

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Vol VI. No. 4.

Workers' Library Publishers,
35 East 125th St., New York.

10 cents

Contents

The Problem of Agricultural Development in the U.S.S.R. <i>Editorial</i>	93
Tendencies in the British Party. <i>Page Arnot</i>	102
The Struggle on Two Fronts. <i>A. J. Bennet</i>	114
The Coming Congress of the C.P.G.B. <i>W. Rust</i>	119

The Problem of Agricultural Development in the U.S.S.R.

THE vigorous tempo of development of U.S.S.R. industry is an indubitable fact. The annual increases in industrial production by 19, 23 and 22 per cent.—unheard of in the old conditions of Russian capitalism, even during years of exceptional development—have become normal and natural conditions of the Soviet system of economy.

Both the increase in production and the capital of the U.S.S.R. industry has far surpassed the customary tempo of development of production in the old industrial countries of capitalism. While in the U.S.S.R. industrial production increased by 23 per cent., the rise in industrial production of the U.S.A. was only 9 per cent., in Germany 6.6 per cent., and in Britain a certain fall (of 7.7 per cent.) occurred. As a result the proportionate relation of U.S.S.R. industry to world economy is growing from year to year. The U.S.S.R.'s share of the world output of coal has grown from 2.8 per cent. in pre-war days and 3 per cent. in 1927 to 3.5 per cent. for the seven months of 1928. The U.S.S.R.'s share of the

world production of pig-iron has grown from 4.1 per cent. in 1927 to 4.5 per cent. for the first seven months of 1928; for steel there has been a corresponding increase from 4.4 per cent. to 4.5 per cent.; for oil the U.S.S.R.'s share in world output has grown from 5.8 per cent. for eight months of 1927 to 7.5 per cent. for eight months of 1928. Simultaneously, taking industry as a whole the pre-war level of production has been greatly surpassed.

The Resolution of the November Plenum of the C.P.S.U. proposed to maintain this high rate of development in the forthcoming period also. The Plenum of the Central Committee, whilst stressing the necessity of overtaking and passing the capitalist countries technically and economically, points out that the accomplishment of this task is only possible if the rate of our industrial development is increased to the utmost, the industrialisation of the whole country accelerated, and the Party of the working and peasant masses mobilised to a maximum degree.

AFTER pointing to a number of weak spots in Soviet economy, to a number of backward elements in the economic life (the grain production, heavy metals, building materials and so on) which are rendering the industrialisation of the country extraordinarily difficult, the November Plenum of the Central Committee decided on a course of action not in the direction of planning everything on the level of those weak spots, not by reduction of the rate of industrialisation relatively to the standard of the backward elements, but on the contrary of a maximum development of the backward spheres of industry, even though it entails great financial tension.

The November Plenum recognised that the weakest spot in Soviet economy was agriculture, and especially grain production. Consequently it paid exceptional attention to the grain problem.

On this question the resolution of the November Plenum says: "The tremendous achievements of socialism during the last economic year have, however, been accompanied by great difficulties and signs of crisis, which must be overcome at all costs by the Party and the working class. The ultimate cause of these dangers is to be found in the extreme backwardness and low rate of development of agriculture in general and of grain cultivation in particular. The July Plenum of the Central Committee has already stated that the 'extremely low level of agriculture, especially of grain production, involves the danger of a breach between the socialist town and the petty bourgeois village, and therefore the danger that the fundamental prerequisite for the socialist reorganisation of our whole national economy may be destroyed.' And later on in the same resolution we read: 'Agriculture is the basis of industry. Its growth implies the extension of the food and raw materials basis of industrialisation. Unless agriculture grows correspondingly, the permanent growth of industry is an objective impossibility.' "

THE problem of speeding up the rate of development of agriculture and of its reconstruction was raised at the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., which indicated the general line and direction of the reorganisa-

tion of agriculture on a large scale and collective basis, with a concomitant intensification of the attack on the capitalist elements of the countryside. Since then the problem has not diminished in importance for the Party. At the April and July Plenums of the Central Committee it was given primary importance owing to the crisis in grain collection, and at the November Plenum in connection with the ratification of the control figures for national economy during 1928-29.

The grain collections have become the centre of the developing class struggle in the villages. The very great difficulties experienced in grain collections last year, which difficulties are still not finally outlived, and the intensification of the class struggle bound up with them, have given birth to a panicky mood and a right deviation from the basic Leninist line among certain elements of the Party.

MORE than once already the basic causes of the difficulties in grain collection have been elucidated in the C.P.S.U. The Fifteenth Congress of the Party noted that "despite the undoubted growth in culture of our agriculture (machinery, tractors, electrification, a multi-field system, joint cattle-raising, improved seed, manure, etc.), the level of fertility of the U.S.S.R. is still extremely low, particularly by comparison with Europe and America; the tempo of development of agriculture is still slow, its dependence on natural factors (drought and harvest failure, etc.) is still very great." The resolution of the July Plenum of the Central Committee pronounced in the same sense: "Agriculture still remains at an extremely low level, and the rate of its development lags excessively behind the rate of industrial development." (The word "excessively" emphasises that to a certain extent this lagging is inevitable at the present stage, inasmuch as industry plays and ought to play a leading role in all agriculture.) How much agriculture lags behind industry is evident from the following figures for the gross production of agriculture during the last three years.

	<i>Industrial production (in roubles)</i>	<i>Agricultural production (in roubles)</i>
1925-26 ...	12.5 milliard	17.4 milliard
1928-29 ...	19.0 "	18.5 "

From these figures it is evident that indus-

trial production during these three years has grown by 6½ milliard roubles i.e., by more than 50 per cent.), overtaking agriculture, while agricultural production during the same period has grown rather more than by 1 milliard roubles, i.e., by a total of approximately 7 per cent.

The backwardness of agriculture in the U.S.S.R. finds expression not only in low productivity but in its lower commodity proportion, which is dependent partly on low productivity, and partly on other causes. The agrarian revolution had the effect of the parcelling out of landownership, which right down to the present time continues to be of a disintegrated nature whilst the population of the U.S.S.R. is growing swiftly (by two or three per cent. per annum) and whilst the consumption per head of the peasantry has also increased greatly by comparison with the pre-war level. Before the war the peasantry in many districts lived on orach (mountain spinach). Furthermore, in connection with the increase in stockbreeding the consumption of cattle food is also swiftly increasing. Consequently the villages are sending lower quantities of grain to market.

DURING the July Plenum comrade Stalin emphasised the fact that the main cause of the difficulties in grain collection in the U.S.S.R. is the extremely low commodity proportion of the disintegrated petty-peasant husbandry, and illustrated this by the following facts: Whilst before the war there were about sixteen million peasant husbandries in Russia, we now have more than twenty-four million, and the partitioning process is continuing. This explains the paradox that the area sown in the U.S.S.R. is now 95 per cent. of the pre-war area, whilst the amount of grain obtained from it (about five milliard poods) is only some two to three hundred million poods below the pre-war harvest of grain, yet the commodity section of the grain production hardly exceeds fifty per cent. of that of the pre-war period. Hence the almost complete decline in the export of grain, which before the war amounted to six or seven hundred million poods per annum.

Such are the real basic causes of the difficulties in grain collection in the U.S.S.R., out of which also arise the methods of overcoming these difficulties: the technical and organisa-

tional reconstruction of agriculture, its reorganisation on a large-scale basis, productional co-operation, and collectivisation. But the severe economic difficulties which arose last year in connection with the fact that the early frosts and the drought which followed ruined the crops over an area of five million dessiatines and the intensification of the class struggle resultant upon this, gave birth to a panicky mood among certain elements of the Party, and caused them to subject the established Party estimate of the grain problem to reconsideration. This over-estimation of the problem manifested itself in the form of a right deviation, and found a fairly complete written expression in comrade Frumkin's two letters addressed to the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. As comrade Frumkin in his letters crystallised thoughts which evidently were troubling the minds of many comrades his letters attracted considerable attention. The Party and comrade Stalin gave adequate answer to them at the November Plenum.

Comrade Frumkin bases his "theory of the retrogression" of agriculture on the following control figures of the State Planning Commission and the grain and fodder balance of the Central Statistical Administration for 1928-29. It is worth while giving more attention to these figures. In accordance with them the situation of agriculture in the U.S.S.R. over the past four years is outlined thus:

1. Total Population	143.7	147.0	150.3	153.8
% Growth	100.0	102.3	104.5	107.0
2. Total area sown	97,035.0	102,835.7	105,361.0	105,252.0
in dessiatines.				
% Growth	100.0	105.9	108.3	108.1
3. Area of grain sowings.	81,539	87,336.0	88,975.0	86,673.0*
% Growth	100.0	107.1	109.0	106.4
4. Area under rye and oats.	50,138.0	53,616.0	55,343.0	49,966.0
% Growth	100.0	106.9	110.3	99.6
5. Average harvest of all grains per dessiatine.	55.6 (pds.)	64.6	50.4	52.4
6. Gross production of all grains.	4,512.4	4,747.4	4,464.4	4,535.4
7. Area under technical plants	6,546.1	6,186.2	6,576.0	7,780.0
% Growth.	100.0	94.5	100.4	120.5
8. Cattle (large horned cattle) in millions	76.0	80.9	84.9	86.9
% Growth.	100.0	106.4	111.7	114.3

* For 1928/29 about 1.2 million dessiatines were sown with winter crops which were lost, and the area not resown; in other words the gross area sown in 1928/29 is equal to 87.9 million dessiatines.

BEFORE we draw any conclusions from this table we must make a correction to it, one which for that matter is partially made by the author himself in his note to the table. As is well known, in 1928-29 about five million dessiatines of sowings in the Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus were lost through drought. Of these about four million dessiatines were resown, and 1,200,000 dessiatines remained unsown. In the table the figure for the area sown with grain in 1928-29 takes into account only the area in which the grain came up. In order to obtain the total area sown another 1.2 million dessiatines has to be added to the figure, when we obtain an area sown of not 86.673 million but 87.9 million dessiatines. In accordance with this the percentage in increase of area sown for 1928-29 will be not 106.4, but 107.85. In reality, if the winter crops had not been lost the area under cultivation this year would have been still larger, for it is clear that the necessity of resowing four million dessiatines of winter crops diminished the possibility of extending the spring sowings.

If we take this correction into account, and study the table, we see that the area under spring sowings has grown systematically during the past four years, while the percentage increase is overtaking the percentage growth of the population. In exactly the same way the percentage increase of animals is overtaking the percentage growth of population. And the percentage increase in the area sown with technical plants has made a very big jump forward during the last two years. It is now 58.5 per cent. higher than the pre-war area, whilst in regard to animals (excluding horses) we have already exceeded the pre-war number. All that is true is that the rate of increase in sown area has greatly declined of recent years. Under such conditions can one speak of a decline in agriculture, of its "retrogression"? Of course not.

Nor does the development of fertility testify to any retrogression in agriculture in the U.S.S.R. Of course, the result of the agrarian revolution and the partitioning of the landowners' estates, and afterwards of the civil war and the tremendous loss of horses, was at first to lower the fertility greatly. But as we see from the above table, of recent years, especially on comparison of the figures with the

average yield of 54.9 poods per dessiatine for the five years from 1909 to 1913, the harvest yield is stabilised at an amount close to that of the pre-war period. Of course that amount is extremely low and quite inadequate. But there have been several achievements in the Soviet Republic of recent years which it is true have not yet effected any revolutionary change in the yield, but have established the prerequisites of such a change.

CONCERNING these achievements the resolution of the November Plenum says: "The percentage of winter sowing has increased, from 29.1 per cent in 1926 to 32.1 per cent in 1927. The area cultivated on the multiple course system increased from 3,664,000 hectares in 1925 to 9,429,000 hectares in 1927. The middle and poor peasant farms are growing more corn, and are therefore gaining in economic importance. The socialised section of agriculture is beginning to play a conspicuous role. Agriculture is being better furnished with draught animals and machinery. In 1926-27 an average of 25.6 head of draught animals fell to every 100 hectares, while for 1928-29 this figure will be 27.4. For agricultural machinery the equivalent figures (expressed in monetary values) are 9.90 roubles and 11.94 roubles (1928-29). The value of the agricultural machinery manufactured in 1926-27 was 93 million roubles. In 1928-29 this sum will increase to 190 million roubles (on the pre-war price basis) so that the production of agricultural machinery will reach the figure of 280 per cent. of pre-war."

