 30, 1929, was £19,615,616; for 1932 £15,001,022; for 1935 £18,174,022. Thus the decline of earnings after 1929 and the rise since 1932.

When the decline commenced in 1929, the Commissioners launched a ruthless campaign of dismissals, and by 1935 just on 10,000 workers had fallen under the axe. The increase in production since 1932 did not result in the reinstatement of any of the 10,000 dismissed workers. Since 1929 the most intense drive to speed the workers up has developed, with a consequent increasing elimination of workers, despite the growing volume of railway traffic.

To illustrate this let us examine the situation of drivers. Between 1927 and 1933 the average run for train drivers increased from 69 to 77 miles in 8 hours. The loads of trains increased from 401 to 466 tons. At the same time, speeds were increased, so that the passenger run from Newcastle to Sydney, which formerly occupied about 4 hours, has been reduced to 2 hours 30 mins. for fast passenger trains, and plans are now in hand to reduce it to 2 hours. The times of the passenger expresses between Sydney and Melbourne and Sydney and Brisbane have been reduced upward of 3 hours.

The greater speeds, heavier loads and longer runs are not accompanied by a corresponding improvement in the permanent way. The tracks were seriously neglected between 1930 and 1933. Now speed-up methods threaten to reduce carrying capacity of the track. For instance, on the Menindie section, where at present 4 men are attending to 10 miles of track, a new system is now being introduced whereby 5 men will attend to 20 miles of track. That system is to be introduced in all parts of the State. With the tracks everywhere in a bad condition, the speeding-up of trains, increasing of loads, endangers the lives of the crews, as well as of the travelling public.

What is happening to train crews and fettlers is the case generally. No matter where one looks in the rail services, whether in the workshops, amongst porters, guards, or carriage-cleaners, this speeding-up of the workers is taking place. What is the result? Dismissals are continuing, more railway workers are paying the price of "prosperity."

Now let us turn to the wages of the workers, which have by no means escaped the fierce assault of the Government and Rail Commissioner. In 1928 the total railways wages and salaries bill amounted to £12,693,706; by 1934 it had fallen to £8,154,378, a reduction of £4,539,329, or, approximately 33 per cent. Men on the basic rate were reduced from £4/15/- in 1929 to £3/8/- in 1935, a reduction of £1/6/6 per week. To take the figures of train crews covering the periods mentioned above—between 1927 and 1935; wages fell from £1,247,329 to £784,390, or nearly



40 per cent.

Intense speed up, thousands of dismissals, slashing wage reductions—this is the proud record of the Stevens Government, and which has won for it the undying gratitude of the rich bondholders. And why not? A brief examination of the position of the bondholders reveals that between the years ending June 1928 and June 1934, payments in interest and exchange increased from £5,882,452 to £7,074,793. To get a complete picture, however, it is necessary to know that the cumulative loss to the railworkers in wages and salaries between 1928 and 1934 was £15,652,092, whilst the cumulative increase in interest payments to the affluent bondholders was £7,255,715.

Those figures starkly reveal the colossal robbery of the railwaymen that has taken place. They emphasise the great truth of Marx's words, that "accumulation of wealth at one pole is at the same time, accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery . . . at the opposite pole."

Huge profits for the bondholders, mass unemployment, lower wages and worsened conditions for the toilers—those facts must sear into the brain of every railworker, arousing his resentment to fever pitch, intensifying his hatred for the exploiters.

There is another aspect of this question. The total capital cost of the Railways in 1933 was estimated at £140,796,968; the total amount in interest payments made up to that date was £145,299,024. Thus interest payments, already in 1933, exceeded the capital cost of the Railways by £4,502,056—but interest payments must go on, the bondholders must be paid and repaid if necessary.

The declared intention of Mr. Stevens is to "make the railways pay," and within a very short period of time. Between 1932 and 1935 "deficits" were reduced from £4,500,000 to £1,500,000. In the next financial year the deficit is to be reduced to £500,000, which means that in the next 12 months a further £1,000,000 is to be taken out of the hides of the railway workers.

The attack is already under way. Guards are suffering reductions, overtime rates for engineers have been reduced, boiler-makers' wages have been reduced 1/- per week; plumbers are being regressed to pipe-fitters, losing 12/- per week; the coach-makers are before the Arbitration Court, and it appears will lose 6/- per week; construction branch building workers are on the verge of being reduced 12/6 per week. Extensive reclassifications and reductions of grades are taking place, with consequent wage and salary cuts; juniors are replacing seniors in many parts of the service, the adult workers being dismissed.

Those are the facts which must command the attention of every Communist, of every militant, of every railway worker. It is essential not merely to resist the offensive now raging, but to wage the struggle to improve conditions.

**Railway men must inscribe on their banner the struggle for the 40-hour week, and a £4/15/- basic wage.**

Profits for the rich cannot come before the lives and conditions of the workers.

A shorter working week will frustrate further dismissals and lead to the restoration of the thousands retrenched. It is the only positive answer to the brutal speeding-up of the workers.

To demand a £4/15/- weekly minimum wage is but to demand the restoration of the 1929 basic wage.

The struggle for a shorter working week and for increased wages is now upon the order of the day. This struggle is irretrievably bound up with the fight against arbitration and for industrial unionism.

Arbitration has the purpose of maintaining peace in industry to the advantage of the exploiters. It implies that the State is an organ standing above classes, which regulates the relationship between classes, between exploiters and exploited. Such a concept denies the irreconcilability of the class struggle and serves to hide the real truth that the State, far from standing above classes, is a class weapon used by the exploiters to maintain their domination over the exploited.

Arbitration shackles the unions in legalism, chokes them with class collaboration, stifles activity, smashes wages and conditions and dooms the working class to defeat. Its devastating trail since 1929, the crash of wages from £4/15/- to £3/3/6, which was mainly the work of the courts, is the living proof of this.

In the struggle for a shorter working week and for increased wages, direct negotiation with the employers and the reliance of the workers on their industrial strength must replace their philistine faith in arbitration.

To reject Arbitration does not mean to indiscriminately advocate strikes. It is necessary only to point out that the 44-hour week recently gained by the A.R.U. was obtained not because of the good graces of the Arbitration Court, but because of the mass pressure and demands that came from the railway workers for the 44-hour week.

The path to an improvement in wages and conditions is the path of direct negotiation backed up, when necessary, by industrial action.



The existence of 49 unions in the railways with different executives, conflicting policies, and craft prejudices, is a source of great weakness. Obviously all efforts must be directed to overcome this, to realise the slogan, "one union in the railway industry." There is advocacy in some circles for one general transport workers' union, which will include all transport workers, including road, rail, tram, water, etc. This high-sounding concept has its origin in the theory of the I.W.W.; it is a carry-over from the O.B.U. Movement. At this stage it should be rejected precisely because it serves to detract from that more urgent, practical, and concrete task of organising one union in the railways.

There are two tendencies towards industrial unionism in the railways—that amongst the metal workers, and that amongst the traffic workers. The approach of the metal unions is definitely a craft one. Their slogan is "one union in the metal industry," and by some strange method of thinking they suggest that with industrial unionism, metal workers in the railways must belong to such a metal workers' union and not a rail-workers' organisation. This is obviously wrong. The very concept of industrial unionism, as it applies to the railways, is that all workers in the railways, whether on the footplate, on the stations, or in the workshops, should be organised into the railway workers' union.

Despite this wrong view of the metal workers, however, support must be given to their efforts precisely because they serve to unite workers, divided at present into a number of different crafts, into one, bigger and more powerful, organisation. From the amalgamation will emerge a stronger craft union. From the standpoint of the workers this is better than a number of smaller and weaker organisations. Any move which will lead to a strengthening of the organisations of the workers should be supported.

In addition to that, the amalgamation will have psychological effects facilitating everywhere moves for amalgamation. It is a step along the right path, but only a step. The end of the path is industrial unionism or one union for railway workers.

In the traffic section the movement towards amalgamation affects the A.R.U. and the A.F.U.L.E. The leadership of the A.F.U.L.E., as well as many members, oppose the amalgamation on the grounds that it will mean the swallowing of their organisation by the A.R.U. and result in the neglect of the grievances of the enginemen, drivers and cleaners. This is a view fostered

by the officials to try and prevent amalgamation. Proposals for a basis of amalgamation have already been forthcoming which overcame these objections. These proposals are:—

- (1) That immediate steps be taken to bring together the offices of the two unions, with a view to the collaboration and co-ordination of the activities of both union executives.
- (2) That at the end of 12 months a conference be called, fully representative of both organisations, to work out the final details for amalgamation.
- (3) That in the new organisation which emerges, provisions be made for divisions and sections to be established and that the engine drivers, firemen, and cleaners, be catered for in these.

