

COMMUNISM IN GERMANY.

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At the last meeting of the German Communist Party important decisions were arrived at, which are of special interest to the development of the revolutionary movement in Western countries. On that account the development of the German Communist Party is of particular importance for western people; for not only is the activity of the German party geographically between Russia and Western Europe, but it works in a more advanced milieu than that on which the Russian Soviet Republic was founded. The problems which the Communist movement in Germany must tackle are mainly those with which all Western civilisation will be met.

Take the agrarian problem as a case in point. Our Russian comrades had to solve this question in a different manner from us, owing to political and economic differences. Great Russia, on the whole, had little to do with the problem of large estates and cultivation on a large scale, for in Russia large estates were managed on the small holding system. The agrarian conditions in Germany, however, are similar to those in western countries; large estates, cultivated by the most modern methods on a large scale, and between these extremes a hardy-cult of small and large peasant farmers. Whilst France is particularly interested in small scale production, and England in large estates and their cultivation, the agrarian problem before the German Communists covers both countries, and its solution should be of interest to them.

The question of tactics, too, which the last Party meeting dealt with, is of equal importance. The attitude of the Communist Party to Syndicalism, which has taken root in a strange way within the Party, was discussed at length. In Russia this new Syndicalism was of no importance, but France must tackle this phase, and England has similar tendencies to deal with in the I.W.W. movement. German Communists, in their decision on this point, have solved a problem, which sooner or later must be solved by all western countries. That decision favoured the sharp division between Marxian Communism and Syndicalist or new-Syndicalist tendencies. The basic problem which this discussion brought forward was the existence of the political party; the question being whether the Party should undertake the political leadership of the revolutionary workers, or should become a sort of general mixture of an economic political uniform party. But the meeting decided against new-Syndicalist tendencies, and the idea of an economic-political uniform party; the development of the political party, the meeting held to be a question of life or death for the development of the Revolution; the industrial struggle, on the other hand, required special organisations, namely unions. Few were in disagreement with this decision, and even those few showed inclinations of working with the Party again.

Further points in the tactics of the party were those of parliamentary and industrial action. Both of these problems are equally vital for England, France, Italy, etc.; because with them similar circumstances to those in Germany prevail. In Russia Parliament had only had a short life, and the workers had not suffered the same bad experiences with it as did the German workers. Russian trade unions, too, differ greatly from those in Germany and Western Europe. In Russia they were a part

of the first Russian Revolution, and they bore the stamp of Revolution on their brow. But in Germany trade unionism is the result of a time of political stagnation, its bureaucracy and tactics became conservative in peace time, and counter-revolutionary in the Revolution. In France, in England, and in many other western countries revolutionary workers will have the same task as German workers have in front of them: the revolutionising of the trade unions.

As for parliamentary action, the mere fact of being anti-parliamentary does not constitute Communism; it is rather the Syndicalist conception. For Communists, the Party decided, parliamentary action is a question of expediency and not a fundamental problem. Syndicalists shut out any possibility of parliament being used for revolutionary ends; but the Communist Party recognises this possibility with certain reservations. The Independent Socialist Party is still undecided as to whether the workers should use Parliament on attaining power, but we Communists have made our final decision that the Soviet system is the only means of carrying out the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Another marked difference between the Communist Party and the Independent Socialist Party lies in the different idea of the form parliamentary activity should take. The Independents favour influencing Parliament itself; the Communists only see in Parliament a means of revolutionising the masses outside of Parliament. The Communist Party of Germany is of opinion that abstention from using Parliament is only justifiable when such abstention is a signal for the decisive struggle for power.

How, then, is the counter-revolutionary trade union bureaucracy to be overcome? The Party holds the opinion that the trade unions can be made helpful in the Revolution by expelling the counter-revolutionary bureaucrats. On that account the Party considers it to be of the greatest importance for its members to pull together within the unions, and thus bring about their revolutionary advancement. But the new-Syndicalists consider the trade unions anti-revolutionary, and as such propose organising the revolutionary element within them for the industrial struggle in special workers' organisations. But the Communist Party is opposed to this idea on the ground that such outside organisations would be ineffective, and, further, that the new members of trade unions would be deprived of the influence of Communists within the unions. We feel that this problem must be solved in a similar manner in England, and also in France.

Recently, a sort of National Communism has arisen in Hamburg, a group that preaches war against England, and for that end is ready to join issue with the bourgeoisie. The Communist Party of Germany thoroughly disapproves of this nationalist move, since its tactics are wholly international.

The class war on international lines is the only struggle which must take precedence of the specific national interests of the workers.

The class war in England is not identical in all its bearings with that of Germany, but analogies may be drawn between both countries which cannot be without use. There is naturally no question of a literal transfer of the methods used in one country to another; but the tactics used in Germany will be modified for the particular circumstances prevalent in England, and used accordingly.