AMONG the achievements one has to note the following three: first, the Soviet Government has begun the establishment of enormous grain factories, on the Soviet farms. Secondly, a swift increase in collective holdings has set in. Despite the active opposition of the kulaks and the inadequate organisational service of the collective farms being established, the number of collective farms has increased more than two and a half times during the past year. (In the R.S.F.S.R. the percentage of collective farms on May 1st, 1928, was 229.2 per cent. compared with June 1st, 1927.) According to the preliminary estimates of the U.S.S.R. Central Statistical Administration the total of collective farms in the

U.S.S.R. was 32,506 on May 1st, 1928. They included 375,377 families and had a sown area of 1,180,723 dessiatines. (The last two figures do not include Uzbekistan and the Transcaucasus.) It is particularly noteworthy that the harvest yield in these collective farms is already higher than the average yield of land for the whole mass of peasantry, despite the fact that the collective farms are preponderantly unions of the poor peasantry, and despite the fact that their lands are still of poor quality and that the farms are badly equipped. For example, according to the investigations of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in the Urals district, if the average yield of all the peasant farms be represented by the figure 100, the yield of the collective farms has to be represented by 118, whilst in regard to wheat yield it is 141.18. The rye yield is considerably lower than that of the most advanced individual peasant farms, the figure for the latter being 74.3 per cent. more than the average for all farms! The yield of spring wheat is now almost level with the most advanced farms. The third important achievement is the swift development of the contract system for grain, which is not only guaranteeing the State purchase of a certain quantity of the harvest, but is conducing to the increase of sown areas, the introduction of first quality grain to the peasantry, and better methods of working the land, and also new agricultural plants, and which simultaneously is one of the most important forms of assistance to the poor and of squeezing out the kulak sales. By comparison with last year the plan for grain harvest contracts provides for the enormous area of fifteen million hectares. Together with the production already contracted for during the winter campaign, the contracts for the spring sowings of 1928 will in the coming campaign guarantee the planned transfer to the State's disposition of more than one third of the total expected from the planned collection of grain.

Thus we see that the theory of the "retrogression" of agriculture in the U.S.S.R. is the direct product of panic and is a gross distortion of the picture of Soviet economy.

WHAT are the social roots of this theory? Comrade Molotov provided the answer to this question in his report at the Moscow Party active workers' con-

ference on November 30th. After specifying the conditions set up by the Soviet Government for a more resolute restriction of the growth of capitalist elements in the countryside, he said: "Despite the still continuing growth of capitalist elements in the countryside, the circumstances I have mentioned are already in certain instances resulting in a restraint of that development and even at times a reduction in the sowings of the kulak elements. Consequently, with the continuing rise in the level of the poor and middle farms in the villages in some places the growth of the kulak farms is coming to a halt. Taken in conjunction with the Party policy of a more resolute attack on the kulak (15th Party Congress) this fact cannot but result in an intensification of the struggle waged by the kulak elements against the Soviet Government. It is also easy to realise that the howls about the retrogression of agriculture come and come increasingly from this quarter."

In his report at the Leningrad party active workers' conference, comrade Rykov also noted the tendency which in some places has already begun, towards the reduction of the sown areas of the affluent peasants, concomitantly with the swift increase in sowings of the poor and the lower groups of middle peasants. "From these figures" (the Spring questionnaire of the Central Statistical Administration) he said, "it is obvious that the village poor are extending their sown areas, increasing them even in those districts where the total dimensions of the sown areas remain stable or are even declining somewhat. The lower groups of the middle peasants are doing the same. But other groups, beginning with those with two horses in certain areas and three in others, are stabilising or reducing their sown areas."

Thus we see the social roots of the theory of the "retrogression" of Soviet agriculture. Getting the wind up under the influence of a crisis in grain collection, and so losing a true perception of the dynamic of the modern Soviet village, characterised by the tendency of the poor and middle peasant masses to extend their sowings and improve their farms and also by the strengthened tendency of the poor peasants towards collectivisation, the "right" have come to the absurd conclusion that the "direction recently taken has reduced the basic

masses of the middle peasantry to complete inability to advance, to a hopeless prospect." (comrade Frumkin's letter). They have believed the kulaks' wails concerning the "retrogression" of agriculture and have begun to wear the kulaks' spectacles when considering the state of agriculture in the U.S.S.R.

IN correspondence with this, in discussing the immediate prospects, they indicate a disposition of class forces which is in sharp distinction from the Party line. Despite the temporary vacillation of part of the middle peasantry and their temporary subjection to the influence of the kulaks, the Party quite justly places the entire middle and poor peasant masses in opposition to the kulaks, whilst the right deviators throw the higher groups of middle peasantry into the arms of the kulaks, and thence draw the conclusion that in order to obtain grain we must pin all our hopes to this kulak-middle-peasant bloc. In his second letter comrade Frumkin writes:

"According to the preliminary figures for the aggregate estimate of the agricultural tax yield in 1927-28, the higher groups occupy the following position in regard to sown areas:

	<i>% of Total Farms</i>	<i>Area Sown</i>
1. Assessed with incomes of over 600 rs.	3.17	12.34
2. " " " from 500 to 600 rs.	2.71	6.70
3. " " " from 500	6.00	11.69
Total	11.88	30.73

"Here you have the kulak, and the 'semi-kulak,' and the ordinary affluent middle peasant group. . . . The development of their farms particularly those of the upper group, of course, represents all the dangers of the development of capitalist elements; but now we are faced with the great danger of inadequate supply of grain. With their increased harvests in the affluent farms . . . with their increased commodity proportion, these groups provide about 45 per cent. of the total amount of grain marketed, and the kulak farms alone provide about twenty per cent. of the total grain marketed.

"It goes without saying that we must increase the production and the commodity proportion of the basic mass of peasant husband-

ries, but so long as we are experiencing the greatest difficulties owing to the lack of grain, so long as we are badly supplied with raw materials, we ought not to interfere with production in the kulak farms, whilst simultaneously struggling with their methods of serf-exploitation of labour." (In other words, struggling only with their pre-capitalist, and not with their capitalist exploitation.)

COMING face to face with the kulak in the search for grain, comrade Frumkin has consequentially turned his back on the socialist elements of the Soviet countryside: the collective and Soviet farms. In his second letter he says:

"In his letter dated July 15th the writer of these lines objected not to the establishment of the Soviet farms, but to the carrying on of this work 'in shock order.' The expenditure of such enormous resources as are represented by 350 million roubles, . . . in reality 400 to 500 millions, on an experimental business cannot but evoke a certain anxiety.

"The organisation of the collective farms will in future proceed under more healthy conditions, but not along shock lines. . . . One has to take into consideration the fact that in view of the perfectly sound policy of our party to organise collective farms from preponderantly the poor peasants, the collective farms will not stand out from the general mass of all peasant farms by reason of any increased commodity output." (Yet, as we have seen, they do already stand out.)

IN defending himself from his critics, comrade Frumkin declares that in regard to the further prospect he is quite in agreement with the general line of the Party, that his plan has only importance arising out of the present conjuncture, that it is drawn up only for the period during which we shall experience difficulties in grain collection. But as we shall have those difficulties for several years to come it is quite obvious that if the Party listened to the counsels of the "right," if it transferred from the Leninist to the "Frumkinist" line, it would give a still stronger impulse to the development of capitalist at the expense of the socialist elements, and thus would prepare the ground for the restoration of capitalism. Con-

sequently, no matter what benevolent intentions the "right" may have in regard to the future, in fact their plan cannot be called other than capitulation.

It is interesting to compare the position of the "right" on the grain problem with that of the Trotskyists, which found a clear reflection in the illegal article by Smilga which was hand-circulated; "On the anniversary of the platform of the Bolshevik Leninists." If we compare this article by the Trotskyist Smilga with comrade Frumkin's letters we shall be convinced that they have very many points of contact. Smilga also finds that the U.S.S.R. is passing through a "heavy crisis." But while the "rights" see the causes of this crisis in a "retrogression" of agriculture the "super-industrialist" Smilga sees them in the "lag of our industry," and not in the backwardness only, but in the lag: in other words, in a too slow a rate of growth. In the article we have mentioned Smilga writes: "Our general deduction amounts to this, that the U.S.S.R. economy has entered a period of protracted and serious crisis. At the basis of this crisis lie the difficulties of socialist construction in one technically and economically backward country. These difficulties have their root first and foremost in the lag of our industry behind the demands made of it by the national economy as a whole. . . . The more our industry develops the more it will come up against the growing opposition of the village bourgeoisie (agrarian capitalism) the significance and power of which is growing more swiftly in the countryside than the position of socialism. . . . The decision of the July Plenum that the basic cause of our difficulties lies in the backwardness of agriculture turns the actual position of things upside down. Never before has the Plenum formulated the programme of the agrarianisation of the country with such apparent frankness."

After charging the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., which despite all the difficulties is unswervingly holding its course for industrialisation, with the insane accusation that it has "formulated a programme of agrarianisation," Smilga further provides his view of the disposition of class forces in the villages,* And the picture he draws coincides with that drawn by the "right" deviators. He also sees no prospects of the growth

and the socialist re-education of the central figure of the countryside, the middle peasant; he, like the "right", also lumps together the kulaks and the more advanced but non-exploiting middle-peasants. And he also talks of the "growth of the kulak and the affluent section of the countryside," which hold in their hands a good half of the commodity grain.

Of course he differs from the right deviators in his deductions. While the latter proposed to make concessions to the kulaks, the Trotskyist Smilga proposes to resort to the measures of war communism, in order to frighten the affluent peasantry. His basic slogans amount to (a) a compulsory grain loan of 150 million poods, distributed among the million and half of large farms; (b) the freeing of a further ten per cent. of the weakest holdings from the agricultural tax (this will mean the release of 45 per cent. altogether from the tax). The agricultural tax is to be reduced by this sum. (c) A union of peasant poor is to be organised; (d) the tasks of the union of poor peasants at the present moment amount essentially to ensuring the success of the grain loan, the assistance of the Soviet authorities in grain collections, the ensurance of cheap grain to the poor and so on.

In a word, in the eleventh year of the existence of the Soviet power the Trotskyists propose to return to the methods of war communism as applied in 1919. But this "left" proposal arises from a purely Menshevik distrust of the Leninist plan of attracting the basic masses of the peasantry into socialist economy. Consequently it is not surprising that in regard to collective farms and Soviet farms the "left" Smilga entirely shares comrade Frumkin's views. On this subject he writes literally the same in his article as Frumkin writes in his letters: "We are in favour of an extensive establishment of collective and Soviet farms, but we are against

* That the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. has "formulated a programme of agrarianisation" is evident from the following passage of the resolution of the November Plenum: "This revolutionising influence on agriculture can only be exercised by the proletariat when industry develops rapidly and when the leading and reorganising influence of socialised industry is further strengthened. In this regard heavy industry and the production of the means of production are the key to the socialist transformation of our whole national economy, including agriculture."

these fulcrums of socialism in agriculture being established by shock tactics. A definite plan for their establishment ought to be drawn up, one which would take into account all the class, economic, and financial side of this construction."

Thus, despite their "left" phrases, the Trotskyists do not believe in socialist construction in the village (just as they do not believe for that matter in the possibility of building socialism in the backward Soviet Republic at all). Apart from their "left" phraseology, they are differentiated from the openly opportunist "right" deviators by the fact that they are outside the Party and openly fight against it.

THE C.C. November Plenum did not allow itself to be carried away by the panicky mood of the right deviators. More than that. It recognised the "right" deviation as being at the present time the greatest danger inasmuch as it is still inadequately unmasked in the Party. Starting from a sound, realist estimate of the causes of the difficulties in grain collection, from the fact that they arise out of an excessive lag in the rate of agricultural development behind the rate of development of industry, and standing resolutely on the position which the party formulated at its Fifteenth Congress, the November Plenum made a great step forward by indicating a number of practical measures for putting the decisions of the Fifteenth Congress into force. All these measures are based on the following thesis, formulated in the November Plenum resolution. "The strict pursuance of the course towards industrialisation, by means of ensuring increased investments in fixed capital as provided for in the decisions of the Government, in the course of the present year, renders it necessary at the same time to take every measure for attracting agriculture in general, and the production of grain and bread corn in particular, by means of promoting the productive forces of the village and at the same time placing severer restrictions on the exploiting capitalist elements, by organising Soviet farms, by lending general support to the collective forms of agriculture (collective farms, communes, artels, etc.), and by increasing the economic incentive of the masses of poor and middle peasantry."

Concomitantly with this general direction the November Plenum stated that "the tension in the food and raw material balance of the country makes the extension of the cultivated area by seven per cent. and the increase of production per land unit by three per cent. in 1929, one of the most important and urgent tasks of our economic plan."

IN order to achieve these ends the Plenum drew up a number of measures for the strengthening of the economic incentive of the poor and middle masses of peasantry on the one hand, on the other to ensure the further growth of production co-operatives and the collectivisation of agriculture, whilst simultaneously strengthening the attack on the kulak.

On the latter issue, comrade Rykov in his report at the Leningrad active workers' conference stated that "one of the immediate practical measures directed to the defence of the interests of the poor sections of the peasantry is the necessity of passing a law applying the Labour Code to the kulak farms."

In order to strengthen the economic incentive among the poor and middle peasantry the Plenum proposed the following measures: (1) the strict application of revolutionary legality, "ensuring to the individual producer the possibility of a certain economic credit." (2) While retaining the present principles of the agricultural tax, to rearrange it so that it does not conduce to the disintegration of economy, so that in its assessment not only shall the total sum of receipts of the holding be taken into account, but also the number of mouths to feed, so that the agricultural tax shall be lightened for the middle group of peasantry, so that the co-called individual assessment (over and beyond the single agricultural tax) shall be applied "only on the exact basis of the law and only in regard to the richest section of the kulak farms and even so not to more than three per cent. of all holdings."