Those are the two outstanding questions of amalgamation. They need to be approached not in a narrow craft sense, but from a class standpoint. The unions are not just weapons to defend sectional, craft interests, but organisational weapons for the struggle of the working class against capital, a struggle, the final aim of which is the establishment of the power of the working class.

Organisation increases the power of the working class tenfold and in struggle it is decisive. This is why we must always strive to perfect working-class organisations, why it is necessary to support moves for closer unity and towards one organisation in the industry. This is also the reason why those who would attack the craft unions, an attitude which tends to weaken and even destroy them, must be ruthlessly resisted. In union organisation the industrial union is the most desirable form. If this desirable form of organisation is to be realised, however, work in the craft unions with a view to building, strengthening, and amalgamating them, is necessary. Industrial unionism can be realised in no other way whilst capitalism remains in existence.

There is a great need to strengthen the spirit of unionism in the masses. In the railways there is not that intense trade union loyalty which is found amongst the miners. There are many reasons for this: the 1917 defeat, the policy of class collaboration, role of the reformists, the policy of the Government and the Railway Commissioner, the sectarianism of the militants—these have all contributed to this situation. The militants must energetically work to build the confidence of the masses in their organisation. To do that they



must finally overcome past errors made in connection with unorganised workers and unfinancials. To-day the most resolute and determined campaign against non-unionism, as well as unfinancial unionism, is necessary. Neither can be tolerated. People who refuse to join the union, as well as those who refuse to become financial, would destroy organisation and leave the working class to the tender mercies of the employers. They are a menace and where possible should be driven out of the industry.

## The Party and the Pastoral Workers

By T. E.

Since the Tenth Congress there has been a considerable growth of the Party in the rural districts. At the beginning of 1931 there was scarcely any Party organisation outside of the industrial centres, whereas to-day over 100 local Party organisations exist in the rural districts and main country towns, and hundreds of individual members and close sympathisers in other small towns and villages are working in contact with local or central Party committees and fractions.

The first advance of the Party from the industrial to the rural districts in 1931, in New South Wales and Victoria, encountered a vicious onslaught at the hands of the rural bourgeoisie. But the Fascist pogroms of Mildura, Bourke, Dubbo, Uralla, Tarcutta, Binnaway, and Armidale, instead of checking the advance of the Party, aroused the fighting spirit of the rural workers and won their support to the little bands of courageous Communists who fought every inch in retreat against overwhelming odds. It can be truly said that the Communist Party in the country districts of New South Wales and Victoria was born fighting, reviving in the manner of its birth the fighting traditions of the old guard of the rural proletariat, who gave battle to the squatters in the struggle for union organisation in the last two decades of last century.

In five years the Party in the country districts has carried out a great amount of work among the rural workers, town workers, unemployed, and small farmers. In some districts the Party is now capable of exerting a strong influence on the political life of the countryside, although a great variation in the

level of work exists from district to district and from town to town.

In No. 9 District (North Queensland), where the Party is based mainly on the sugar industry, and where the leading activists are sugar workers, the highest level of work among the rural proletariat has been reached, and here the political influence of the Party is strongest. Although there are many shortcomings in other spheres of activity, especially in the work among small farmers, the Party in North Queensland is firmly based upon the rural proletariat and closely connected with the masses of the workers by a correct policy in relation to the Australian Workers' Union, and because of the excellence of the agitation around economic and social demands.

The recent strike struggles waged by the cane-cutters for protection against a recurrence of Weil's disease was largely under the leadership of the Party. That the workers were only partially successful and in some areas defeated is no reflection against the leadership, for although sufficient information to provide an analysis of the causes of defeat is not yet to hand, the whole forces of the State were brought into action to assist the A.W.U. officials to break the strike.

In the immediate future, No. 9 District Committee, whilst consolidating its position in the sugar towns and strengthening the Party among the rail and waterfront workers, must devote more attention to the farm population on the Tablelands and to work among small cane farmers. What will be said in a future article on the general tasks of the Party in the country towns and villages applies with particular force to North Queensland.

It is impossible, within the scope of this article, to present even a brief summary of the details of work in each district. District 9 has attained the highest level of work among the rural proletariat, and this success is due to the Party being based mainly on a rural industry even to the extent of leading members of the Party committees themselves working in the industry.

In the last issue of the "C.R." attention was drawn to the political and economic importance of the pastoral industry. Here, in the most important rural industry in Australia, employing the most militant of the rural proletariat, whose militant traditions date back over 50 years, is the centre of gravity for the future work of the Party in the rural districts. In South Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia the main task must be to more extensively connect the Party with the pastoral industry. We have already explained the



special difficulties to be overcome—the scattered disposition of the industry and the migratory conditions of employment. Although excellent work is being done by the Party activists and organisers of the Pastoral Workers' Industrial Union among the pastoral workers in N.S.W., the P.W.I.U. has not yet realised organised contact with the majority of the pastoral workers. In the past the country membership have not fully realised the importance of the pastoral industry, have not, therefore, paid particular attention to the pastoral workers living in the country towns, or entering other industries, or working on relief jobs in the off season. The country units and section committees have no plan of work for assisting the activists of the P.W.I.U. in reorganising the scattered forces of the pastoral workers in accordance with the principles of militant unionism. The forthcoming district conferences in Districts 1 and 2 must bring about a complete reorientation of our agrarian work in the direction of centring the main activity of the country membership on the task of connecting the Party with the pastoral workers and of recruiting large numbers of pastoral workers to the Party.

The Party activists in the rural areas must improve their knowledge of Party organisation, of Communist theory and practice, in order that they may be able to more fully utilise the existing organisation of the Party and its connections to aid them in their work.

One of the great weaknesses of the P.W.I.U. is the lack of contact with the pastoral workers in the off season, when the workers are dispersed among the hundreds of towns and villages and in most cases even out of reach of the P.W.I.U. paper, which carries on consistent agitation and propaganda. Yet in N.S.W. there is Party organisation in 36 country towns and individual members or contact in approximately 40 other towns and villages. True, our membership and contact is widely diverse, embracing town workers, rural workers of many occupations, unemployed, small farmers, intellectuals, and artisans; but still the most important problem confronting the Party in the development of the class struggle in the country is the winning of the decisive section of the rural proletariat—the pastoral workers.

How can our Party in the country districts apply itself to this task as a central task whilst at the same time carrying out its general political work among the exploited masses as a whole? This is a question to be solved by each unit, or by each individual

member where no unit exists.

In Dubbo (N.S.W.) exists one of the best country units. There are approximately 40 pastoral workers resident in the town to whom the work of the P.W.I.U. for militant unionism is unknown. Here is a peculiar situation when we realise that some of our best rural worker activists are devoting the whole of their time and energy to the task of building organisation among the pastoral workers.

The P.W.I.U. is striving to build a united front with the A.W.U. for organising the pastoral workers to struggle for better wages and conditions. Whilst work among the unemployed and relief workers in Dubbo is important, our unit should be giving attention to the pastoral workers and trying to develop the campaigns being waged by the P.W.I.U., as propagated in "The United Bushworker."

If the pastoral workers living in Dubbo do not belong to a union, attempts should be made to recruit them to the P.W.I.U. and to form a local branch. If they belong to the A.W.U., then our Party unit should approach them on the question of trade union democracy within the A.W.U., induce them to campaign for the united front with the P.W.I.U., and to assist in the setting up of bushworkers' committees.

It is possible for most of our country units to complement the work of the P.W.I.U. organisers, because their opportunity for concentration among groups of pastoral workers is much greater than that of the P.W.I.U. organisers, who are mainly engaged in travelling from shed to shed during the shearing season and do not see the same group of workers for more than a few hours a year.

The above condition exists not only in Dubbo, but in most country units in N.S.W. It is therefore necessary that a campaign be undertaken by the leading committees to develop a real political understanding of the importance of the pastoral industry and for the working out of a plan of work based on the needs of the workers and for trade union unity.

