

# In the International

## Discussion on the Thirteenth Congress of the C.P.G.B.

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At our Twelfth Party Congress the central question was that of work in the trade unions. Bad sectarian practices had hindered to a great extent the advance of the Party in this important field of activity. The Twelfth Congress successfully overcame this sectarianism and a considerable improvement in our trade union work followed from it. Not nearly enough. Much more has yet to be done and so this question will once again be an important issue at the forthcoming Thirteenth Party Congress.

But since the Twelfth Congress great changes have taken place in the international situation. The advance of fascist governments in Germany, in Austria and Spain and the increasing development of fascist methods of administration in Britain along with the financial support and legal protection of fascist gangs and the rapid advance of war preparations, present us with very urgent problems.

Against this advance of fascism and war there is developing an ever-stronger resistance on the part of the workers. The heroic stand of the Schutzbundler in Austria and the epic struggle of the Asturian miners in Spain, evidence the unconquerable spirit of the workers and give the guarantee of victory when active unity under revolutionary leadership has been achieved.

It is this active unity that has now for our Party become the central, all animating question. Here in Britain, as in all other countries the upward surge of the working class struggle is clearly evident.

Despite all the efforts of the reformists to hold them back, the workers move forward with ever greater energy into the struggle. This was exemplified in the mass support that was everywhere given to the great **National Hunger March**, to the events at **Olympia** (Mosley's meeting), and in the **monster demonstration** of anti-fascist workers at **Hyde Park** on September 9th. Not only these outstanding events but a continual series of strikes in different industries even in face of official opposition, these with the mass demonstrations of the unemployed, all go to show the character of the Leftward swing which expressed itself in the sweeping Labour victories at the municipal elections.

Since, following the German events, the issuing of the **C.I. Manifesto**, the Party has conducted an exceptionally energetic campaign for **working class unity**. This campaign has met with a warm response from the active workers in the unions and the factories as well as from the masses who are outside of the factories, unemployed. This campaign undoubtedly was responsible for a considerable measure of the support won for the Labour Party at the municipal elections. The idea of unity became very firmly fixed in the minds of the workers, but because it was unity without content, our Party candidates in many cases failed to make the advance they should have made. This was one of the serious weaknesses of our Municipal Election Campaign and one that must now be thoroughly overhauled and eradicated as a result of the discussion leading up to the Party Congress.

The United Front of the workers is built up by our day to day work around the immediate issues that confront the workers, employed and unemployed. Active unity on the fight on such questions as housing and rents, increased relief and the abolition of the Means Test, the fight against labour camps and for extensive work schemes at trade union rates, the 40-hour week with increased wages, as against the "stagger" system being proposed by the National Government. As we develop these so also do we develop the great mass front against fascism and war.

But it must be clear to all of us, and this we must get the workers to understand, that as only the Communists lead the fight for these demands and for the unity of the workers essential for achieving, then an essential part of the building of the fighting united front of the workers is the building up of the membership, strength and representative character of the Communist Party.

This is where our greatest failure has been and it is exactly this the coming Congress must discuss and overcome.

The united front of the workers is absolutely necessary if the forces strong enough to defeat fascism, to overthrow capitalism and

establish Soviet power are to be brought into action. But this united front can only be achieved as the result of continuous activity, and the quicker the Party grows that leads that activity the more rapid will the whole advance of the working class become. Thus at the municipal elections the importance of Communist councillors as representing a new high stage of working class unity should have been right in the forefront of all our work.

Now the question must be answered: do we continue giving our support only to Labour candidates who accept our proposals or do we advance beyond this?

It is necessary to speak openly on this question now. Although we had at the Party Centre discussed the possibility of a change in our attitude towards Labour candidates who would accept our proposals it was not until the last moment, when our comrades in the districts were already deep in municipal election campaigns that we sent out our statement on policy advising support for Labour candidates under certain conditions and advising withdrawal of our own Party candidates in those places where we were not likely to get a substantial vote.

This very late notification of our change of attitude caused considerable confusion and contributed towards the weakness already referred to.

But we will deal with this question of the elections in relation to the fight of the united front in the most thorough manner at the Party Congress.

Already the discussion is going on in the "**Daily Worker**," while an extremely important article has been prepared for the "**Communist Review**" by Harry Pollitt, the leader of the Party.

The effective solution of this question, the further extension of trade union work and the rapid advance of the Party towards a mass Communist Party and the preparations for the World Congress, these will be the important questions dealt with at the Thirteenth Party Congress.