This last decision is for that matter no new one. The introduction of a special individual assessment on the richer kulaks following on the release of the poor peasants from taxation (35 per cent. of all holdings) and the restriction of this individual assessment to three per

cent. of all holdings was introduced last April and was given legal fixation in a government decree. The November Plenum considered it necessary to recall this restriction since in practice this law had been unjustly applied to a certain extent, and had so caused dissatisfaction among the middle peasantry. Altogether there are reckoned to be about five per cent kulak out of the total holdings in the U.S.S.R., and the law restricts the individual assessment to three per cent. on the ground that the basis on which the individual assessment is made are inadequately definite, and that the local Soviet machinery is still insufficiently developed to ensure that the application of this law should not affect the middle peasant farms. Experience has shown that among the various bases taken for individual assessment have been such as the following: the production of valuable agricultural plants, a large number of youths in the family, the presence of cattle belonging to relatives, and so on. It is clear that thus distorted, the law for individual assessment hits not only the kulak but also the non-exploiting advanced farm, whilst the Soviet Government has as its object the all-round support of any rise in agricultural culture. Consequently at the present time the Soviet Government does not consider it possible to extend the application of the law, even although the percentage of kulak farms is considerably greater.

WHILST planning a number of measures for stimulating the growth of individual peasant farming, which still embraces the enormous majority of the peasants, the November Plenum at the same time emphasised that in the task of developing the collective forms of agriculture only the first steps have so far been taken, and that in consequence that development has to be assisted with extraordinary energy and along shock lines. "At the same time the Plenum points out that in spite of the initial successes achieved in the organisation of Soviet farms and collective undertakings, our achievements in this direction are obviously still insufficient. Not only must new Soviet farms be established in larger numbers and the old ones improved, but much effort should be bestowed on the continued numerical and qualitative advance of the collective undertakings. The Plenum

of the C.C. approves the measures provided by the control figures for the increased support of the social section of agricultural undertakings."

In complete agreement with the movement for the enhanced development of agriculture proposed at the November Plenum, the recently concluded session of the Central Committee of the U.S.S.R. had on its agenda the consideration of the decree passed by the Soviet of People's Commissars dealing with measures for increasing the harvest yield: a decree which sets all the Soviet organisations working in the countryside the task of raising crop yield by a minimum of thirty to thirty-five per cent. by the end of five years. This decree has as its basis the work of the People's Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, which was carried out thus: (1) 222 land societies, 944 individual farms with harvest above the average, and 77 collective farms were investigated in the area under consideration; (2) about two hundred questionnaires were sent to distinguished professors, directors of experimental stations, and the most outstanding practical agronomists with the request to indicate what in their opinion were the economic and organisational technical measures which must necessarily be undertaken in order to speed up the rate of intensive increase of crop yield; (3) the activities of Soviet organisations, chiefly land organisations, were subjected to examination in the field of measures directed to the raising of crop yield; (4) an extensive discussion was started in a number of scientific institutions; (5) competitions for the best harvest were organised through the agency of the peasants' newspapers; (6) collation was made of the achievements of the experimental stations in the application of various forms of simple agricultural measures for the raising of the crop yield. As the result of this general, scientifically organised investigation the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection came to the conclusion that the achievement of a rise in the crop yield by thirty to thirty-five per cent. by the end of five years is quite a realist task. According to estimates the universal sorting and cleaning of seed grain will give a minimum rise of ten per cent. in the harvest over the next two or three years; the universal substitution of pure sorts of seed for the unfertile

peasants' seed in all other branches of agriculture will give a supplementary rise in yield of twenty per cent. The organisation of the struggle against injurious pests, which in the U.S.S.R. destroy a minimum of one milliard poods of grain, will at the very least cut down this loss by one-fourth at the end of the five years: the simplest of measures, based on the continually increasing production of agricultural machinery, will in their turn give an increase of not less than 22 per cent. in the yield by the end of the period; the introduction of crop rotation, the application of mineral manures, and improved methods of working the land can give a minimum rise in yield of six to seven per cent. The rest has to be achieved by the collective and Soviet farms, which under conditions of development on the scale indicated by the decisions of the Party and the Government, can give a rise of crop yield which will represent an increase of approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. over the total sown area.

THE characteristic feature of this decree, which if it is realised in practice promises to effect an increase in the quantity of marketed grain by more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ times by the end of the five years period* is that it is based on measures completely accessible to the poor and middle peasant farms. And in this regard it is profoundly different in principle from the agricultural reforms which are now being planned or carried out in capitalist countries. Britain, for instance, is at the present time also drawing up a program for extensive agronomic reforms in India, and an Anglophile government is doing the same for Egypt. But agronomic reforms drawn up by the Soviet Government have as their object the improvement of the state of farms belonging to the great masses of peasantry, simultaneously directing the

* 35 per cent. addition to the 1928/29 harvest would comprise 1,586.4 million poods of grain. If the peasant reserves also be included in the presumed commodity grain for 1928/29 the latter will comprise 1,045.3 million poods, and in that case an addition of 1,586 millions would increase the commodity fund by $2\frac{1}{2}$ times. But if the peasant reserves be excluded from the grain fund and only the planned fund be reckoned as commodity grain for the supply of the town population, for visible reserves and for export, it will comprise 469 million poods, and the addition arising from increased yield will increase the amount of commodity grain by $4\frac{1}{2}$

development towards collectivisation; owing to which these reforms come into conflict in their very inception with the desperate opposition of the kulak, capitalist elements in the countryside; whereas the agrarian reforms proposed by the British in India are pursuing the contrary aim: the transformation of the feudal into capitalist estates and the consolidation of the kulaks at the expense of the ruin of millions of peasants and their relegation to famine. The agricultural reforms planned by the Soviet Government have as their object the industrialisation of the countryside and the elimination of the gulf between town and village which from time immemorial has been the cause of what has been called "village idiocy," whereas the agrarian reforms planned by Britain in India and by the Anglophile government in Egypt have as their aim the perpetuation of the situation of these countries as colonial raw material bases for British imperialism.

THE task of industrialising the countryside and of gradually reconstructing peasant husbandry on the basis of large-scale collective husbandry is undoubtedly a task of great difficulty. It demands the intense application of the energy of the entire Party, of the entire proletariat, of the entire poor and middle peasant active elements and of the entire Soviet organisation. But the Bolsheviki have already shown that they know how to clear the most difficult of barriers. When the slogan "Learn to trade" was raised, it also at first appeared to be extraordinarily difficult. None the less, in the work of squeezing out private commodity turnover by the aid of the co-operatives, the Soviet Government has already achieved enormous results. In this task the most difficult part is now behind us. And now, setting itself a new militant task; the productive co-operation of the village and the technical-agronomical reconstruction of agriculture, in association with its gradual collectivisation, the Soviet Government will need to overcome still greater difficulties, arising out of the peasant routine and out of the peasant individualism. But one can be assured that this barrier also will be surmounted by the Party, which with Bolshevik resolution will cleanse itself of all oppor-

Tendencies in the British Party

By R. Page Arnot

THE closeness of the war danger, the nearing clash of British and American imperialism, the formation of a new Triple Entente of Paris, London and Tokyo, all signs of the fearfully rapid rate of growth of capitalist contradiction in this new period; the hunt for markets, the process of rationalisation, the growth of huge reserves of unemployed; the intensified fight against the world revolution, either in the form of the U.S.S.R., of colonial revolt (especially the great awakening strikes in India) and proletarian struggle at home (resistance to increased exploitation); the move to industrial peace, the attempted transformation of the trade unions into peace and war organs of the bourgeoisie, linked up with the State and the employers' organisations or both; all these things are at the present time brought to a focus in Great Britain.

§

Rationalisation in Britain, hampered by the peculiar historical conditions of the growth of industry, but stimulated by the enormous propaganda of Conservative, Liberal and Labour Parties, by the legislation and administration of the bourgeois States and by the banks, is proceeding chiefly along the line of increased exploitation, lower wages, longer hours and more unemployed. This means that the problem of problems for the rationalisers is to break the working-class resistance; and since the core of that resistance is the Communist Party (together with the Minority Movement and other allied bodies), the Government, the employers, the trade union officials and the Labour Party chiefs are concentrating upon it the whole fury of their attack, with the aim of isolating it from the working class. This is the situation in which the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party takes place.

§

The Labour Party in the months since the

February Plenum has adopted a new programme compact of rationalisation and class harmony, has tightened up still further its disciplinary rules so as to exclude all militant elements, made full preparations for coalition with the Liberals, signalled its complete solidarity (beyond even that traditionally shown by His Majesty's Opposition) with the Baldwin Government on questions of foreign policy (MacDonald's visit to Paris to reassure Poincaré) and of India (the Simon Commission); while at the same time the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, acting in concert with the Labour Party, has followed up the part it played in imperialist policy a year or more ago, in its breach with the Soviet trade unions (war preparations) with a new endeavour to bring India into the orbit of "European trade unionism," and so not to bridge but to widen the isolation of the revolutionary proletariat of Britain from the toiling masses of India. The trade union bureaucracy which betrayed the working class in the General Strike has now, within a twelve-month, proved its usefulness as part of the bourgeois apparatus by its attitude to war with the U.S.S.R., its attempt to cripple the Indian trade union movement and its propaganda of industrial peace.

§

Thus, on the one hand, the conditions are objectively revolutionary and must more and more cause a leftward mood of the masses, already shown by a series of events; while, on the other hand, an organisation of bourgeois State, of trusts, and trade union bureaucracy completer by far than anything ever experienced or projected, thrusts down and stifles the struggle of the proletariat, isolates it from its Indian and colonial brothers and strives to annihilate the natural leader of the struggle, the Communist Party. The task of the Communist Party is generally to help to develop the subjective revolutionary conditions corresponding with the realities of the situation,

to break down the barriers that clamp down the revolutionary movement, and, above all, to defeat the attack specifically directed against itself by the bourgeoisie, of which the trade union bureaucracy, with its weapon of expulsion and suppression, is the leading column.

§

WEAKNESS OF THE PARTY—AND ERRORS

Meeting within a few months of the end of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, the Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain has a double function; in the light of these collective examinations and decisions to solve the difficulties of its main task, and also to find why the membership of the Party has been dropping for so long, why the circulation of the paper has fallen and why its influence is on the decline. As is rightly noted by comrade Rust,* these latter difficulties are only obscured "by tracing the weakness to organisational shortcomings, by attributing the reduced membership solely to employers' victimisation, and by ascribing the reduced circulation of the Party press to the increasing poverty of the workers." When full allowance is made for these things his conclusion remains correct that "the basic causes of the unsatisfactory position of the Party are the political errors of the Party itself."

§

To correct the political errors of the Party requires the applying of self-criticism by every organ and member of the Party. For the responsibility for these errors, which the writer fully shares, has been mainly a joint one. This self-criticism, sadly to seek hitherto, has now for the first time found an opportunity of expression in the Party discussion (the first full discussion ever held in the Party) preceding the Congress. But just because it is the first discussion it has been at any rate in its earlier weeks, illuminating rather than

useful; that is to say, it has served to throw a light on the "ideological and political narrowness of outlook" stigmatised by the Sixth Congress rather than to find and destroy the errors of the past.

§

For the Party controversy of this winter has its roots in the inner Party events of last spring. Seeds were then sown which are now sprouting as errors of policy or tendencies thereto: to recount those events will serve to clarify the present discussion, as well as being the indispensable preliminary to any effective self-criticism. We must know our mistakes before we can get rid of them.

§

The discussion of the British Question at the Plenum of the E.C.C.I. had been preceded by a single Executive discussion in the C.P.G.B. whereat (without any broad Party discussion) a majority thesis, called the January Thesis, was prepared, justifying a retention of the old line. After the February Plenum decision had reached England the sharpness of the turn in policy was concealed by a series of happenings: the editorial of "Workers' Life," welcoming the Plenum resolution as a continuation of the old line; the decision not to open up a controversy in "Workers' Life," but to confine it to the monthly "Communist" (this at a moment when the bourgeois and social-democratic press was *daily* discussing the Plenum resolution and giving its own interpretation thereof); the complete silence for a crucial week of "Workers' Life" in face of the virulent attack on the C.I.; the carrying through the Scottish District Party Conference by the Political Bureau representative of a resolution accepting *both* the January Thesis *and* the February Plenum decision (*i.e.*, accepting both the old line and the new—the very acme of confusionism); and finally, the conduct of the necessary discussion in such a way (as evinced by the diversity of views later expressed in the Comintern delegation and in the present belated full discussion) that the working class generally, and perhaps a very large section of

* See article in this number

our Party, eventually failed to understand the full meaning of the change. For instead of every opposing or doubtful point of view being brought out with the utmost clarity and sharpness (you must apply the poultice before you can hope to lance the gumboil), instead of the members of the Party arguing with one another fiercely enough to sharpen their wits for subsequent arguments against their mates in the workshop, the discussion took the very restricted and formal shape of "enlightenment" conferences.