In Queensland, several units in the sheep country are doing good work in the stimulation of rank and file activity in the A.W.U. But in Victoria practically no attention is given to the industry either by the District Committee or the country units. In W.A., some contact exists, sufficient to provide a starting point for the development of organised activity.

It must not be assumed because this article is devoted to the problem of the pastoral industry that other fields of work are



to be neglected. No! In many areas possibilities for work in the pastoral industry are very limited, and even in Dubbo 40 shearers constitute only a small percentage of the total number of workers. But in neglecting even a few shearers in each area where our Party exists, we neglect the most important single rural industry, which employs over a hundred thousand workers, and whose production for the last year amounted to £72,000,000. The sum of our neglect, in this case, would be tremendous.

Our comrades in Griffith, N.S.W., can do some work among the few shearers living in or passing through the town, at least to the extent of handing them "The United Bushworker" and discussing it with them, and at the same time devote their main attention to the orchard workers.

Some weeks remain before the Eleventh Congress, affording ample time for each district committee to work out and begin the operation of a clear plan for the basing of our rural work upon the proletariat in the pastoral and other rural industries.

## The Party, the Y.C.L., and the Youth

By HARRY TORR

"Pointing out the underestimation by Young Communist Leagues as well as by Communist Parties, of the importance of work amongst the youth, and the weakness of this work in a number of countries, the Seventh Congress of the Communist International instructed the Executive Committee of the Communist International and the Executive Committee of the Young Communist International to take effective measures to overcome this sectarian exclusiveness of a number of Young Communist International organisations, to make it the duty of Y.C.L.s, wherever they exist, to join all mass organisations of the falling youth (clubs, unions, cultural, sports organisations), formed by bourgeois, fascist, clerical, reformist, and Fascist parties, as well as all other organisations; to wage a systematic struggle in these organisations to gain influence over the broad masses of youth, mobilising them for struggle against militarisation, forced labor, and for the improvement of its material condi-

tions, for the rights of the young generation of toilers, striving to establish for these purposes a broad united front of all non-Fascist youth mass organisations."

This quotation from the resolution of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International again brings sharply before us the question of winning the youth for Socialism.

Over the past few years, the Communist Party of Australia has made tremendous strides forward, the working class is taking up the counter-offensive against the capitalists' attacks on their living conditions and political rights. This is happening to a greater or lesser degree in most capitalist countries, and in many countries is accompanied by a growth of the revolutionary youth movement. An example of this comes from the United States, where the Young Communist League is well on the march. In England, the American Youth Congress Movement, representing 1,000,000 American young men and women, and originally started by a Fascist group headed by Viola Fins. In England, last year, the Independent Labor Party Guild of Youth decided on conditional affiliation to the Young Communist International, as a body "sympathetic to Communism." In France, successes have been achieved by the building of united front activity between the Socialist and Communist youth.

### What is the Position in Australia?

The "Problem of the Youth," of which we hear so much, is just as serious here as in any other capitalist country. In N.S.W. alone, it is estimated that 24,000 boys and girls leave school each year, of whom only about 6000 can hope to get employment of anything more than a temporary, "dead alley" nature. Of those who do find work, many are "too old" at 18, and dismissed at 21, in the role of the apprenticeship trade, and this thing and so on, in the industries. Where the youth are employed, according to the statistics, it is not unusual for girls 15 years of age to work for 7/6 a week in shirt factories, whose products are sold at 1/0 each.

Although it is hard to get exact figures, it is estimated that there are thousands of homeless boys and young men on the streets, as well as a considerable number of girls and young women.

In N.S.W. the Stevens Government has introduced the institution of "finding jobs for thousands of youth." This is to be done by an extension of the trades apprentices system to those industries. Under this system, the employer is enabled to control of the apprentices during their periods, re-engage them when



busy, and by this means the apprenticeship period is likely to be extended over many years, so that up to the age of 25 or more the apprentice may still be on "learner's" wages. Furthermore, the apprentice may be sacked at any time for "misbehavior" (which includes union and strike activity), and thereby loses his certificate, without which he cannot resume his apprenticeship with another employer.

Alongside this is an attempt to make the Young Citizens' Association into a compulsory juvenile labor exchange. Unemployed and relief workers are told they must register their children between the ages of 14 and 21, and these must attend the training classes of the Y.C. Association. When jobs are available, the young people are told they must take them or their fathers will lose their dole or relief work. One girl of 18 was recently sent to a factory all day, for no wages, being told that she was "being taught a trade!"

The relationship between youth and war needs particular emphasis.

This also is stressed in the Seventh Congress discussions, particularly by Comrade Kuusinen, who points out the importance of building a mass People's Youth Front Against War, as part of the general people's front.

One of the latest proposals for dragging the Australian youth into war is a suggestion that the homeless unemployed on the track should be regimented into the army. It is claimed that the khaki uniforms would give them self-respect, and in time of need, they would be valuable for the "defence" of Australia!

Under these conditions, the Young Communist League of Australia can be said to have established itself as an organisation of the working youth. Stable district committees exist in Sydney and Melbourne, as well as a National Committee, and its paper "The Young Worker" was revived in a much improved form last April; but the membership is only 200.

The C.C. of the Party and the N.C. of the League have been able to record some successes in the struggle against sectarianism, as evidenced by the united front established in the July anti-war meetings in Sydney and Melbourne, where the Douglas Credit Youth Movement, Christian Youth Committee for Peace, University League of Nations Union, and similar organisations, as well as the Y.C.L., were represented.

The National Conference on Youth Problems, held at Transport House, Sydney, on International Youth Day, was an even broader rally, 71 delegates being present from 39 organisations,

including seven University, 14 trade unions, Sydney Trades and Labor Council, one Young Citizens' Association, one boy scout, anti-war, sporting, one national and several unemployed organisations, as well as shop committees. These delegates came from Brisbane, Melbourne and Wonthaggi, as well as many parts of N.S.W.

The fact that the Y.C.L. took the initiative in calling together the committee to organise this conference shows a step forward towards real mass work. There is a beginning of a turn to work in sports organisations, and the League is at last beginning to understand the necessity of "youthful methods of work," as is shown in the steps towards sports work in Sydney and Melbourne (mass camps at Christmas and Easter).

However, only the beginnings have been made. We now must build the mass organisation of youth demanded by the objective conditions.

These successes have only been spasmodic, and serve mainly to show what can be done. For instance, the textile strike last year caught the Y.C.L. unprepared, without contact, and the reformists were able to very successfully sabotage it. The situation in this industry is not very much improved in Melbourne, and scarcely better at all in Sydney, in spite of opportunities for broadening contact through sports and social work.

In Sydney, the sales of the "Young Worker" have retrogressed, thereby nullifying the excellent work done by Melbourne. Even anti-war work, our brightest spot, is very spasmodic. In Sydney, the work of the district and national committees is weakened by the fact that not one functionary gets sustenance, and so very frequently the majority of these are forced to drop their League activity to seek work.

However, the above mentioned successes should serve to show the possibilities that exist. Our whole experience over the last twelve months has shown that, wherever the Y.C.L. approaches youth on questions really concerning them, there is immediate response. What, then, is delaying the development of a mighty youth movement in Australia?

The main weakness of the Y.C.L. of Australia is still its sectarianism and fear of the masses, in spite of the above noted recent successes. Closely bound up with this is the question of cadres and a knowledge of how to work.

The Seventh Congress correctly draws attention to the responsibilities of the Communist Parties as well as the Young Communist League for the weakness of the latter organisation.



tions. The Central Committee of the Australian Party has long ago realised the necessity of building a strong youth movement. The resolution of the 4th Plenum of the C.C. of the C.P.A. says: "... the continued underestimation and neglect of work among women and attention to the Y.C.L. by Party committees must be overcome." This neglect has not been overcome in most of the lower Party organs, and even in most district committees. In this respect, the matter of organising youth, the Party members still have much to learn from the bourgeois, and the underestimation of the youth by the Party members is reflected in all working class organisations—trade unions, fraternal, etc. The bourgeois quite well realise that "he who has youth, has the future," and spares neither trouble nor expense to win and keep ideological control over the growing generation. Take, for example, some of the greatest of bourgeois youth organisations, the boy scouts. Among the leaders of this organisation in Australia are: The Governor of N.S.W., Sir Philip Street; Chief Justice Jordan, Sir Kelso King, and Col. Maughan. The organisation is brought into the public eye by such publicity campaigns as "Scout Week," and so on.

