

In the International

The Thirteenth Congress of the C.P.G.B.

By Harry Pollitt (London)

The Thirteenth Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain will take place on February 2nd to 5th, 1935, in **Manchester**. The Agenda for the Congress is as follows: (1) The United Front and Next Tasks; (2) Work in the Trade Unions; (3) Party Programme of Action; (4) Building the Communist Party.

The Congress is already creating a lively political discussion throughout the Party, as is evidenced by the way that contributions to the Party discussion are pouring in. It is very significant that the majority of these articles are all around the questions of the **united front**, and what is needed to strengthen the building of it, and also what steps should be taken to extend it to cover new phases of working-class political activity.

The last Congress of the Party took place in the Autumn of 1932, and was noteworthy for the clearing up of issues connected with the Trade Union questions. Since 1932, of course there have been a whole series of political events of the greatest importance. The whole line of the National Government; the strike struggles; the emergence of the Mosley Fascist Movement; the temporary triumph of fascism in Germany, Austria and Spain; the rapid drive to war; the attacks on the British workers' standards by the employers and Government, in their drive to lower costs of production and enable British capitalism to defeat its trade competitors. It is also noteworthy for the big encroachments that have been made on the rights and liberties of the working class, and for the character of such legislation as the new Unemployment Act and Sedition Bill.

In all the class struggles since 1932 the Communist Party has played a leading role, and there has undoubtedly been a marked improvement in the mass work of the Party and its work in the trade unions and united front activities. This has led to the Party gaining increased influence in some of the principal cities of Britain, but it has not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the numerical strength of the Party. This fact is doubly alarming when it takes place at a time when there is a left swing amongst the vast majority of the working class, when there is greater interest in Communism than was ever before, and when the workers so magnificently support the work of the Communist Party out of their meagre financial resources.

The hatred of the masses for the National Government reveals itself on every possible occasion, and especially in the recent municipal elections, but it is accompanied also by strong reformist illusions, that in Britain power can be won and Socialism established in other ways than by the revolutionary solution advocated by the Communist Party.

The Thirteenth Congress of the C.P.G.B. will therefore have to face the questions and problems outlined in the Congress Agenda in the light of this background.

In connection with the first point on the Agenda, it is a weakness of the Congress discussion up to now that there has been a lack of contributions dealing with the practical experiences of the Party in the mass united front campaigns that have been carried out recently. But there is a rather important political reason for this, namely, that while splendid activity has been carried out, especially in connection with the anti-fascist movement, we have so far failed decisively to break through the ban on united front activity imposed by the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress leaders. Which means that there are big sections of workers under the influence of the reformist leaders, that we have not yet drawn into mass activity, and that, in spite of certain united front successes, it is still seriously limited in its scope and influence.

The main cause of this weakness is that in the daily united front activity it is still confined to general political issues and campaigns, and not sufficiently concretely related to the local circumstances that exist in particular factories, industries, and working-class localities.

Recently a drive has been made by the Central Committee to overcome this defect in our work, and at the municipal elections in November an important extension of united front activity was agreed upon, as a means of still further strengthening the united front of the whole working class against the representatives of capitalism in the local elections.

Whilst the Party put forward its own candidates in those

places where it had a mass basis, it made important proposals for united front action in other districts to Labour Party candidates around certain united front demands.

The experiences gained in this connection are now exceedingly valuable when considering the further question of the need for the extension of the united front and the line to be decided upon, in order to carry forward further developments, to win the broadest masses of the workers, still under the influence of the reformist leaders, into the daily mass activity alongside the Communists and militant workers.

At the forthcoming Congress of the Party this question will occupy a very important place in the discussion, because the question of the extension of the united front will not only have to be discussed in relation to the local elections, but with a view of working out a clear line in preparation for the coming **General Election**.

In the statement opening the Party Congress Discussion the Political Bureau indicated some of the problems that will have to be discussed in this connection as follows:—

"It is clear that the Communist Party has not changed its views of the Labour Party, of the character of its programme, or of the policy which the Labour Party leaders would endeavour to carry out in a future Labour Government.

"Since this is so, what is the basis of the new extended united front tactics in the elections? The correct understanding of these questions is the key to our whole line in the coming period.

"We need carefully to judge the situation in the Labour Party, its relation to the developing process in the Second International, the line of the Labour Party Executive, the role of the various Left elements, of the Socialist League, etc.

"What is our attitude to the Labour slogan of a Third Labour Government? What should be the tactics of the militant workers at the coming General Elections?"

The Congress will approach the question, not from the point of view of a united front of a platonic character, or from the point of view of unity as an abstract thing in itself. But, that the united front means the development of all available working-class forces in a fighting movement, with its main basis in the factories and trade unions and working-class localities, taking part in every phase of the daily class struggle, and that the stronger this becomes, then the stronger becomes the power of the whole working class against both their capitalist enemies and those who are at present practising a policy of class collaboration with the capitalist enemies. The Congress will undoubtedly work out a clear line, sharply emphasising that there is no change in the views of the Communist Party either of the Labour Party, of its character, its programme, or of the policy which the Labour Party leaders are carrying out now, and will endeavour to carry out in a future Labour Government. It will, on the contrary, emphasise the Left mood of the masses in Britain and the need for the Communist Party giving daily lead and direction to these workers in order that they can be definitely organised for the class struggle and not for the policy of strengthening reformism.