§

The sharpness of the turn thus concealed, and the Party members left unenlightened by the pseudo-discussion, it is not surprising that confusion was bred in our ranks. Amid the confusion two tendencies showed themselves, one appearing straightway in practical questions of carrying out the new policy, while the other was revealed more as proposals, "ways out of the difficulties."

§

THE RELUCTANCE TENDENCY

The first tendency arising in an atmosphere of incomplete comprehension of the essential force of the Plenum resolution was shown in a reluctance to apply the new line. Linlithgow and Holborn parliamentary bye-elections were cases in point. In the first case a Communist candidate against the Labour Party candidate was first announced, and later, after a fusillade of abuse from the social-democrats, withdrawn; in the second, the voting support given by the Party to an extremely reactionary Labour candidate accorded ill with the final Linlithgow tactics of not voting at all. It may be that the circumstances in each case made it hard for the Party to do otherwise. But undoubtedly the effect on the workers was that of a wavering Party attitude, just at the moment when it was particularly needful to have the clearest definition of our line. When in the summer bye-election at Aberdeen we were able to put up a Communist candidate, and to gain over two thousand votes, and to come out as third party on the list above the Liberals, the splendid results were marred by the Party manifesto, the equivocal terms of

which failed on some most important point to carry out the new line or to make it clear to the working class. Similarly, a month or two earlier, when the South Wales Miners' Federation Conference were induced to pass a resolution (never acted upon) supporting Communist Party affiliation to the Labour Party, this "success" was accompanied, so it was reported, by arguments from left-wingers (not repudiated by Party members present) to the effect that if the Communist Party affiliation were accepted the new policy would not be insisted upon; by which arguments, if accepted by the miners, the supposed "victory" for the Communist Party became actually a serious setback for the new policy.

§

But these and other similar happenings, though indicative of a continuing reluctance to apply the new line, were of small account compared to the Hicks-Maxton episode of the early summer, wherein as it developed it began to appear that the essential feature of the new line, the independent leadership of the Communist Party as the sole effective challenge to the Mondist bureaucracy, was in danger of being submerged. The full implication of this, however, did not appear till later.

§

THE HICKS-MAXTON PRONUNCIAMENTO

Here we approach the most difficult question of the Party's policy during the months that follow the Plenum. In a general situation of crucial importance for the future development of the struggle in Britain, the pivotal point of the new line was to be found, not so much in electoral policy as in the trade union conflict. Mondist capitulation and absorption or revolutionary struggle—this was the issue. Month after month the Communist Party and the Minority Movement, followed amongst the well-known figures by Cook alone, cut and hacked at the network of lies, until in the spring, in spite of the terrible defeats of 1926-27, there were already definite signs of an awakening to their peril amongst the workers. A leftward move began to be felt, whereupon

the "left" I.L.P., the "left" of the General Council, the Maxtons and the Hicks, sensing the feeling, began to move towards opposition to the Mondist drive. Presently a Manifesto signed by Cook and Maxton was issued. Catholic Wheatley gave his support, the "Times" regarded it a serious portent that the Chairman of the I.L.P. should join himself to Cook, and the meetings and conferences announced attracted large masses of workers. During the course of the summer there took place what was to be expected. Maxton proved to be a cock that would not fight. The announced fireworks fizzled out like the dampest of squibs; and the workers who had been stirred by the move subsided, discouraged and disillusioned. Had there been only a question of causing a flutter in the doves, and at the same time of demonstrating once more the qualities of the "left," it would be an entirely satisfactory issue. The workers, disillusioned with the I.L.P., would turn to the Communist Party. But have they? And was this the only point at issue,

§

Here it is only possible to formulate some of the questions to which an answer must be found at the Party Congress. Clearly the intervention of Maxton and Co. was comparable to the Vienna Union in 1921, to the Two-and-a-half International. Nevertheless, it cannot be settled simply by establishing that comparison. Here, because the question is crucial, we are bound to ask :

- (a) What is the general Communist line to "Left" social-democrats, to alliances, etc.?
- (b) Under the circumstances, what was the difference between the necessary attitude towards Hicks-Maxton in 1925-26 and Hicks-Maxton in 1928?
- (c) Was the Party line towards the Hicks-Maxton episode correct?
- (d) If correct at the beginning, was the correct line maintained?
- (e) On what conditions should we have them as allies, and were those conditions kept?
- (f) Who benefited most in the end, the Party or the I.L.P.?

To the writer it seems that we must answer that while the Hicks-Maxton episode had its surface inconveniences for the Labour Party chiefs, its deeper significance was to hold up the development of the issues and to hide the leadership of the Communist Party. Therefore we should have attacked it fiercely and unceasingly from the first moment it presented a surface to attack, we should have told the workers that after the General Strike betrayal—breach or no breach in the surface of the bureaucratic ranks—it was now on the Communist Party alone that they must rely to carry on the working-class struggle against the Labour Party right, left and centre; and that if Maxton and Company meant anything they must take their stand on one side or other. But what the Party did, at any rate for a period, was in effect to transfer to the left social-democrats the critical support previously extended to MacDonald, and by this critical support helped to provide the pseudo-lefts with a programme and a policy. It was perhaps more the comic-opera futility of Maxton than the policy of the Party which prevented the effective growth of a third party. Even as it was, the members of the old governing class families who are now kindly helping to lead the Labour Party, were able to view the whole business as advantageous to themselves, as, for example, in Mr. Oswald Mosley's shameless comment :

"So far from losing elections, different appeals to different sections helped to win them. MacDonald made an appeal to one section of the community with incomparable skill, and Maxton and Cook appealed to the working class as no one else could."

This episode may teach us more exactly what is meant by the saying that the left social-democrats are the most dangerous enemies of the working class.

§

COMMUNISM AND COOKISM

Heretofore one has spoken of Hicks-Maxton and not of the Cook-Hicks-Maxton movement in order to avoid confusion and also because the difference in this consisted essentially in the advent of Maxton and Hicks. But without

Cook it is doubtful if anything would have taken place; and in any case the relation between Cook and the Communist Party remains as a question continuing before, during and after the Hicks-Maxton episode. A belief common in the Labour movement is that there exists an ideological and organisational chain leading step by step from the Communist Party to Cook, from Cook to Maxton, from Maxton to Hicks and Brockway, from Hicks and Brockway to the old "left" of the General Council and the N.A.C. of the I.L.P. And certainly, from his speeches it is clear that Cook likes to feel that he is a centre link in a chain which exists to both sides of him.

But for the purpose of examining the situation it is best to deal simply with the relations of Cook and the C.P.G.B. Until these are cleared up, and cleared up in the minds of every Party member, and in the widest circles of the working class, not only the British working class, but the international working class, there will be continual difficulties arising. Therefore, it is a duty of the Tenth Party Congress to clear this matter up. It is not enough to say that Cook is to be classed as a left social-democrat; equally not enough to leave relations unexamined. For it is precisely the good points in Cook's record, the extent to which at times he has fought wonderfully well, as well as the mistakes, retreats and renegations of which he has shown himself capable that made the essence of this problem. Therefore, the questions must be asked:

- (a) What is the fundamental relation between the Communist Party and A. J. Cook?
- (b) Has the Party maintained a continuous criticism of Cook?
- (c) Have we criticised him on the wider grounds of his political outlook as well as on day-to-day questions?

These questions are necessary because of the danger that the section of the working class which gives ear to Cook but is deaf as yet to the voice of the Party may never grow out of their present stage. Of course, the Party has criticised Cook when he adopted a right-wing policy or when he went back on his word. But without *continued* explanation to the masses

of where Cook stands (be the criticism as temperate as you please, if the occasion allows it—provided it is just as sharp when need be) confusion may be built up in the minds of sincere workers that Communism and Cookism, if not one and the same, are just as good as one another; and that the leadership of Cook is an alternative to that of the Communist Party. Has he not called himself a disciple of Lenin? Here we have fertile soil for confusion, especially if the Party, aware of the hold of Cook on the masses and with a strong reluctance to believe in our strength, endeavours, above all, not to break with Cook. Not that it should set itself to break with Cook, which would be just the opposite fault, whereas the *main* attention should be devoted to developing our own line of independent leadership, independent, too, of any calculations as to what Cook will or will not do—which has indeed to be considered, but only afterwards.

What actually happened in this case? There was little enough criticism of Cook during the summer; then when he withdrew his signature to the Llandudno protest document against the expelling of Communists and for a worthless guarantee induced the other leftists on the Miners' Executive to withdraw also, he was immediately criticised in an open letter from the Party, which as it had not been preceded by minor important criticism could not fully rise to the height and sharpness of criticism necessary, without giving the impression of a greater breach than had actually occurred. Thus, while the tone of our criticism was a little bit damped down by the previous absence of any critical action whatsoever, Cook was able the next week to put forward a clever, but, to the minds of many readers, a disingenuous reply (he avoided the main issue of Llandudno altogether). The "Workers' Life," by no means taken in by this, put forward the issue once more in its accompanying editorial. But thereafter in the succeeding weeks the criticism of Cook again disappeared from the Party press. It was almost as if it had been forgotten that "left leaders" genuinely working with us must, nevertheless, be criticised continuously, and not only when they show a tendency to go over to the right-wing.

If these questions, in what is perhaps the most difficult and complicated question of our Party policy, are answered in one way, namely, that we leaned too much upon Cook, that we fostered Hicks-Maxton as a means to break an isolation, then this would mean that the reluctance-tendency already described was becoming something more, was failing to apply the new line just at the point where it was most needed. But even without this it is clear that the reluctance-tendency, if prolonged, would become a tendency to opportunism.

§

THE BREAKNECK TENDENCY

Meantime it is necessary to consider the second tendency which ran up its colours on entering the sea of Executive discussions. This tendency, while not differing appreciably from the already described reluctance-tendency on practical day-to-day questions, insisted that the Communist International Executive decision at the Ninth Plenum was wrong, or at any rate imperfect, in that it did not go far enough. Thus the arena of criticism was transferred from the concrete daily tasks of the Party set forth in the new policy to necessarily abstract "left" criticism of the new policy itself. This tendency displayed itself over the questions of Affiliation, Political Levy, Left-wing and Abstentionism.

§

THE AFFILIATION ISSUE

The February Plenum resolution, clause 8, ran as follows :

"It is inexpedient as yet to abandon the slogan of affiliation to the Labour Party, as the latter has not yet definitely and completely transformed into a social-democratic party in organisational structure. The fight for affiliation, however, must be converted into an *offensive fight* against the treacherous leadership of the Labour Party."

Instead of criticising the Party for OUR conspicuous failure to convert the fight for affiliation into an offensive fight (hardly any tangible sign of the carrying out of this clause appears in the Party publications), the second tendency criticised the International for not

having dropped affiliation straightaway. The International, it now appeared, was the hesitating factor, was the faithful supporter of the Labour Party as compared with its "Breakneck" critics; THEY were willing to drop it like a hot brick. Under these circumstances, with a section of the Party unconvinced of the correctness of the new line and the vast masses of the working class completely without an understanding of the new line, this seemingly contrary tendency was only too effective in preventing the Party members from carrying through the policy of the Ninth Plenum on this point.

§

THE POLITICAL LEVY

Clause 9 of the February Plenum Resolution runs :

"An energetic campaign must be organised in the local trade union branches for local control of the expenditure of the political levy, in order that it may be possible to finance any candidates the rank and file of the branch may approve."

and the implication was clear that the Party members must pay the political levy. To this it was contended by the "Breakneck" tendency, that the International was wrong, in thus desiring to "support" the Labour Party; and it was said that the workers would not understand a tactic which combined a fight on two fronts (against Baldwin and against MacDonald) with a fight for the right of the unions to levy their members and so build up a political fund for the Labour Party. It is perhaps unnecessary to quote Lenin's advice in Left-Wing "Communism" beginning: "Do not ascribe to the masses your own prejudices . . . etc." Nevertheless it may be necessary to recall here why the E.C.C.I. took this decision, a decision based not only on the present situation, but on the historic struggles of the working class in England.

§

The political levy grew as a traditional right of the trade unions as working class organisations to finance the working class candidates for Parliament and to take part in politics. The actual candidates selected might

be Liberals or right-wing Labour. This is for the moment of lesser importance compared to the principle (anti-bourgeois democratic) of class representation. This levy was compulsory like every other trade union levy; and any member who did not pay it was liable to run out of the union just as much as one who refused to pay a strike levy. Against this political levy, the bourgeoisie have carried on an unceasing struggle by every device in their power, getting more and more keen as the class-consciousness grew in the movement, beginning some twenty years ago with legal judgments, especially the famous Osborn Judgment of 1911, and passing into the crippling Trade Union Act of 1913, by which a serious breach was made in working class traditional rights in this matter (severe restrictions were placed both on the use of union funds for political purposes and on the method of collecting these funds, individuals being allowed to claim to be exempt or, as the saying is, "to contract out"); and then finally in 1927, by the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act, whereby the unions were permitted only to call for a voluntary levy, and all individuals had to claim to be liable to this tax, had, as it were, "to contract in." Against this Act of 1927, against the Act of 1913, against every legal judgment the working class and every working-class organisation must assert the full right of the working-class organisations to levy their members for political purposes, and must never cease the struggle to smash the bourgeois tyranny, which would deprive the working class of self-expression.