On the other hand, in the working class movement we find adult workers, militant, and class conscious, who "can't be bothered by the kids," regard the youth as "hopeless," because "all they think of is sport and jazz," etc. Yet others have a patronising bureaucratic air, based on an underestimation of youth's abilities to do things when given a lead, which drives the youth away from organisations, cramps their initiative, and dulls their enthusiasm. This is so widespread that Kaunisten says "The Party must stop taking the best functionaries from the Y.C.L." This is reflected in many trade unions, which refuse to allow youths to have membership, or full membership rights.

One of the first steps towards building a really mass Young Communist League (a prerequisite to the organising of the young workers and students generally) is to convince the Party members of their responsibilities in this connection. The main tasks facing the Y.C.L. for the immediate future are those laid down in the Seventh Congress Resolution, quoted above, which apply to the Australian Y.C.L. as much as to any other section of the Young Communist International. The Y.C.L. cannot properly perform these tasks without the assistance of the Party membership. Already our Y.C.L.ers give lip-service to the "necessity to penetrate all organisations of the toiling youth," but the fact that the overwhelming majority of our members are

still isolated shows that they do not yet understand just what is meant by this slogan, and above all, they do not understand how to carry out Communist work once they penetrate an organisation. The Party membership, with its better theoretical knowledge and greater practical experience, must give assistance here, by showing the Y.C.L.ers in a comradely way, what to do, and how to do it. In their ordinary every-day work in the unions and on the jobs, and among the unemployed, the Communists must convince their fellow-workers of the necessity for organising the youth into the general struggle of our class.

The underestimation of Australia's only revolutionary youth newspaper, the "Young Worker," must cease, and Party members must see that the paper is sold, cash promptly forwarded, and news supplied, so that the paper can grow into a weekly in the shortest possible time, realising that the building of the "Young Worker" into a weekly and the "Workers' Weekly" into the "Daily Worker" are two phases of our task of winning the Australian masses to Communism. The Y.C.L. was well to the fore in organising the first National Congress on Youth Problems. The Party must see to it that the League remains in the forefront in developing the united front of the Australian youth in the struggle for "Peace, freedom, and progress," which was begun at that Congress.

The Y.C.L. must be in front in the development of activity amongst the unemployed, in the unions, and on the jobs, amongst the armed forces, organising the sport-loving youth for better sporting facilities, etc. To the extent that the Y.C.L. succeeds in organising these young men and women for the struggle for their immediate demands, in extending the United Front to still broader masses including the A.L.F. Younger Sets, the Youth Congress movement will be successful.

The Y.C.L. will be successful in these tasks insofar as the Party shows it how, and this, in its turn, implies the allocation of Party forces to work among the youth of our class, as the bourgeoisie does.

A realisation on the part of every member of his and her tasks in connection with the youth will lead to the rapid growth of the Y.C.L. in Australia, and a general growth of activity on the part of the youth of the working and middle classes. The youth are not handicapped with tradition, old habits, etc., and are quick to see who their real leaders are in action.

Though the Y.C.L. must be based mainly on the factory youth, yet much attention must also be given to the students, the sons



and daughters of the middle class, whose future is as hopeless as that of the proletarian youth, so long as capitalism lasts, and who are an easy prey to Fascist demagogy, if this latter is not counteracted by a concrete handling of their problems by the Communists.

When the Party membership, as a whole, learns to assist the Y.C.L., then the Y.C.L. will be able to fulfil one of its main functions, to " . . . become the best helper of the Party" (Lenin). The activity of our brother Y.C.L. in Germany, in the struggle against Fascist terror, in China's Red Army in the struggle for Soviet power, in the Soviet Union in the struggle for Socialism, shows what an invaluable part the youth can (and must) play in the struggles of the toiling masses for emancipation.

We in Australia must give due attention to the Youth of this country. Let us report to our Eleventh Party Congress that a real beginning has been made.

## Australia's Anti-Militarist Tradition

### PART III—THE FIGHT AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

By J. N. RAWLING

The Treaty of Vereeniging, which ended the Second Boer War and set the seal of legality upon British Imperialism's seizure of the two Boer Republics, ushered in a period of "peace." A period of "peace" during which the process of expanding the domains of the British Empire went on at the expense of Africa's and Asia's "backward" peoples, and a period of "peace," too, that was occupied with manifold preparations for that struggle for power with Germany which was destined to begin after just twelve years. Those twelve years saw Britain gaining undisputed possession of Egypt and the Sudan, by agreement with France and, by that same agreement, gaining an ally for the fight against Germany; saw Europe on the verge of war in 1905 and 1911 over the Moroccan question and the principal antagonists of 1914 lined up and confronting each other; saw the consolidation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance; saw Britain's continued advance into China and the expedition into Tibet; saw Persia divided up between Britain and Russia, who united their forces against Germany for the approaching war; saw many little wars (called "punitive" or "police" expeditions) in Africa,

and saw, too, the rapid growth of the rivalry all over the world between Britain and Germany, whose outcome was to be the war of 1914. Those twelve years were occupied also by preparations for the conflict—seeking of allies, ideological preparation, welding the empire into a united body, military and naval preparations.

In all these preparations Australia played its part. Figures of expenditure upon armaments by Australian Governments serve as indexes of that preparation. Those figures for the years 1901 to 1914 are as follows:

1901-2: £861,218; 1902-3: £766,880; 1903-4: £855,764; 1904-5: £934,598; 1905-6: £970,345; 1906-7: £1,035,795; 1907-8: £1,334,744; 1908-9: £1,050,590; 1909-10: £1,534,881; 1910-11: £1,395,794; 1911-12: £2,128,649; 1912-13: £2,612,687; 1913-14: £2,950,721.

It is of importance to remember that the Labor Party was responsible for a great proportion of that expenditure. The Labor Party kept the Deakin Ministry in office from September 23, 1903, to April 26, 1904, and was in office itself for three terms: (1) Watson Ministry, 26/4/'04 to 17/8/'04; (2) 1st Fisher Ministry, 12/11/'08 to 2/6/'09; (3) 2nd Fisher Ministry, 29/4/'10 to 26/6/'13. The last mentioned Government, in its three years of office, spent on defence, a total of £6,137,130, while in the three previous years only £3,920,215 had been spent. That is, the first Labor Government that was in power as well as in office spent on armaments and war preparations 56 per cent. more than its predecessors had spent in the three years immediately preceding! Again, during the first six years of Federation, \$6,759,354 was spent on "defence," while in the next seven years (up till June 30, 1914), £13,008,066 was thus spent—over twice as much—and, of this latter figure, over £7 million (that is over half) was spent by Labor Government! When the first Labor Prime Minister (Watson) took office in 1904 he had a message cabled to London to reassure those who looked askance at a Labor Government. The record of Labor Governments has shown how that reassurance, in words, was made doubly strong by deeds!

The Imperial Conferences which came to be held fairly often concerned themselves mainly with questions of "imperial defence." In 1903, an agreement arrived at by the Imperial Conference was ratified by the Commonwealth Parliament. By it, Australia was to provide £200,000 per annum to support a naval squadron in Australian waters. Another Imperial Conference was held in 1907—Deakin and Lyne (Prime Minister and



Treasurer) attended. It was agreed that an Imperial Council of Defence should be set up. In 1909, it was proposed that Australia should present a dreadnought to the British Navy and super-patriots began collecting money. But—money for war must come from the pockets of the workers—that should be obvious. So the super-patriots collected only £70,000. And, moreover, the scheme was against the policy of the Government. The Labor Prime Minister (Fisher) showed the policy of his Government envisaged something more serious than such tinkering with preparations for war. Senator Pearce said that the Government intended having an "Australian Navy, paid for by Australian money and manned by Australian seamen." And, in a speech at Gympie, Fisher announced a policy favoring compulsory training. An order was given at once for three destroyers—to be increased later to twenty-three! The succeeding Deakin Government put the "Labor" policy into operation—the Australian Navy was established and compulsory training was instituted.