§

At the same time it is true that the political levy, though applicable to any political purpose or party, and actually used in the past to finance non-Labour Party candidates (*e.g.*, Miners' Federation candidates before that body joined the Labour Party 20 years ago), has in the main been devoted to support the Labour Party—from which it follows clearly that while we struggle firmly against the attempt of the bourgeoisie to deprive the working-class organisations of the right to the political levy, we equally struggle against the application of those funds to support the Labour Party, for it is a political embezzlement and nothing less

that funds raised in the teeth of bourgeois opposition for working-class representatives should be devoted instead to misrepresentation of the working class by a third capitalist party. But this is precisely the premise on which our general line is based: "that the C.P. has to contend not with one camp of enemies, but with two camps" (it is to be noted that in the text of the Plenum resolution this sentence stands in the closest and most consequent conclusion with the political levy clause).

Again it will be understood that misunderstanding and mistrust of the political line of the Communist International meant an inability, amongst the adherents of mistrust, to carry through in the trade union branches the "energetic campaign" which it had been stipulated should be organised. Again, the two tendencies, the combination of inertia and of seeming "independence" availed to hamper our Party's fight throughout the spring and summer.

§

THE LEFT WING

The attitude, or rather the attitudes, of the Breakneck tendency towards the Left-Wing Question varied so much as to make it difficult to track down the course of their criticism.* Since, however, in one form or another it was brought forward by the adherents of this tendency, it may best be treated here—but as a danger of the Hicks-Maxton and Cook kind. The National Left-Wing Movement (originating as a resistance to the "Liverpool decisions" of the Labour Party 1925 Conference) remained as a bridge to the Communist Party, consisting of a dozen or

* The Breakneck tendency first took up the line that the National Left-Wing Movement should be developed into a new "Socialist" Labour Party. This, a definite right deviation (the creation of a third party, though expressly reprobated in the discussion in the Ninth Plenum), was insistently put forward by comrade Murphy during the first half of 1928 till it was decisively defeated in the British delegation at the Sixth Congress. Thereafter by the same comrades it was urged on the contrary that the National Left-Wing Movement should be done away with and its place taken by Workers' Electoral Committees. Now the Breakneck tendency certainly strove for a change; but the fact that one day they wanted a change to the east and the next day a change to the west, rather robs their case of its value for either change. By their own chopping and changing about they made confusion just where clear definition was most required.

more disaffiliated parties plus left-wing groups within local Labour Parties. This in itself has never been a danger, and need never be, given an active Party fraction therein, *if only the Party line is correct*. The danger lies in allowing the growth of a third party idea (again part of the reluctance tendency!), in making it possible for militant workers, fed-up with the Labour Party, to think that there is a "true socialist" or "militant class-conscious standpoint" intermediate between the Labour Party and the Communist Party, in which half-way house they may find an abiding place. The danger of this emerges in certain formulations of the pre-Plenum "National Left-Wing Programme" (a programme is the garment of a party), and in a host of smaller incidents, but most of all whenever this conception is allowed to appear unchallenged in the columns of the "Sunday Worker." The remedy, of course, is not the scrapping of the Left-Wing Movement, but a clearer definition of its purpose. But the sort of notion that now and again appears uncontroverted in the "Sunday Worker" that there is a possibility for some "true socialism" of the 1904 brand to exist a quarter of a century later, standing between developed Communism and developed social-democracy or social-imperialism is historically nonsensical and of about as much value as romances relating to the discovery in the Gran Chaco of a living ichthyosaurus.

There remains the "Abstentionism" discussion. About this all that needs to be said is that on the barren question of abstention from voting a real debating society atmosphere was generated. Not concrete difficulties of the new line, but new "principles" of Abstentionism and Non-Abstentionism were discussed and found their respective champions. While the sides taken in the academic controversy did not coincide with the groupings on the other subjects, the new fact that such a controversy could take place in the form it did must be taken as part of the evidence of a sectarian tendency in the Party.

Thus when the belated Party discussion began preliminary to the Congress, it had already behind it a pseudo-discussion and the emergence during these eight months of two tendencies: the tendency of which comrade Murphy now emerged as chief representative, which had latterly concentrated on the drop-

ping of the political levy was able to make this proposal the main subject of discussion. It was eagerly taken up by its opponents, amongst whom comrade J. R. Campbell was most to the fore. And forthwith all the tremendously difficult tasks, needing our utmost thought and discussion, were forgotten while all, or nearly all, joined in on one side or another in discussing whether or not to pay the political levy, and similar supposed "logical" deductions from the new line of the Party. I mention "logical" in inverted commas because this word has been much to the fore in the discussion; and in general anyone, after a perusal of several numbers of "Workers' Life" containing the discussion, would be bound to conclude that the Party membership was eaten up by formal logic. Dialectical treatment was absent.

§

But neither the events of the spring, the lack of discussion, the failure to carry through the new line, the international situation, the colonial situation, the war danger, the Hicks-Maxton danger, the question of Cook, the fight against the grafting of the trade unions on to the bourgeois State machine and on to the trusts, the fight for the masses by the united front from below, the work in factories, the position of the working class and the approaching struggles, received more than a passing mention. Each subject, as the discussion proceeded, was taken in discussion. On the other hand, all the ghosts of infantile leftism that had been thought to have been buried eight years ago, now began to "squeak and gibber" in the open columns of "Workers' Life."

§

Thus the first impression that would be derived from the controversy would be that it was a mistake to open the columns of "Workers' Life" only in order to expose our nakedness, and that a wide discussion was a luxury in which only parties richer in experience than the C.P.G.B. could indulge with safety. But such a view would be short-sighted. It is precisely our inexperience of discussions which made it difficult for our first Party discussion to be effective as a preparation for the Congress, and the conclusion is not

that we were too soon, but rather too late in indulging in this "luxury."

§

Why has there been this recrudescence of infantile leftism? ("Parliamentarism breeds corruption," etc.). Whence come the ghosts? This question I believe must be split into three:

- (i) What caused the particular form taken by the leftist ideas?
- (ii) Was healthy discontent canalised into leftist channels?
- (iii) What are the real roots of the Break-neck tendency?

§

ANIMATED CORPSES OF LEFTISM

The clue to the sudden outburst of leftism in these curious phenomenal shapes (historically outworn) is to be found in the history of the British Party. *This is the first full discussion in the British Party.* That is to say, when the Party was formed amid discussions eight years and more ago, the various amalgamating sects with a history behind them of splits and schisms following upon discussions were firmly resolved that this particular way of leading to schisms should be avoided. Possibly the path to a mass Party was also avoided by this resolve. Be that as it may, the sectarian and infantile leftist ideas in the Party were suppressed rather than annihilated, for only complete and full inner Party discussion, only an ideological struggle, can lead erroneous tendencies to annihilation.

§

A healthy tendency to dissatisfaction among the members of the Party, dissatisfaction because the Party membership is decreasing, dissatisfaction with mistakes, political and organisational, dissatisfaction with the failure to carry out the Plenum policy, does not necessarily find expression straightway as a fight for the correct line. Much thought is often needed before the correct line can be found, and in the meantime the dissatisfaction, healthy in origin, can easily be canalised into

perverse channels. Certainly it can be said that in the case of such a Party membership as this, overwhelmingly proletarian in its social composition, close to its trade union tasks, and recruited mainly from just those industries where the most desperate struggle has been carried on for more than seven years against the employers' offensive, in such a case the existence of dissatisfaction cannot simply be dismissed as "the product of petty-bourgeois anarchist elements, etc., even though its expression may be distorted into wrong shapes. For the distortion may very well come as a reaction to the excesses of the Reluctance tendency (as, for instance, its trade union legalism), which is basically much more dangerous.

This brings us to the question what were the real roots of the Breakneck tendency in itself? Clearly the failure to carry out the line of the Ninth Plenum because, as they said, *it did not go far enough* is twin brother to the other tendency with its refusal to carry it out *because it went too far*. Of course, it is not surprising that there should be this fundamental similarity between the two tendencies, though their superficial expression may vary; it has more than once been said, "The pseudo-left is the shadow of the right." But really remarkable is the extent to which the likeness goes when we dig down to the roots. In each case there is a despair at the magnitude of the task, at the multitude of the enemy forces, a feeling of overwhelmedness in sight of the seeming tremendous odds against the Party, a doubt in the response of the proletariat to the Party stand. Only in the Breakneck tendency this despair presently seeks refuge in the desire for desperate remedies, for some spectacular or magical change which will bring a miraculous easing of our load.

§

Here before we return to the more dangerous Reluctance tendency it is needful to deal with *new unions*. It is understandable that one of the counsels of despair amongst the Breakneckers is for an indiscriminate formation of new *Red* unions. But against this, on the other hand, there may be a tendency amongst Party trade unionists of long standing to react to the suggestion as something horrifying, and

to attack it with arguments indistinguishable from those employed by centrists in a difficulty. Now while any indiscriminate formation of new unions under present existing circumstances in Britain would be completely wrong, there is no Communist dogma condemning new unions as such. At certain times and in certain places the working class may be driven to form a new union, and to meet any mistaken vague drift toward new unions by refusal to discuss the question will only prevent that ideological clarity amongst the Party membership which is one of the surest guarantees of strength.

§

Clearly, the most dangerous tendency is that which shows itself as a reluctant, hesitating, slow or belated response to the new situation and events, which at bottom comes from an under-estimation of the ripeness of capitalist development, of the driving forces of the revolution and of the power and possibilities of the Party itself. It takes two forms, the first of failing to react to new situations, the second, of continuing to "react" to situations which no longer exist. Of the first form several examples have already been cited: the lack of response to the international situation was marked this autumn in the strike wave; and of course it must be realised that the failure to carry out clauses 8 and 9 of the February Plenum resolution (the offensive affiliation campaign and the campaign for rank-and-file control of the political levy) arises also mainly from this tendency. An even more flagrant example is in relation to Clause 15, viz., "It is necessary to start immediately a broad mass campaign for the creation of a daily paper and the collection of the necessary funds." It is not as though this question had arisen for the first time. The inaction of the Party in this matter had already called forth the severest strictures. At the Ninth Plenum it was cited as an example of an opportunist attitude on the part of the leading members by comrade Bukharin viz.:

"When during the last elections we spoke with the British comrades of the necessity of publishing a daily paper, they were against it, and wanted to know why it was necessary. They opposed de-

ciding in favour of a daily Communist paper. It is quite clear why they thus acted. The issue of a paper meant a sharpening of the struggle against the Labour Party and the trade unions throughout the line."*

Yet, in spite of this, it has to be recorded that after specific instructions were thus included in the British resolution of February 18th, not a single sign is seen of the "broad mass campaign" from that day to this. In this matter the Party has not stood still, but has definitely gone back. Five years ago, with our slogan for the "Workers' Weekly," the forerunner of the "Workers' Daily," we were nearer to that aim, to that intenser, sharper fight, than we are at present.

Of the latter form of reacting to non-existing situations, a good example is to be found in the belated retention of the slogan, "All Power to the General Council," long after it had ceased to be of use to the struggle; and even now in the Trade Union Thesis to be presented to the Party Congress are to be found remnants and reminiscences of this slogan. How far the constitutional line followed in the Scottish coalfields is also an example of this it is difficult to say. But sufficient has happened to cause disquiet, and to make it necessary for the Party Congress to be given both the reasons (based on facts and figures) to show whether the line was there obsolete or not.

§

Finally, what, then, are the basic weaknesses revealed by this history of ten months, wherein one has cited a series of actual errors of commission and omission, and has shown the existence of definite tendencies in the Party. Is there a right danger? If so, how exactly is it revealed? Not as comrade Murphy thinks in the "errors" or "insufficiencies" of the Plenum Resolution of February. No, they are revealed in the lack of faith in the Party, in a disbelief in the efficacy of the new policy, in hanging on to the old policy (see the Trade Union Thesis above cited) in "forgetfulness" of main issues, in the failure to put forward in sharp and concrete form the policy that will meet the needs of the workers.

* "Communist Policy in Great Britain," C.P.G.B. 2s. 6d. (p. 56.)

One of the philosophers of antiquity said it was impossible to conceive a beast seven miles long. The same applies to slogans seven miles long. For instance, the thesis on the International Battle Front, with all its verbiage, is largely a needless vulgarisation of the quite fresh decisions of the Sixth Congress of the E.C.C.I., which should be made available for every delegate in the original shape. No, main slogans should be short, sharp, clear and strong, and should have subordinate slogans attached.

Our hardest fight is against Mondism, against expulsions. For this we have to hang on to every position we possess, to hang on with the skin of our teeth, to strive for class unity against the splitters and strike-breakers, to fight desperately to loosen the grip of the bureaucracy upon the organised workers, a grip that is tightening and tightening up to the moment when they will be able to turn the workers right about and march them into another imperialist slaughter. Our business is to loosen this grip not only by propaganda and agitation, but also by unofficial strikes, which may by good leadership, if we have prepared well and are quick enough to seize the right moment, turn into movements of gigantic proportions. But in order to fight hard in this way it is necessary to put forward

the exact programme in each industry which the working-class most needs (not abstract phrases, but direct fighting programmes), and to back up the programme by establishing ourselves in each workshop, the centre and leading elements of each factory committee.

§

Lastly, the question arises how are we to lead ourselves "to abandon the narrowness from which the Party has suffered somewhat in its ideological and political outlook." For this the recipe is, along with better discipline, the strengthening of inner Party democracy, and therewith the infusion of new life into the body of our Party. Therefore, it is not simply as one of a terrible heap of tasks that are set forth in the International Battle Front Thesis, tasks so numerous, so unrelatingly piled on one another as to make the ordinary Party member feel himself a weary Titan after he has only once read it—not as one of all this multitude, but as a really fundamental task must we now undertake what has been neglected for seven years—the raising of the ideological level of the Party by dint of a strenuous self-criticism, by dint of analysis of all our problems, of all our organisation, of all our victories and defeats. This must be done side by side with the drive forward of our struggle.

The Struggle on Two Fronts

The Coming Convention of the Workers' Party of America

By A. J. Bennett

A NEW Trotskyist faction has made its appearance in the United States. Its leader is Cannon, who for some considerable time has been vacillating between the two major factions in the Workers' Party, and who has now picked up the tarnished yellow flag of Trotskyism. Intellectuals who have been expelled at different times from the Communist Party for fighting against Leninism and the Communist International are now rallying to this banner. The newly-fledged Trotskyist group repeats the tenets of the old Trotskyist platforms which have long since been exposed in the course of the class struggle and condemned by the individual Sections of the Communist International and the Comintern as a whole. These intellectuals, who have long since lost every connection with the working class and the harsh class struggle, think that the most important task of the Communist International, and especially the Workers' Party, at the present time is to start a discussion on the fate of the Anglo-Russian Committee and the outcome of the Chinese revolution.

Of course, the leader of the new Trotskyist group in America is trying to introduce some new elements in defence of Trotskyism. He is trying, for example, to convince the American workers that Trotsky fought for an alliance with the middle peasants. The idea of reliance on the poor peasants and an agreement with the mass of peasants for a struggle against the rich peasants is regarded by Cannon, this ignoramus on questions of Leninism, as one of the main tenets of the Trotskyist opposition. In Cannon's platform submitted to the Central Executive Committee of the Workers' Party there are other gems besides. That platform describes the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as a bloc of factions, and

advises the Workers' Party to support the left against the right and centrist factions.

In the decision on Trotsky, Saprnov, etc., *unanimously* adopted by the Sixth Congress, it is said :

"In its views on questions of the programme, policy and organisation the Trotskyist group has sunk to the position of Menshevism, and objectively has become an organ of struggle against the Soviet Power."

Of course, Cannon's action will not force us to abandon the main line of the Comintern as formulated in the resolution just mentioned, which says :

"The Congress considers it superfluous to discuss with the enemies of the C.I. the counter-revolutionary political content of the Trotskyist platform, after the mass of membership of all the Communist Parties has repeatedly and resolutely rejected their point of view."

Refusing to start a discussion on the substance of the Trotskyist platform laid down by Cannon, we shall, nevertheless, try to understand the origin and nature of the new Trotskyist group in the United States.

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND A.F. OF I.

The recent elections in America, which resulted in a victory for Hoover, the outstanding representative of finance capital, have once more demonstrated the strength of American imperialism, which does not hide its aggressive intentions with regard to the rest of the world, and especially on Central and South America, and the Eastern countries. The elections have simultaneously revealed the enormous role of American reformism, chiefly represented by the American Federation of

Labour, which is acting as an agency of imperialism within the working class. The American Federation of Labour Convention, which took place immediately after the election, has shown once again that the Labour aristocracy and trade union bureaucracy constitute a true pillar of finance.

On the other hand, we witness a constantly sharpening class struggle in the United States. The almighty dollar, in the process of its further imperialist expansion, is more and more coming up against the post-war development of capitalism, expressions of which are the disproportion between the development of capitalist production and the capacity of the world market, the struggle between the two systems in contemporary world economy (the capitalist and socialist systems), the growing conflicts between the colonies and the imperialist Powers. The further rationalisation of American industry leads to growing unemployment and more intensive exploitation of the proletariat. American imperialism is still strong and powerful enough to corrupt and keep under its sway the upper sections of the working class, and to intensify with their help the exploitation of millions and millions of workers. The antagonisms arising on the basis of capitalist rationalisation in the United States are inevitably reflected in the differentiation of the working class (radicalisation of the rank and file on the one hand, and the further Fascist development of the trade union bureaucracy on the other), and in the development of gigantic class struggles involving great masses of organised and, especially, unorganised workers.

The strength of American capitalism is the source of strength of Gomperism and of American reformism of a European type, which oppresses the minds of the working masses. Under these conditions it is no wonder that some sections of the Communist Party succumb to the influence of reformism. The chief manifestation of the strength of reformism in the ranks of the Workers' Party are the right errors which have been clearly pointed out by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in the *Theses on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International* (attitude towards the Socialist Party, insufficiently energetic work in organ-

ising the unorganised and in organising the movement among the negroes, insufficiently clear struggle against the aggressive policy of the United States in Latin-America). The so-called left (Trotskyist) deviation is, as it were, a "shadow" of the right errors of which the Sixth Congress of the Comintern spoke.

TASKS OF THE AMERICANS

The American Party is thus faced with the serious, difficult and responsible task of waging a systematic and determined struggle on two fronts—against the right opportunist errors which reflect the strength of reformism, and against the "left" deviations which are the shadows of the right errors arising on that soil. From the declaration of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers' Party (see *Daily Worker*, December 16th) it is clear that the whole Party, regardless of factional adherence, is ready to close its ranks for a struggle both against the newly fledged Trotskyist faction as well as against the outspoken right errors outlined by the Sixth Congress. In that declaration we find an announcement to the effect that the Political Bureau of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers' Party of America has *unanimously* expelled the leaders of the Trotskyist group. The declaration also states that the minority to which Cannon belonged has definitely dissociated itself from Cannon and from those who defend his position. Finally, the concluding part of the declaration contains the general programme of struggle against the right danger in all its forms. There can thus be no doubt that there is absolute unanimity in the Party on the question of the necessity to wage an unconditional, vigorous struggle against the Trotskyists and Trotskyism on the one hand, and against the right danger on the other. Our task is only to analyse the methods of that struggle so as to establish to what extent they may really be able to cope with the clearly formulated tasks.

STRUGGLE WITH THE RIGHT

It is obvious that the struggle against the right deviations, as well as against the so-called lefts, signifies primarily a clear and

sound Leninist struggle against reformism in all its forms. From this angle we shall take up, firstly, the analysis of the decision of the Sixth Congress given in an editorial of *The Communist*. That editorial says :

"We are now in the period of decisive clashes between socialist reformism and Communism for the leadership of the majority of the working class. This is so in all countries of high capitalist development with the exception of the United States, *where we have peculiar specific conditions in which the Labour movement on the whole is very weak and especially politically backward.*" (My italics.—A. J. B.)

The editorial writer concludes that :

"In America we are fighting the republican and democratic parties for the majority of the working class."

The author of the editorial has reduced to naught the role of the Socialist Party, and has kept silent on the existence of the American Federation of Labour. That forgetfulness is the less pardonable considering that the programme of the Comintern adopted at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International very clearly defined the role of this worst agency of capitalism in the general system of international reformism. We will take the liberty to quote this point from the Programme of the Communist International. The Programme says :

"The 'ideological' dictatorship of the American servile trade union bureaucracy, which in its turn is the expression of the 'ideological' dictatorship of the American dollar, has become through the medium of British reformism and His Majesty's Socialists of the British Labour Party, the most important composite part of the theory and practice of the whole of international social-democracy and the leaders of the Amsterdam International. Moreover, the leaders of the German and Austrian social-democracy embellish these theories with Marxian phraseology, and in this way mask their utter betrayal of Marxism."

But the national organ of the Workers' Party forgot this "ideological dictatorship" not only from the point of view of inter-

national reformism, but also from the point of view of its immediate influence on the working class. It is true that the American Federation of Labour embraces only a small number of American workers. That is exactly why the question of organising the unorganised stands out in America more sharply than in the other highly developed capitalist countries. But no one has so far expressed any doubt as to the American Federation of Labour serving as an important stronghold inside the working class in the hands of American capital.

This effort to exclude the United States from the general rule in the struggle against the agents of capitalism in the Labour movement must be most seriously examined also because similar, although less flagrant, attempts were made also after the Ninth Plenum. It is quite obvious that the resolution on the struggle against reformism cannot be mechanically applied with the same methods in all countries. Social-reformism in Germany sharply differs, as far as forms and methods are concerned, from social reformism in Great Britain or Gompersism in America. There is no doubt, however, that we must wage a relentless struggle in all countries against social reformism in all its shades and variations in our ranks, and that we must make a thorough study if we are to understand the given concrete situation in every case. Without an energetic struggle against reformism we shall be unable successfully and profitably to fight against the open opportunist as well as against the so-called left deviations in the Communist Party.

ERRORS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The struggle on two fronts also demands a clear understanding not only of the general foundation of the outspoken rights and so-called lefts, but also a clear characterisation of their different methods and attitude. From this viewpoint the declaration of the Central Executive Committee of November 16th, not only fails to help the Party, but sows confusion in its ranks. In that declaration we find a description of the different forms and manifestations of the right danger. But the last two points of the part of the declaration de-

voted to the right danger absolutely confuse the deviations and mistakes committed by the different groups and different members of the Party. Let us quote these two points in full :

"9. Wrong attitude toward the Communist International. This is one of the worst manifestations of right-wing danger in our Party. On the part of certain comrades there is a tendency to accept the C.I. decisions only with reservations. The tendency to attack the leadership of the C.I. as a right-wing leadership, to attack the C.E.C. of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to speculate on alleged differences within the leading group of the Russian Party, undermining thereby the prestige of the leadership of the C.I. (Cannon). The substitution for the Leninist conception of the Communist Party the theory of permanent factionalism, disregarding openly or covertly all instructions of the Comintern.

"10. Trotskyism is the most comprehensively developed system of opportunism with an international basis still seeking to hide its social-democratic character by covering itself with left phrases."

The first objection to be made to point 9 is that it is remarkably unclear. It considers any reservation on the decision of the Comintern as a manifestation of the right danger. We have just cited an example of a reservation—a most vital reservation—made concerning the resolutions of the Sixth Congress. The author of that reservation was comrade Lovestone. On the other hand, comrades Foster and Bittelman also make their reservations on the analysis of the economic situation of the United States. The C.E.C. should have clearly stated what reservations it is referring to. The charges against the factionalists will hardly help to clear up the essence of the right deviation. It is obvious that factionalism is the worst enemy of the Workers' Party. That enemy must be overcome and liquidated. The complete liquidation of factionalism in the Workers' Party is the most vital task of to-day. But it is at the same time necessary to state very clearly that the comrades who are very, very much inclined to make right mistakes suffer from the factional malady. A

successful struggle against deviations depends first on formulating clearly the political substance of the deviations and our tasks in the struggle against them. If we classify all sins of the Party as right deviations, all cats will look grey, and it will be impossible to carry on a vigorous and fruitful struggle.

Matters are even worse with regard to point 10. In essence point 10 means that the Workers' Party of America must fight only against one enemy—against Trotskyism. The importance of the Trotskyist opposition is obviously exaggerated by this formulation, and, what is worse, the struggle against the open right danger is entirely forgotten.

The question of the two deviations was also a subject of serious study at the November Plenum of the C.P.S.U. In discussing that question comrade Stalin clearly formulated the difference between the open right and so-called left deviations, showing that the struggle on two fronts is not a figment, but a very serious and very difficult political task. Comrade Stalin said that "wherever there is a right deviation there must also be a 'left' deviation—the 'left' deviation is but a shadow of the right deviation." Anticipating confusion of the two fronts, Stalin said: "People may say that if the 'left' deviation is essentially the same old right deviation, where, then, is the difference between them, and where are your two fronts?" To this question Stalin replies: "The difference between them is that their platforms are different, their demands are different, their approach and methods are different."

A CLEAR ANALYSIS NECESSARY

From this it is obvious that in our concrete struggle against deviations we must correctly analyse the different platforms, different demands and different methods of approach. If we put all platforms in one bag and classify them as Trotskyism we thereby weaken the struggle against the open right danger and exaggerate the Trotskyist danger.