In 1911, Lord Kitchener and Admiral Sir Reginald Henderson arrived in Australia as a result of the invitation sent in 1909 by the Australian Government to the British Government to send out military and naval experts to advise on matters of "defence." The former advised the establishment of an army of 80,000 men, organised in 80 battalions of infantry and 28 regiments of light horse, and the setting up of a military college. Naval expert Henderson wanted a navy to be within twenty years eight times the size of that already under construction! The ships under construction then were one armored cruiser, three protected cruisers, six destroyers and three submarines. Both experts evidently proceeded on the policy that it is better to ask too much than not enough.

In 1911, too, Fisher and Pearce went to London to attend an Imperial Conference. While there they gave assurances of support by Australia in the inevitable war with Germany. Australia was pledged to war by its "Labor" Government—not in July, 1914, when Fisher, speaking at Colac, said: "We will stand behind the Mother Country to help and defend her to the last man and the last shilling," but already in 1911—when it seemed that the European War was to break out that year, and when Fisher and Pearce were at hand in London to give personal assurances to Asquith, George, Grey, & Co. Refer back to the figures of expenditure and notice the huge increase in 1911-12—nearly a million. In the following year, 1912, Pearce discussed the matter of sending troops overseas with Major-General Godley, of New

Zealand. A scheme was drawn up for the supply of a joint force of 13,000 men—Australia to supply 12,000 of them. When war broke out, however, such a number was considered too small, and Cook (then Prime Minister) cabled offering 20,000 men. In actual fact, however, with the Fisher Government (elected in September, 1914) in control, Australia sent about twice that number in the first convoy. Fisher had his eye on that last man—while Hughes had his on the last shilling!

Voluntary enlistment, moreover, was not going to be relied on if the war-mongers of this country had their way. In April, Fisher, reporting in the House of Representatives, stated that 70,000 men had already enlisted. Cook found fault with the efforts made. Britain, he said, had spent on the war \$776,000,000 and had raised 3,000,000 men. Australia, in proportion, should have spent £86,000,000 and raised a force of about 350,000 men. Actually, he said, Australia had spent only £13,000,000 and raised only 70,000 men. A deplorable situation! Just after that speech, Australia had 9000 casualties, 2000 of them deaths—between April 25 and May 1! The King cabled his congratulations.

But opposition to the war was growing—even if it merely took the form of refusal to enlist. In March, 1915, the enlistments were 3000. In April, they fell to 1800, and in May to 1750. In the following month, Pearce stated that 3500 men were required for reinforcements. At the same time it was announced that another division was to be raised. Members began urging the introduction of conscription. In July, Sir William Irvine moved the adjournment of the House to discuss a proposal to register all men of military age. Fisher raised no objection and the War Census Act was passed. In the meantime, an energetic campaign to encourage enlistment had been going on: house-to-house canvassing, white feather campaigns, economic conscription and so on. All this resulted in a large increase of recruiting. This in return resulted in the decision of the Government to double the number of reinforcements to be sent each month, to raise another infantry brigade and to send a siege train.

In October, Fisher resigned, and W. M. Hughes became Prime Minister in his stead. His Government offered to the War Office another 50,000 men, to leave Australia in the next few months. These were to be enrolled in new units and to be exclusive of the 9500 per month required to fill the gaps in the ranks of the old units. When these new units went into action, they would, of course, require reinforcements, too, and the 9500 per month would have to be increased. That was the procedure throughout



the war: a campaign to maintain reinforcements ("Don't let your mates down"), then recruiting more than necessary for reinforcements, and thus the creation of new units, these necessitating an increase in the number of reinforcements. During the months of rest in Egypt, after the withdrawal from Gallipoli, reinforcements accumulated, so that by 1916 there were four infantry divisions, in addition to two mounted divisions and other corps. The four infantry divisions were transported to France, where they were later joined by No. 3 Division, raised as a unit in Australia. Thus there were five divisions demanding the draining of the human reservoirs in Australia to supply them with reinforcements. Such reinforcements became more than ever necessary as a result of the criminal slaughter at Pozieres, on the Somme, and around Ypres. Even then Hughes and the war-mongers were not satisfied. In 1917, an attempt was made to send a sixth division into the field. The nucleus of that division was actually organised. Those who were in camp in England in 1917 know that this was so. The present writer saw members of his own unit drafted into some of the battalions of the new division. The color-patches for the personnel of the new division—the color-patches were the same shape (oval) as those of the Third Division, but were vertical instead of horizontal. But the slaughter around Ypres was such that it became apparent, even to Hughes and Pearce, that six divisions could not be maintained. As it was, reinforcements could not be found to supply the needs of the existing five divisions, which never again reached full strength. The sixth division had to be disbanded—but, had conscription been adopted by the people of Australia in 1917, there is no doubt that the sixth division would have been revived and Australia drained of its last available men to fill the gaps to be made in the ranks of six divisions during 1918. Fisher's promise would have been honored, two Australian Army Corps would have served instead of one, and Birdwood would have gained his full generalship long before he did. We should have had more and bigger memorials—we might even have had an unknown soldier's grave!

In 1916, W. M. Hughes visited England, where he was feted and made much of and sent back to introduce conscription in Australia. Enlistment went on steadily during 1916—but not enough men were enlisting to provide the 9500 men necessary for reinforcements each month, in addition to the men required to form the new units promised—not to mention the sixth division.

Between November 1915 and the end of 1916 there were 134,286 enlistments. But, at the rate of 9500 a month, 123,500 would have been needed merely as reinforcements during that period. And in that 134,286 would be included men of the Third Division—(that is not reinforcements)—which left Australia in 1916 and did not go into action until 1917. So, even if we do not consider the sixth division, we see that the basis for opposition to conscription that the Labor Party sought to construct (namely, that enough reinforcements were coming forward and that conscription was not necessary) crumbles. That basis was put forward—instead of the basis of uncompromising opposition to the war, an opposition that was voiced by only a few in the Labor Party. While the opposition to conscription by the Labor Party machine helped to defeat conscription, that machine was instrumental in increasing the number of enlistments, because of the very basis of its opposition. It offered an alternative to conscription; and Labor Party politicians exerted all their energies to ensure that the voluntary system would itself be capable of supplying the requisite number of men. They were not opposed to the war or to recruiting—conscription was simply not necessary. As we shall see, also, the split between the conscriptionist Laborites and the anti-conscriptionists. Laborites did not develop into a final break until the latter saw that the majority of the Australian people were opposed to conscription.

Hughes, while in England (in 1916), had decided on the introduction of conscription. It was not for nothing that duchesses feted him, kings conversed with him, and papers published daily bulletins when he was down with the flu. In May, a time limit was fixed for the voluntary system in England. New Zealand followed suit, and when Hughes left England, the Australian Labor Government was committed to conscription. At home the ground was being prepared for him by persistent propaganda: the Australian Natives' Association, by motion, favored compulsion; Pearce said 120,000 men between the ages of 18 and 44 had refused to enlist; the Commonwealth Parliament met, on May 9, in secret session (oo-oo-oo!); the British Army Council cabled asking for a special draft of 20,000 men and that reinforcements had been increased to 16,500 per month (as half of the Anzac Corps had been wiped out in seven weeks at Pozieres and Fromelles)—thus was the atmosphere created.

In New South Wales, in 1915, J. D. Fitzgerald, a Labor member of the Legislative Council, and others had formed a Universal Service League, after the model of a similar league established



in England by Lord Roberts. "Universal Service" was, of course, a pleasanter sounding name for "conscription." The advocacy of conscription by leading members of the Labor Party had followed naturally from the policy adopted by that body years before of compulsory military training. But the opposition to conscription by the rank and file was widespread. And this opposition reflected itself in the decision of the Executive of the Party. Early in October, 1915, the Central Executive of the New South Wales Branch of the Labor Party passed the following resolution:

"That this executive of the Political Labor League regrets that members have allowed the name of the League to be associated with their membership of the Universal Service League, and expresses the opinion that it is inadvisable for members of the movement to publicly associate themselves with controversial issues upon which the movement may be called upon to express an opinion."