The coming convention of the Workers' Party of America is called upon unconditionally to fulfil the main task formulated by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern as follows :

"The most important task confronting the Party is to put an end to the factional

strife—which is not based on any serious differences of principles—and at the same time to increase the recruiting of workers into the Party and to give a definite stimulus to the promotion of workers to leading posts in the Party.”

The two tasks are closely related and interconnected. The proletarianisation of the Executive Committee of the Workers' Party will help to cure the greatest evil—factionalism—and give the Party the necessary weapon for a persistent and systematic struggle against the open right opportunist tendencies and the groups of intellectuals which are now

rallying to the banner of Trotskyism for a struggle against the Workers' Party and the Communist International. The convention will be able to fulfil this two-fold and difficult task of increasing the proletarian elements on the Executive and liquidating factionalism if the problems now confronting the Party are clearly formulated now, during the discussion before the Convention. The discussion before the Convention must take the form of a courageous and Leninist self-criticism which will prepare the Party for carrying out of the great tasks placed before it by the course of the class struggle in the United States.



THE ENGLISH EDITION of the *COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL* (New Style) will be published on the 1st and 15th of the month. Subscription rates 8s. per annum in England, \$2 per annum in U.S.A., post free through any bookseller.

TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

by

JOHN REED

A vivid account of the November revolution in Russia as witnessed and recorded by that brilliant journalist and author, the late John Reed

Cloth 4s.

Post free 4s. 5d.

Paper 2s.

„ „ 2s. 3d.

THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

By N. LENIN

In the form of a reply to Karl Kautsky, Lenin gives a very clear exposition of the Bolshevik theory of Revolution and Democracy

Cloth 3s.

Post free 3s. 5d.

Paper 1s. 6d.

„ „ 1s. 9d.

Published January 17th.

REMINISCENCES OF LENIN

By KLARA ZETKIN

Dealing with Lenin's views on the position of women, and other questions

Cloth 2s.

Post free 2s. 4d.

Paper 1s.

„ 1s. 3d.

Published January 17th.

Of all booksellers or direct from

MODERN ★ BOOKS ★ LIMITED

26 BEDFORD ROW, LONDON, W.C.1

The Coming Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain

By W. Rust

THE Tenth Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain will take place on January 19th-22nd, and may be regarded as the most important Congress in the history of the Party. It will be faced with the task of estimating the work of the Party since the adoption of the new policy in February last. A year of "independence" will lie behind the Party. The Congress is also of great importance in view of the approaching General Election, in which the Communist Party will, for the first time, take part as an independent political Party, with candidates opposing all three capitalist parties — Conservative, Liberal and Labour.

The situation in Great Britain is favourable for the development of the Communist Party. The decline of British capitalism continues in spite of measures of partial rationalisation which have been introduced in several industries.

Unemployment is again increasing, and now the Government figures total 1,348,200 (December, 1928). From April 23rd and October 22nd unemployment increased by 281,902. Wages continue to go down. The boom in "new" industries (chemicals, artificial silk, motors and electrical engineering) is in now way a substitute for the declining basic industries. The following percentages give the *decrease* of the number of insured persons on 1923 in the basic industries :

	<i>Percentage</i>
Coke ovens and by-products works ...	28.1
Shipbuilding and ship repairing ...	22.3
Iron ore mining	21.8
Pig iron manufacture	18.2
Marine engineering, etc.	14.2
Steel smelting, etc.	12.4
General engineering	9.3
Coal mining	7.5
Woollen and worsted	6.4
Cotton	1.0

The problem before the British bourgeoisie is the speedy rationalisation of the basic industries (mining, iron and steel, shipbuilding, cotton and woollen textiles). Is this possible?

The limited measures so far recorded and the rising revenue from foreign and colonial investments indicate favourable possibilities for the carrying through of rationalisation. The "Theses on Trade Union Policy" prepared for the Party Congress declares :

"Accumulation of capital (from foreign investments and from domestic and luxury industries) is going on steadily. British capitalism possesses the necessary capital resources to carry through the rationalisation of its basic industries without foreign assistance (as was necessary in Germany). So far, however, the new capitalist resources tend to go into speculative investments in luxury and amusement trades (the boom in gramophone, greyhound racing and cinema shares), British colonial and foreign government loans,* public utilities (*e.g.*, electricity supply industry, etc.), investment corporations, and to give the depressed industries a wide berth. The increase of profit secured through lower wages is, from the standpoint of capitalist interests, a necessary preliminary to the attraction of capital to those depressed industries.

"The prospects before the workers, therefore, are immediate rationalisation in the prosperous industries leading to greater exploitation, declining share of the workers in the product of industry and greater unemployment. In the depressed industries, increasing attacks on wages and conditions of labour to enable the capitalist class to restore these industries to a profitable basis again, as a pre-

* This indicates the growing "rentier" (share, coupon-clipping) role of the British bourgeoisie.

liminary to more extensive rationalisation than they are yet able to undertake.”

These facts point to the development of a large-scale capitalist offensive against the working class in the immediate future. The railwaymen have already suffered a 2½ per cent. wage-cut, the mine-owners carry on a constant attack district by district, wage reductions are threatened in the cotton and wool textiles. We stand before the prospect of bitter mass struggles, for just as the rationalisation of German industry was made possible by the defeat of the working class in 1923 so will the British bourgeoisie endeavour to defeat and demoralise the British workers as an essential pre-requisite for successful rationalisation.

The sharpening pressure of capitalist rationalisation and war preparations intensify the differentiation of the British working class. This is shown by a series of important facts. Firstly, the highly successful conference of the Minority Movement in August, which was attended by 844 delegates. This was the biggest and most representative conference in the history of the Minority Movement, and was achieved in the face of an unprecedented campaign of expulsions, threats and misrepresentations on the part of the bureaucracy. Secondly, the Communist poll in the North Aberdeen by-election. Despite the fact that the constituency is not exclusively industrial and the Party local was small, the Communist candidate obtained 25 per cent. of the Labour vote in the first open fight against Liberal, Conservative and Labour since the adoption of the new policy. Thirdly, the sham left campaign of Cook and Maxton for a “socialist revival” was an expression of the leftward swing of the masses which compelled the “left” leaders to make a pretence of fighting against MacDonaldism and Mondism. Other facts could be enumerated, for example, the increased Labour vote in the municipal elections and in by elections, the miners’ marches, and the enthusiastic support for the Women’s Delegation to the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, the swing to the right on the part of the reformist leaders becomes more and more marked. The only limit to the open co-operation of the reformist leaders with the bourgeoisie is the necessity to carry

on a sham opposition in order to retain their influence over the working class. The new programme of the Labour Party is intended to provide the basis for coalition, in one form or another, with the Liberals. Many prominent Labour leaders, *e.g.*, Snowden and Brailsford, are frankly advocating a Liberal-Labour coalition. The Programme is a promise that the next Labour Government will make capitalist rationalisation and war preparations its chief task. In the sphere of foreign politics MacDonald warmly defends the Kellogg Pact, and now dismisses the Soviet disarmament proposals with contempt, and makes no attempt to conceal his hatred of the Workers’ Republic. On the industrial side the General Council has completed the first stage of its negotiations with Lord Melchett (Mond), and has on its own initiative presented a plan for a National Industrial Council, which in effect means the prevention of strikes by compulsory arbitration. The attack on the revolutionary opposition has quickly developed. The decisions of the Trades Union Congress promises an intensification of this attack. The hitherto sluggish life of the trade unions is now disturbed by fierce disputes. In many unions Communists have been expelled, in almost every union Communists, Minority Movement members and known sympathisers, have been deprived of office, even the lowest posts. Democracy in the British trade unions is now a thing of the past. In Scotland the bureaucrats have split the miners’ union in one district, and in Scotland as a whole their sabotage has almost completely wrecked the union. The British students of the Continental splitters of the Labour movement promise to surpass their masters.

The events of the last months have confirmed the estimation of the Ninth Plenum :

“Ideologically the reformist leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions are coming out more avowedly and cynically in favour of industrial peace and active collaboration with the capitalists against the revolutionary proletariat. Organisationally, they are endeavouring to convert the formally independent Labour organisations into auxiliary apparatuses of the bourgeoisie by merging their upper strata with the capitalist organisations.”

What progress is the Communist Party making in this situation? Despite the favourable objective conditions the Party is not making headway. A heavy fall in membership took place after the defeat of the miners and continued throughout 1927. Although the decline may have been arrested, the membership, nevertheless, shows no tendency to rise. The circulation of "Workers' Life" has decreased in 1928, and is now back to the pre-General Strike period.

Such a situation demands the sharpest self-criticism on the part of the leadership, and every member when preparing for the Party Congress.

The problems of the Party are not clarified but only obscured by tracing the weakness to organisational short-comings, by attributing the reduced membership, solely to employers' victimisation and by ascribing the reduced circulation of the Party press to the increasing poverty of the workers.

It is self-evident that these are not the real causes. This type of "explanation" leads only to self-satisfaction, and consequently to an accentuation of the errors which must be ruthlessly overcome. We know that workers will loyally support our press, however much their wages may be reduced if the Party is really responding to the necessities of the every-day struggle. This is particularly true when a Party works under legal conditions at a time when the spirit of the workers is rising. Although victimisation is a tremendous difficulty, it is a normal condition of Communist work in every capitalist country. The Party enjoys legality, and is not subjected to a White Terror. Under such circumstances an exaggeration of the effects of victimisation is a bad example of passivity. We have no desire to minimise the organisational short-comings, particularly the failure to penetrate into the factories and mines, the weakness of the apparatus and the unsatisfactory relations between the membership and the Central Committee. But such shortcomings cannot be solved mechanically, the solution lies only in the galvanising of the political life of the Party by the vigorous application of the new policy.

The basic causes of the unsatisfactory position of the Party are the political errors of the Party itself. The events of 1928 demonstrated

that the new policy, although unanimously adopted, has not found expression in the day-to-day activities on many important issues. It is hardly necessary to add that this is because the new line has not been fully understood and has been hesitatingly operated.

Before dealing concretely with certain of this year's experiences it is well to emphasise that the sharpened tactics of the Communist International in the struggle against social-democracy, which arose out of the changes in the objective situation, meant for the British Party a sharp break not only in the organisational relations towards the Labour Party but also a far-reaching tactical change in the methods and forms of struggle against reformism in general.

The C.P.G.B. has in the past, because of the historical conditions of its development, carried out its policy as a kind of revolutionary left-wing in the Labour Party. The leadership of the masses has been approached from the standpoint of bringing mass pressure on the trade unions and Labour Party, nationally and locally, for our policy. The independent leadership of the masses over the heads of the reformist bureaucracy, and in the face of their violent opposition, was not undertaken by the Party except in a few cases when the historical conditions presented such opportunities, e.g., the mining struggle of 1926 and the miners' march of 1927.

The basis of the new policy is the recognition of a changed political and economic situation in Great Britain as compared to the situation in 1920, when Lenin gave his famous advice to the British Communists to push the Labour Party into office. To-day the Party works no longer for the return of the Labour Government, but for a Revolutionary Workers' Government, participating in elections as an independent Party with its own candidates and programme against both the Labour and open capitalist candidates. But it is also clear that this change is not merely a question of parliamentary tactics. There can be no talk of a sharpened struggle against reformism unless the Party comes out "more boldly and more clearly as an independent political Party," and brings out "more clearly and sharply its own political line, which radically differs from the reformist line on all

general political questions (wars, relations with the U.S.S.R., China, India, Egypt), and on the every-day struggle of the working class." (My italics.)—Ninth Plenum.

The central task of the Party is to establish its direct independent leadership of the masses in the teeth of the opposition of the reformist bureaucracy. This is not an academic question. Continuation of the old line means that the heavy blows of the reformist leaders and the bourgeoisie will completely isolate us from the masses.

A Party discussion is now taking place on the new policy preparatory to the Congress. (The fact that an organised discussion only commences eight months after the adoption of the new line is in itself an example of the under-estimation of its importance.) The content of the discussion is very disquieting.

It is exclusively taking the form of regarding the new policy as beginning and ending with a changed tactic towards the Labour Party. The contributions to the columns of the Party organ deal only with certain problems arising from the application of the new line, namely, payment of the political levy in the trade unions, affiliation to the Labour Party and the future of the National Left-Wing.

Although many useful contributions have been made none of the letters so far published in "Workers' Life" betray any concern over the tasks of the Party as a whole; none of them show the slightest appreciation of the necessity for fighting resolutely and independently in all spheres and approaching all questions from the standpoint of what *we* can do to lead the workers and win them for revolutionary action. *All are concentrated on the above-mentioned concrete problems.*

The fact that this is an artificial discussion, with a marked absence of all-round self-criticism, shows how deep-rooted the passivity is within the Party. The passivity is due to the failure to adapt the day-to-day work of the Party to the new situation.

The discussions show that there is a marked tendency to interpret the Ninth Plenum decisions not as a call to action but as a justification of sectarian passivity.

It should also be mentioned that the decisions of the Sixth Congress play no part in

this discussion, and, in fact, have not even been mentioned.

This discussion shows how the unanimous acceptance of the Ninth Plenum resolution without discussion and self-criticism signified no deep-rooted change in the every-day activity of the Party and is a mistake for which we are now paying heavily.

The question of invigorating the inner life of the Party by frank discussion and self criticism is a real problem for the British Party. There has never yet been a thorough discussion in the Party. A discussion has always been regarded as an unnecessary interference with the carrying on of the daily work and the tremendous value of the weapon of self-criticism has never been realised.

The discussion shows that the prevalent idea that we have only changed our Parliamentary tactics and that consequently the only problems are our relations to the Labour Party, must be ruthlessly combated.

We will discuss two questions. The struggle in the Scottish Miners Union and the Cook-Maxton Campaign.

It is not necessary to recount the whole history of the Scottish struggle. Briefly the facts are as follows. Communists and Minority Movement members were elected to the official positions in the federal Scottish Mineworkers' Union in 1927 but the displaced reformist officials refused to give up office. Thereupon commenced a struggle within the autonomous district unions, the biggest of which are Fife and Lanark. In Fife the union was in the hands of the revolutionary opposition. The tactics were to win Lanarkshire and then try to take over the national posts. The opposition actually secured a strong position on the Lanark E.C. but this never operated because of the legal injunction secured by the defeated right wing. The opposition replied with legal action. Every move of the opposition was sabotaged by the reformists with the result that the union has been reduced to a shadow of its former self and the income is not sufficient to meet the expenditure. The members who voted Communists into office are leaving the union disheartened at the failure to overcome the right wing. Now the right wing are taking the offensive and are taking steps to suspend the Communist sec-

retary. In Fife the right wing minority has broken away and formed a new union.

Yet in face of this situation the Party still refuses to break the bonds of trade union constitutionalism and to take over the posts in the in the Scottish Union and Lanarkshire Union and to re-organise them whether the dismissed reformists are willing to go or not. A "Save the Union Conference" called by the opposition decided not for action but for pressure on the officials. The reply of the Lanarkshire "old gang" was to take a ballot proposing the suspension of the four E.C. members who participated in the Conference. Even as late as November 16th the line of "Workers' Life" was to call on the miners all over the country to pass protest resolutions against the refusal of the "old gang" to give up office!

It is argued that decisive action by the militants in Scotland will result in the intensification of the reformist attack throughout the country in all trade unions. This is undoubtedly true. But will conciliatory tactics on our part mollify the bureaucracy? The Scottish experience gives the answer. Our hesitancy and conciliation has encouraged the reformists to take the offensive against us and has driven a large number of workers away from us.

Comrade Gallacher writes as follows in *The Labour Monthly*: "It is a common thing when men are asked to come back into the unions to hear them say 'We are not going to pay another penny till Graham and his pals are cleared out.'"

Our position in Scotland is much weaker than it was a few months ago. But to argue that our weakness, caused by delay, is a reason for further postponement of decisive action means nothing else than to argue for the liquidation of the struggle. The longer we delay the weaker becomes our influence and the smaller the possibilities of success.

The clearing out of Graham and his pals will embitter the fight in the unions, in any case this cannot be avoided, but will do it under circumstances favourable for us because our offensive will draw masses behind us.

This weak, hesitating policy in Scotland, this fear to break through the web of the trade union constitution, this refusal to take inde-

pendent action regardless of the reformist bureaucracy is not only the carrying over into a new situation of our out-of-date tactics, it is also the expression of a passive and hesitant spirit. It has resulted in the weakening of our influence amongst the masses, a reduction in the Party membership, a decreased circulation of the Party press.

Our impotence in the Scottish struggle has weakened our Party throughout Britain. The Scottish struggle is the nerve centre against the reformist bureaucracy. Our weakness is an encouragement to the bureaucracy to intensify their attacks throughout the trade union movement.

The attitude towards the Cook-Maxton campaign is an expression of the same policy and displays moreover no recognition of the left leaders as "the most pernicious fraction" of the social democrats. This campaign was initiated by the so-called left Clyde group because of the pressure of the masses. It was the reply of the left leaders to the new Party policy, an attempt to grasp the leadership of the left wave before the Communist Party.

The whole course of the campaign and its final ignominious collapse has shown it to be a sham left manœuvre calculated to deceive the masses that the "lefts" were really fighting MacDonald. Cook was drawn into this manœuvre because the prestige he had secured in the fight against Mondism helped to cover up the tarnished records of the parliamentarians.

The Party took up an attitude of critical support and treated the "lefts" as well meaning but unreliable friends. It endeavoured to mobilise mass support around the movement thinking that the workers would come to us via Maxton-Cook. This movement was supplied with a programme and developed with the assistance of the Party.

The essential political lesson of the Cook-Maxton move, was ignored. The Party failed to see that this campaign was an expression of the new left wave and that the chief political conclusion to be drawn from it was the necessity for direct leadership of these moving masses. The Party ignored the lessons of the last three years and acted as if we were still in the conditions of 1925 which led up to the General Strike when the leadership of the

THE VI WORLD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

*The following books dealing
with the Sixth World Congress*

**THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT
IN THE COLONIES** Price 9d.

**COMMUNISM AND THE
INTERNATIONAL SITUATION** „ 6d.

**PROGRAMME OF THE COMMUNIST
INTERNATIONAL** „ 1s.

may be obtained from the

WORKERS' BOOKSHOP LTD.
16 KING STREET, W.C. 2

revival was in the hands of the left leaders, when we were still too weak to lead independent of them and when the reformist leadership had not so completely gone over to the services of the capitalist rationalisation.

The Party should have utilised this manoeuvre in order to widen the mass opposition to MacDonald whilst at the same time exposing the "lefts." The failure to expose the "lefts" enabled them to influence left wing workers and to lead them back into MacDonald's camp. It is not to be expected that workers will join the Communist Party when that Party is offering them other leaders.

The failure to sharply expose Maxton and Co. is all the more inexcusable when we consider the fact that Maxton publicly capitulated to MacDonald at the very outset. This is shown by the assurances that Maxton gave the N.A.C. of the I.L.P. that he intended to express only the policy of the I.L.P. The refusal to put forward a definite programme, the refusal to allow Communists on the platform because this would be a breach of Labour Party discipline. (George Hicks was invited to speak at the first demonstration but the demand from the body of the hall that Gallacher be heard was rejected by the platform.)

The issue of *Workers' Life* (July 13th) following this Glasgow Congress is a clear expression of the incorrect Party line.

The leading article says :—

"Maxton should speedily correct the mistake of the initial meeting of the campaign, if he does not, the workers, stimulated by the Cook-Maxton manifesto, will demand other and more vigorous leadership."

Maxton's lead is criticised because it is not sufficiently vigorous. He is asked to correct the "mistake" of doing MacDonald's work.

The article concludes by offering not the Communist Party, but the Minority Movement and the National Left Wing as the "more vigorous leadership."

Reporting on the meeting in the same issue comrade Gallacher writes :

"The lead will be given by Cook and the Communist Party, but unless Maxton can make a stronger stand than he did last Sunday he might as well drop out of the picture."

Since when has the Communist Party shared the leadership of the masses with Cook? Here

again the criticism is that Maxton did not make a strong enough stand.

The Maxton-Cook movement suddenly disappeared from the Communist press without explanation, and then suddenly bobbed up again just before the Labour Party Conference. Maxton was again full of fight and loudly declared his intention to fight to the last ditch. As is well known he collapsed in the most cowardly manner at the Birmingham Conference amidst the sneers and jeers of the bureaucracy.

Maxton was criticised in *Workers' Life* for his antics at Birmingham but the Party still hesitates to expose him and decisively break with him. It fails to draw for the masses the lessons on the role of the "left" leaders. It remains silent because it hopes that Maxton will make another left flutter, or if he is worn out by his exertions perhaps some other influential left leader will come forward.

Only in this light can we understand the decision of the Politbureau in favour of a "Socialist Revival" campaign and for the formation of left wing committees throughout the country. This is not a united front move. The Conferences are to be called under the leadership of the *Left Wing*, not the Communist Party.

The Committees are to have the following programme :—

- (1) Against Liberal-Labour Coalition Programme.
- (2) Against Mondism, against splitters.
- (3) For 100 per cent. trade unionism, trade union democracy, for a general wage attack by the workers.
- (4) Support for unemployed march and demands.

Such a proposal means the skeleton of a new Party, which can be nothing else than a basis for the sham-left leaders (our chief enemies) and a rival to the Communist Party. This represents nothing more or less than a liquidatory tendency within the Party.

A week after Maxton's capitulation at the Labour Party Conference, Cook followed suit within the E.C. of the Miners' Federation. Like Maxton he preceded his collapse by strong declarations of militancy. Although Cook gave way for different reasons and on a

different date the causes were basically the same and it was no accident that Cook quickly followed in Maxton's footsteps. The reformist bureaucracy compelled them both to toe the line. The sharpness of the struggle within the working class movement compelled them to choose between the Communists and complete capitulation to the bureaucracy. As "left" leaders they chose the latter. (This does not mean that they have given up trying to appear "left.")

Cook capitulated before the energetic offensive of the right wing at a decisive moment in the struggle between the bureaucracy and the revolutionary opposition in the M.F.G.B., when the splitting of the miners' unions has already commenced. In the face of this situation our Party was faced with the necessity of sharply exposing Cook in order to undermine his influence with the masses, to bring mass pressure on him and to show the correctness of our line.

This situation demanded sharp independent action on the part of the Party. But because the Party still has illusions on the possibilities of these honest left leaders, and thinks that the "mistaken" comrade can be won back, because the Party regards Cook as a road to the masses and because the Party still fails to understand that independent action will bring us closer to the masses and not isolate us, it tempers its criticisms of Cook and this enables him to strengthen his position.

Cook has already taken two left wing members of the E.C. with him and divided the militant workers in the localities. Every conciliatory word we utter, every soft word in our criticism is helping Cook to win over to his banner waverers among the active workers.

It is bad enough that the Party has offered merely a friendly criticism that, e.g., it fails to demand from Cook a plain straightforward answer to the question "Do you support the revolutionary opposition in Scotland?" But it is a thousand times worse when the Party, in spite of Cook's capitulation, continues to exalt him as the standard-bearer of revolutionary politics within the union. *Workers' Life* for November 16th, puts forward a five-point proposal for submission to a national ballot of the miners. In this proposal the

miners are asked to choose between A. J. Cook and Herbert Smith.

In the present circumstances we may as well ask the miners to choose between the devil and the deep blue sea. It is the giving of Communist support to the "left" leaders at the very time when he is committing acts which are leading to abject treachery and renegadism. It will not only strengthen him personally and extend his influence over the masses but will undermine the influence of the Party and drive masses away from us.

It is clear that such mistakes as those outlined have been committed because the Party has not orientated itself to the new situation in Great Britain and has not carried out the letter and the spirit of the decisions of the Ninth Plenum and Sixth World Congress.

The popularisation of the decisions of the Sixth World Congress is an urgent task in the British Party as so far very little has been done in this connection. A clear understanding of the decisions will enable the Party to grasp the imperative necessity for the new policy and all that it implies. The Sixth Congress declared that the war danger is the decisive factor in the present situation and that the under-estimation of the war danger is the most serious danger threatening the Comintern.

The struggle against the war danger is a question of our daily work. Mondism, the expulsion of Communists from the trade unions, the Trade Union Act, the attempt to isolate the Party from the masses are all part of the war preparations. We can only talk about a real fight against them in so far as the Party vigorously struggles for the independent leadership of the workers. In the light of the imminent war danger the hesitancy displayed by the British Party acquires a tremendous significance. These facts and the experience of the other sections of the Communist International which led the Sixth Congress to emphasise the necessity for the sharpest struggle against the right wing danger as the chief danger, show that the British Party is faced with the tasks of vigorously combatting right wing tendencies.

Its Tenth Congress will have a great significance for the entire Communist International.

Martin Lawrence Limited

announce

for publication in January the following books:

*ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, Vol. II.
Demy 4to., 10s. Postage 9d.

*CEMENT. A Novel by F. GLADKOV. Demy 8vo., Library edition 7s. 6d.,
postage 6d. Popular edition, paper boards, 3s. 6d., postage 6d.

This is the famous Russian novel dealing with life in Russia in the period of
transition to the New Economic Policy.

*LENIN'S COLLECTED WORKS, Vol. XX., in two parts. The Russian
Revolution of 1917. Price later.

*SELECTIONS FROM LENIN, Vol. I. Price about 2s. 6d., paper covers.
This is the first of a series of four volumes, containing the most important of
Lenin's writings.

*RUSSIAN POETRY. A selection of lyrics. Cloth 6s.
This includes the full text of Blok's world famous poem, "The Twelve."

Martin Lawrence Limited
26 Bedford Row, W.C. 1