Five comments force themselves to be made on that resolution: **Firstly**, conscription was not, according to the Executive, a menace which must be fought tooth and nail, but a "controversial issue upon which the movement may (sic!) be called upon to express an opinion"! **Secondly**, no opinion was expressed one way or the other. **Thirdly**, it was considered "inadvisable" not to belong individually to the Universal Service League, but to associate the P.L.L. with it. **Fourthly**, the Executive was careful not to commit itself—the way was left open to move in either direction as political expediency would dictate. **Fifthly**, it is of importance to stress the fact that this resolution was carried by a two to one majority—that is, one-third of the Executive did not consider it inadvisable to associate the P.L.L. with the U.S.L. At the inception, then, of the propaganda and organisation in favor of conscription, the governing body of the P.L.L. refused to give a lead in the fight against conscription. Such a lead, however, was given. On October 23, 1915, the **Anti-Conscription League** was organised by E. E. Judd and the Socialist Labor Party, with the support of the Australian Socialist Party, the Federated Ironworkers, the Boilermakers, and other unions.

At the Easter, 1916, Conference of the P.L.L., however, conscription was emphatically condemned and a decision made to oppose it. The Wagga Branch of the P.L.L. had sent along a resolution recommending the withholding of endorsement of any Member of Parliament who voted for conscription. The following motion, moved by A. Rae, was carried:

"(1) That this Conference solemnly pledges itself to oppose, by all lawful means, conscription of human life for military service abroad, and directs all leagues and affiliated unions to take immediate steps to oppose all Labor members who vote for or otherwise support conscription, so so as to make this matter the issue between the forces of democracy and despotism. (2) Where unions or leagues fail to take such action, the Central Executive is hereby instructed to refuse, under any circumstances, to endorse conscriptionist candidates. (3) That it be an instruction to the New South Wales delegates on the Interstate Executive to oppose at all costs the policy of conscription. (4) That copies of the foregoing resolutions be sent to the central bodies of the Labor organisations in each State, to the Interstate Industrial Conference to be held in Melbourne on May 10, and to the Acting Prime Minister (Senator Pearce), and to Mr. Tudor, M.H.R."

The conference of the P.L.L. had given voice to the determination of the masses of Australia to oppose conscription!

Hughes arrived back at Fremantle on July 31, 1916, and reached Melbourne on August 8. In the following week, at a Town Hall meeting, he told Australia that it would have to send still more men. Then he went to Sydney, conferred with Holman and the State Ministers and made the same statement at a public meeting in Sydney. He returned to Melbourne to attend a meeting of the Federal Labor Caucus. Hughes asked the Caucus to agree to the introduction of compulsory service. No decision was arrived at, at that meeting or at two others. But, when Parliament met on August 30, the Government announced that the voluntary system was to be given another month's trial; that, if it failed to furnish the required number of recruits, all men without dependents and between the ages of 21 and 35 would be mobilised; but that they would not be sent overseas until the people of Australia had declared for conscription in a referendum. Hughes had determined upon a referendum rather than attempting to introduce conscription by means of legislation. Caucus would not agree to the latter method and he could not have carried a bill in spite of its opposition—at any rate through the Senate, where there were 31 Labor Senators and five Liberals. But the Bill to take a referendum was carried in both Houses. On September 29, the first batches of men be-



tween the ages of 21 and 35 were called up. Hughes began his campaign for a vote for conscription.

He had seen that it was very doubtful whether he could carry the day without the support of the Labor Party executives. Therefore, he asked to be heard before the N.S.W. Executive. That Executive agreed to hear him, and he spoke before them on September 4. A long debate followed and a vote was taken in the early hours of the following morning. Hughes' proposals were condemned by a majority of twenty-one votes to five. Then he visited the Labor Conference, sitting in Adelaide—there, too, he met with hostility. On September 14, Frank Tudor, Minister for Customs, resigned office. While the debate was proceeding on the Referendum Bill in the Federal Parliament, a march of anti-conscriptionists was organised upon Parliament House. It was dispersed by a baton charge of the police. Evidences were everywhere that the rank and file were revolting against the political machine, against this in control of it, and above all against the attempt to force men into the trenches. A split resulted in the ranks of the politicians, not because of any great difference of principle, but because some preferred to defy the revolt (Hughes and Co.), and the others bowed to it (Tudor and Co.). The Referendum Bill was carried, in the House of Representatives, by 46 votes to 10—(10 Laborites out of 42 in the House voted against the Referendum)—and in the Senate by 17 votes to 9 (9 Laborites out of 31 in the Senate voted against the Referendum). Moreover, it was not until after the voting had taken place that there was a secession from the Ministry and that the Hughes Party Ministry was formed. Had the vote been in the affirmative, there would have been no reconstruction of the Ministry. Political expediency and not conscientious and determined opposition to conscription was the determining factor in the actions of the "anti-conscriptionist" Labor politicians. Mahon, Higgs, O'Malley and Gardiner remained in Hughes' Ministry until after the Referendum—true-blue democrats they; ready to sit on the fence until the "people" showed the way to jump. The one exception was Tudor, who had resigned before the Referendum was taken.

The voting took place on October 28. The result was a majority of 72,476 for "No," the votes being—For conscription, 1,087,557; against conscription, 1,160,033. It is important here

to compare the votes at the second referendum, in December, 1917. Then the votes were—For conscription, 1,013,361; against, 1,178,256—a majority of 164,895. A worse defeat than that of the previous year! In 1916, the Government refused to publish the votes of the soldiers overseas. It does not need a too suspicious mind to jump to the conclusion that their vote had been against conscription. If that were the case, the Government six months later plucked up enough courage to tell a lie and to publish the "figures": 72,399 for conscription and 58,894 against it. With a conscience a year harder, in 1917, the Hughes Government did not need any courage to publish the "figures": 91,365 for and 89,743 against conscription. Of the vote in 1917, the present writer can gauge the result from his experience in his own battalion, where the vote was taken in the trenches. He knows that that vote was not merely overwhelmingly against conscription, but practically unanimous against it! And that experience was the experience also of men in other units with whom he has talked. No returned soldier could be made to believe that the figures published were true. **The soldiers fighting in the trenches, on active service abroad, victims of imperialism, lured to the shambles under false pretences, voted against conscription almost to a man!** The present writer knows of only one man in his company who voted for conscription—and that was himself. His excuse, to-day, is his conscience and the logicalness of his mind—he was firmly convinced of the justice of the Allies' cause and determined to give his all for it. The rest followed. Moreover, he was only 19 when he voted, and was fresh from school when he enlisted! He feels no shame for his actions; on the contrary, he looks upon them now as a necessary part of his education. But those who would have forced men into the trenches, those who, in spite of the knowledge and experience that were theirs, did not use that knowledge and that experience and the opportunity that they had in order to mobilise the masses of Australia not merely in opposition to conscription but also in opposition to the war their masters had planned, had neither conscience nor straightforwardness. They engineered the great betrayal—not only by their support of the war but, as well, by their preparation for it. The split of 1916 had



its roots in the Labor Party policy of years before, and no great principle divided the Hughesites from the followers of Tudor. Both were for the carrying on of the war to a successful conclusion—even if the one broke from its moorings and sought new anchorage and the other stayed where it was to lure the workers to further disasters.

But a magnificent fight was waged against conscriptionists by the rank and file of the Labor Party and by the revolutionary organisations. That fight was responsible for the defeat of the conscriptionists—on two occasions. It remains for us to chronicle that fight.

(To be Continued)

COMING SOON!

COMING SOON!

**Report of  
GEORGE DIMITROV**  
(Secretary of the Communist International)  
to the  
**SEVENTH WORLD CONGRESS**  
of the  
**COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL**

Order Single Copies or Bulk Orders Now  
From

**MODERN PUBLISHERS**  
191 Hay Street, Sydney

## *Towards the People's Front in France*

By "OBSERVER"

It is by no accident of time table that in the first week of this June there occurred simultaneously in France these three events:

- (1) The debates on the united front at the Congress of the Socialist Party at Mulhouse.
- (2) The celebration in Paris of two National Days of Friendship with the U.S.S.R.
- (3) The publication by the Communist Party of a document suggesting the basis for, and inviting the formation of, a single Party of the Proletariat.

Think back to this time a year ago, and you have a contrast that throws into high relief the importance and the meaning now of these events.

This time a year ago none of these three things could have happened as they did. This time a year ago the opponents of precisely these developments had easy going when they demonstrated in scores of newspaper articles, scores of speeches, the impossibility of anything of this kind ever taking place. The development which they were opposing was the development of a force and a movement worthy of the name of a People's Front Against Fascism and War.

To-day, at a tempo which has astounded the defeatists and dismayed the enemy, the People's Front is on the way. In all the debates at the Socialist Congress one fact was outstanding. There was no one at all who was willing at that Congress to suggest openly the splitting of the united front.

The silence and the admitted shift of position by many who formerly were among the most bitter opponents of the united front were the most eloquent tributes paid to its success. The force of that success, the power of the unanswerable argument of the facts of the experience of the past twelve months are seen in their full strength when one reflects on the still terrible strength of the forces within the Second International which



have during these twelve months—under the leadership of the British Labor Party—concentrated all the energy, all the venom and all subtlety of which they are capable in an effort to undo what has been done in the struggle for unity.

But at the thirty-second National Congress of the French Socialist Party at Mulhouse on June 10-12, the debate was already shifted to another plane. The discussion turned no longer around the question of the desirability or otherwise of the united front. Instead, it turned around the question: How has the Socialist Party failed to make such great advances as the Communist Party in the operation of the united front, and how are these mistakes to be corrected?

It was inevitable that the former opponents of the united front should take the opportunity to suggest—without saying it in so many words—that of course once one has the united front, then the advance of the Communists at a vastly greater rate than the advance of the Socialists must simply be accepted as a necessary evil, and that the only thing to be done about it is that Socialists should “watch their step” with greater care, should insist on the strictest limitation of united front activity, and thus leave themselves free to conduct a more vigorous activity on behalf of the Socialist Party as such.

Although the Executive's line on this was formally supported by the Congress, it was obvious that in fact the support was in the nature rather of a general support for the Executive than a special endorsement of this line. The arguments in support of this line creaked in a fashion audible to all the delegates, who were obviously glad of the opportunity to avoid a demonstration of wholehearted agreement with the line, offered by the intervention of the Trotskyists, who broke into the debate waving their arms in revolutionary gestures against the Executive on the ground that it had failed to carry out a putschist policy in relation to the Fascist menace.

Since the vast majority of the delegates present were at least united in support of the Executive on this point, the Executive was able to sail comfortably into port on the strength of the hot air puffed in their direction by the Trotskyists.

Paul Faure, after taking advantage of the Trotskyist uproar to attack the policy of putschism and to rally support for the Executive by uttering a defence of the policy of mass action—

with which almost everyone present heartily agreed—declared:

There cannot be any question of breaking the unity of action, but it is necessary to take practical steps to ensure that our party shall preserve its character.

It was Zyromski, representing the Socialists of the Seine area (the district round Paris), who put his finger on the real reason for the relative smallness of the Socialist advance. He pointed out that this was not in the least due to “excessive” united front activity by the Socialists. On the contrary, it was due precisely to the fact that among sections of the leadership originally opposed to the formation of the united front, there had remained during the past year a tendency to adopt a delaying and hesitating policy in connection with united front activities, with the result that time and again they might be said to have “missed the bus”: a bus upon which are travelling, so to speak, the masses of the French workers.

Nor are the workers moving along that line alone. For the first time the small bourgeoisie—including small shopkeepers and Government officials—are on the move with the workers against Fascism and war. The astonishment of certain Socialist leaders at this development is similar to the astonishment of certain Labor bosses in Scotland during the last Hunger March, when they found that while they were digging their heels in and refusing to join with the Communist Party and the I.L.P. in support for the march, butchers and bakers, who knew what the policy of the National Government meant for them as well as for the workers, were in many places pouring out supplies to facilitate the march and increase the power of the protest in Glasgow.

In the days before there was a united front, one of the favorite platform arguments of the Socialist opponents of unity was the statement or at least the strong suggestion that “What we gain on the Left we shall lose on the Right.” Everyone will notice how closely this argument is frequently paralleled in the arguments of the subtler opponents of unity in this country to-day. The suggestion, based on a fallacious and dishonest analysis of the class forces and a gross misrepresentation of the possibilities of development, is that united front action will “frighten away” petty-bourgeois elements who “might otherwise support” a “working-class policy.”



It is, of course, the fact that this argument is, in general, used in the most dishonest possible way in order to dress up the fact that the united front is not refused in order somehow to lure petty-bourgeois elements into the ranks of fighting Socialism, but in order to enable the collaboration of the chiefs of the Labor Party with the capitalist enemies of the working class.

Developments in France have exposed this argument—previously as useful to reaction there as it is to reaction here—in the most sensational manner imaginable. So that to-day, and particularly during the recent series of Cabinet crises, it was startlingly evident that large sections of the Radical Party, representing precisely these petty-bourgeois elements, were actually more eager than the Socialist leadership to assist in the formation of a left government supported, on definite conditions, by the Communists in the Chamber. In the words of Maurice Thorez, the leader of the French Communist Party:

“For many of the peasants, for many of the petty-bourgeois throughout this country, the bogey of the Bolshevik with the knife between his teeth no longer exists. For them now the thing to be feared has become Fascism, the Royalist bands, the Fiery Cross, the French solidarity groups, with the dagger and revolver. To defeat Fascism, one must take up the defence of the proletariat and of the petty-bourgeoisie against Fascism, which desires to enslave us.”

It is a curious fact, noted in passing by Thorez, that already the idea of the People's Front has reached the point where the capitalist press—including the bitterly hostile “Temps”—is now compelled to use the term in headlines and in reports, dropping the “Front Commun” against which so vast a propaganda had already been deployed.

The National Days of Friendship with the U.S.S.R. were a peculiarly vivid demonstration of the power of the forces which are driving towards the full development of the People's Front. The spectacle of M. Herriot heading the list of a Committee of Honor, which included Radical leaders stretching all the way from Right to Left, together with the Communist leader, Vaillant-Couturier, with trade union leaders, famous authors like Andre Gide and Malraux, with the fine flower of French scientists and artists, was one which presented in the most concrete manner the fact that no one in France to-day can

afford to ignore the fact that the masses of the French people want peace, that they see a way towards the preservation of peace for the moment in the support of the policy of the U.S.S.R., and in the formation of a bulwark of pacts, enforced by the pressure of the working people in every country against the war plans of the Hitler Government.

The days of friendship were not a demonstration by or in favor of the People's Front. They were a demonstration of the state of affairs in which the People's Front is being developed and in which it will come into powerful existence. For the composition of the Committee of Honor was in itself a barometer of the state of feeling among the broad masses of the people.

It is worth quoting here certain references of Thorez to the history of the idea of the People's Front. “For those comrades,” said Thorez at the beginning of June, “who find out the policy of the Communist Party by reading the bourgeois press when they get up in the morning, this (i.e., the Peoples' Front) was a revelation. But we said these things on the eve of the Radical Congress at Nantes, and we outlined them in a more precise form at Villeurbanne when we said, ‘There can be another policy besides that of Flandin, besides that of Doumergue, besides that of the Government of National Union.’ We said, ‘There can be another policy which will still not be yet the policy of a government of workers and peasants, the policy of a government of Soviets.’”

“We Communists are convinced that the Soviets, and the Soviets alone, will finally assure the well-being of the workers, will assure peace and liberty, but we have very forcibly proclaimed the existence of the possibility of reaching an understanding and of struggling to set a limit to the exploitation and the oppression of the capitalists, and to force back the menace of war.”

“And in the month of October we stated that a policy powerfully based on the extra-parliamentary action of the masses can find its expression even on the parliamentary plane, and can be applied by a government which pays attention to the will of our country. We said, ‘Such a government can be formed,’ and we had the question put: ‘Would you take part in a government of the Left Cartel?’ and we said, ‘No, the Communists will not participate in any other government than that of the Soviets of the workers and peasants, but they will give their support to



all measures which make easier the life of the working masses. . . . If a government is willing simply to pay attention to the will of the country and presents this or that measure favorable to the interests of the working class, of the poor peasants, of small shopkeepers, a measure which enables us to force a retreat by Fascism, well, we shall support a measure of that kind, we shall vote for it."

Almost simultaneously with this review of Thorez was issued the "Charter of Unity for the Working Class of France." It is difficult to quote from this important document, for it must be read as a whole. It may, however, be noted that people who a couple of years ago would have considered such a Charter a mere game of "wish fulfilment," who did, in fact, consider futile and doomed to failure the first overtures of the Communist Party on the question of the united front, who have seen these derided efforts pushed forward to magnificent victory, are forced by these experiences to understand that the Charter of Unity is not a programme put out "in the air," but is a practical suggestion issued at a moment when not only in the Socialist and Communist Parties, but in the trade unions, the move towards unity has already progressed at a pace which offers good hope to the advocates of that magnificent possibility: the Single Party of the Proletariat.

## The Fourteenth of July in France

### I

The working masses again have reason to be grateful to the movement created by Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland for carrying into effect the results of the Amsterdam and Paris Congresses. Everyone realises the important part played by this movement in bringing about a unity in action in France, and its initiative in organising a vast demonstration on July 14 has had most satisfactory results.

Indeed, a large number of organisations have given their support to the demonstration, and it is an important fact that there are working together on the same organising committee representatives of the following: the Radical Party, the Inter-representatives of the Socialist Parties (Socialists of France, Socialist group of the Socialist Parties (Socialist trade unions), the Republicans and French Socialists), the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the C.G.T. (Socialist trade unions), the C.G.T.U. (red trade unions), the League of the Rights of Man and the Intellectuals' Vigilance Committee. Here, indeed, is a striking testimony to the triumph of the Front Populaire du Travail, de la Paix et de la Liberté (People's Front of Labor, Peace, and Liberty), for which there seems to be every day a more pressing need in the eyes of the French working population.

All this is a gratifying extension of contacts made in the heart of the **Left Delegation** during the recent ministerial crises. But this time it is not only members of parliament and party leaders who are going to act together.

In every town and village of France, the Socialists, Radicals, members of the various Left parties, and the Communists are anxious to unite for July 14. With the trade unionists of the C.G.T. and the C.G.T.U., both of which are supporting the demonstration, they will be able effectively to organise their action for the defence of the workers' bread and of peace and liberty. The important thing in the present situation is that the wide masses of the people will be able to act together, pitting the strength of their numbers against the activities of their enemies.

To bring about this vast assembly of all the partisans of peace and liberty, our Communist Party is taking care to limit



the programme of action of the Front Populaire to issues which correspond to the needs of the masses and are at the same time acceptable to the left organisations.

It is possible within the framework of the present regime to carry out a policy other than that of Laval.

It is possible to make good the budget deficit without putting a further burden on the masses, by making the rich pay and by restricting financial speculation.

It is possible to render ineffective the armed hordes of the Camelots du roi and of Francisme [The Royalists.—Ed.], whose provocations against the workers are well known.

It is possible to confiscate the weapons of civil war possessed by the Croix de Feu of Colonel-Count de La Rocque.

It is to achieve these ends and so that the people can defend their liberties and prevent the Fascist wave from spreading over our country that the Communists have done everything they can to make possible the joint demonstration taking place of the forces of the Left.

No doubt the watchwords of the demonstration of July 14 would gain something from being more precise about the defence of all that concerns the workers' bread, but the essential thing is to ensure that the French masses, by making July 14, 1935, a great day of unity for bread, peace, and liberty, bring about the unification which is necessary in view of the coming struggles.

This is why the Communist Party intends to participate with all its forces in the popular celebration of July 14. We were among the first to answer the call of the Amsterdam movement, and we will do all we can to see that those who unite on July 14 will remain united afterwards by the same desire to safeguard liberty and peace.

In this way a new blow will be dealt to Fascism, whose shame and horrors we must avoid in our country, the more so as its triumph would not only mean slavery but also the outbreak of a new war.

The Fourteenth of July, 1935, will prove the triumph of the People's Front (Front Populaire), originally put forward by the Communist Party nine months ago. And if our plan has

achieved a rapid and striking success, it is because it corresponds to the deep feelings of the masses, who feel the need for unity, as they are determined not to allow themselves to be led back along the path of barbarism.

As for ourselves, we know that by barring the way to the people's enemies we are acting not only in the present interests of the workers, but also in their future interests, that is to say, for the bringing about of a new society.

It is thus that we Communists, who proclaim aloud our desire to set up soviets in France, are working with all our powers to counteract, as far as possible, the evils of capitalism.

From the very fact that we are working in concert with the wide masses of the French people, we, whose perspicacity rendered possible the formation of the People's Front, are certain that those who as yet do not know much about us will be obliged to agree that all our policy is guided by the desire to defend the people.

And our ultimate objectives will be understood and admitted by the wide masses who, fighting under the banners of the People's Front, will see more and more clearly that the final solution to their ills lies in the triumph of the soviets.

JACQUES DUCLOS.

## II

### The Preparatory Conference of the People's Front

On Sunday, July 7, in the Magic-City Hall in Paris, a regional session of the Committee for Unity of Action Against Fascism (C.U.A.A.) was held in preparation for the demonstration of July 14.

This was in the nature of a preparatory meeting, at which delegates from all the organisations comprising the People's Front worked out the basic points on which all anti-Fascists could agree and which might be called a minimum programme of the People's Front.

There were 1,143 delegates, and the diversity of opinion represented at the meeting and its extremely broad basis can be judged from the following summary of the organisations from which the delegates were drawn:—There were 92 Communists, 143 Socialists, 22 Pelletanist Radicals, 13 Valois Radicals, 10



Socialist Republicans, 159 from the C.G.T., 106 from the C.G.T.U., 23 Autonomists, 3 representing united trade unions, 48 elected from labor municipal councils, 28 ex-servicemen, 39 women, 15 from the youth, 102 delegates from the C.U.A.A. whose organisations were unspecified, 94 from the Amsterdam-Paris movement, 23 from the League of the Rights of Man, 41 from the Red Aid, 16 from the League Against Anti-Semitism, and 75 from various political and cultural organisations. There were also—and this was a cause of great satisfaction—93 anti-Fascist factory committees represented.

The resolution, which was adopted with 7 abstentions, was as follows:—

#### The Adopted Resolution

The delegates declared that they accept the reports presented in the name of the C.U.A.A. and formulate their watchwords on the basis of those reports in the following terms:—

“Disarmament and dissolution of Fascist leagues; against legislation by decrees; against all cuts in wages, grants, and pensions; against the dismissal of civil servants and the reduction of the number of jobs; against all attacks on the pensions and the rights of ex-servicemen and war victims; against the two years' service and any increase in military service; against the deceit as to the organisation of passive defence, the militarisation of the civil population, and the utilisation of Fascist groups to this end; against the more than infamous laws and for the defence of political and trade union liberties.

“For the broad political and administrative amnesty of all who have fought for bread, peace, and liberty; against the high cost of living, for a reduction in the cost of gas, electricity, transport, water, and the denunciation of the disastrous conventions by which the town and district of Paris are bound to concessionary companies; for the carrying out of big public works to re-absorb the unemployed; for the reduction of taxes which hit the workers and the small producers.

“The 1100 delegates present, speaking in the name of the 500,000 whom they represent, and conscious that the majority of the population of Greater Paris is behind them, invite the regional organisations to work out in common a plan of united action for anti-Fascist workers in and around factory areas. They call on the masses of Greater Paris to arise in their multi-

tudes on July 14 to show the Government and the Fascists the iron will of the People's Front to 'defend democratic liberties, to give bread to the workers, work to young people, and peace to humanity as a whole.' ”

#### JULY 14

#### Summary of Number in the Demonstrations

According to "L'Humanite" of July 15 and 16, the following were the numbers (in parentheses) demonstrating in the principal towns of France:—Paris (500,000); Marseilles (100,000); Toulouse (60,000); Bordeaux, Nimes, Angouleme, Saint Etienne, and Nantes (30,000 each); Lyons (25,000); Toulon and Lorient (20,000); Rouen, Tours, Le Havre, Brive, Oran, and Perigueux (15,000 each); Clermont-Ferrand (12,000); Sete and Carcassonne (10,000 each); Nice, Cherbourg, Bergerac, and Tarbes (8000 each); Montauban, Avignon, La Rochelles, Castre, Dijon, and Auxerre (6000). That is to say, over 1,000,000 workers demonstrated in these 30 towns alone.



## The Soviet Union and the League of Nations

The League of Nations is in the forefront of discussion at the present time when the question of concerted national endeavor to preserve peace is one of immediate urgency.

Clarity on the role of the Soviet Union inside the League and on the functions of the League itself is essential if one is to appreciate precisely what is meant by the application of sanctions.

THIS EXTREMELY VALUABLE  
BOOKLET IS NOW AVAILABLE  
AT 1d. PER COPY.

When buying *Peace or War?* ask the seller for this companion volume.

Prices for Bulk Orders on application to MODERN  
PUBLISHERS, 191 Hay Street, Sydney.