There is a heavy responsibility on the Communist Party at this stage, because of the undoubted fact that the Labour leaders of Britain are now not only the strongest section of the Second International, but are that section which leads the fight against the united front both in Britain and on an international scale. This is in violent contrast to the demands of the British working class, and upon the Communist Party rests the task of being able to organise the mass desire for united action, along concrete lines which can effectively develop the widest possible mass campaign. The Party's decisions at the Thirteenth Congress in connection with the development of the united front and the extension of its policy in the elections can undoubtedly lead to a big acceleration of the fight for united action, which can have important repercussions throughout the working-class movement.

The whole success of this fight for the united front, however, depends upon the recognition that it is not a tactic that is only developed at elections, but that it is the essential way forward and most urgent task for the whole working class, if it is successfully to defend and protect its immediate interests and demands in every phase of the daily fight against the National Government and the employers, and developing the mass movement against fascism and war.

On the Trade Union question important discussions will take

place, because the Party has now many rich experiences since the last Party Congress. It is correct to state that a big turn has been made in the work in the reformist trade unions, but a turn that is entirely insufficient and not commensurate either with the demands of the situation or the possibilities that lie before us. The good results that have been achieved are infinitesimal compared with what can be achieved if the whole Party membership available for work in the trade unions was fully mobilised, and the Party Congress will have the task of ending once and for all any further hesitation and neglect of this work on the part of our comrades.

It is no accident that since the Party really got down to work in the reformist unions in the last years that there have been such significant developments of militant activity in many important Unions, and in many cases strikes, and that the Trades Union Congress leaders have replied to this by new proposals to the Trades Unions and Trades Councils to strengthen their rules and constitution, the aim of which is to prevent the Communists in future holding elective posts in these organisations.

The circular which the Trades Union Congress leaders have issued since their **Weymouth Congress** in September has been aptly dubbed "**the black circular**," and it has met with the fiercest resistance in many important Unions and Trades Councils, and has been flatly turned down in a number of important cases. The fact that these reformist leaders are prepared at this moment, when the workers desire united action more keenly than ever before, to initiate proposals that not only deny the necessity of united action, but are deliberately attempting to split the forces of the working class, is a factor which is not being lost sight of by big sections of the rank and file of the trade union movement, who recognise since our Twelfth Party Congress the splendid work the Communists have done in the trade unions and in the economic struggles.

In discussing the Trade Union question, the Congress will have to take note of the experiences and weaknesses of the Party's work in the economic struggles, and particularly will it have to criticise the inability of the Party to develop so far a really effective campaign that can lead to the unification of the big wages movement which has been a marked feature of trade union events in the last twelve months. There has not been for many years past so many unions demanding wage increases, and absolutely no common lead, strategy or policy whereby the whole of this movement could be co-ordinated around the common demand, backed up by the organised force of the trade union movement as a whole. One of the tasks of the Congress will be to face up to this position, in order that it can clearly be seen that the Communist Party alone fights for the united action of the trade unionists and for their closer consolidation and organisation in their trade unions.

The Congress will have the task, not only of stating in words, but demonstrating in deeds, that the Communists are in the forefront of the struggle for the unity of the trade union organisations of the working class as organs of its class struggle against the employers and National Government, and for the securing of this aim recruiting every available man and woman into the trade unions, as conscious fighters for the carrying out of this task.

If the Congress gives such a lead, it will undoubtedly be warmly welcomed by big sections of trade unionists all over Great Britain, and can lead to a rapid development of mass work in the unions, and the successful carrying through of economic struggles.

The Thirteenth Congress will also have before it a Communist Party **Programme of Action**, around which there will be very important discussions. This Programme of Action will be the Party's reply to the various programmes and policies that have been brought forward by the capitalist and reformist political parties. It will give an outline of what the Communists would carry through and can be made an invaluable means for strengthening the Party's appeal to those tens of thousands of workers who are now interested in Communism, but have not been finally won to the Communist Party. The Programme of Action, when adopted, will have to be popularised in all the daily work of the Party, so that we avoid the all too common mistake in our work, i.e., not linking up the fight for the immediate demands of the working class with the revolutionary aims of the Communist Party.

Finally, the Congress will give considerable attention to the **outstanding problem and weaknesses of the work of the Communist Party in Great Britain**—the neglect of building the Party and recruiting for the Party. Never since the formation of the Party

was the disparity between the influence of the Party and its numerical membership so striking as now.

The reasons for this are not to be found in the objective factors of the situation; they are to be found entirely within the ranks of the Party itself and its methods of work. It is no exaggeration to say that, tireless and unceasing as the work of the majority of the members of the Party undoubtedly is, the last thing that occurs to the comrades is that the value of this work is nullified when it is not accompanied by a steady building up of the Party in the factories, in the trade unions and localities. There are many experiences recently which go to show that, especially when the factory cells set themselves the task to recruit from amongst the workers with whom they are daily in contact, that success immediately attends their efforts, and if this can be done in one case it can be done everywhere. This lack of the will to recruit, this lack of an appreciation that the Party must be built up, as a result of the daily work of Party members, is fatal both for the development of a mass united front firmly bedded in the factories, trade unions, working-class localities, and to the perspective for carrying through the struggle for power.

From top to bottom of the Party this is a fundamental defect in our work which must be eradicated at this Congress. The problem of **Party organisation** must no longer be looked upon as a job for one or two of the more enthusiastic comrades, who are often described as "not being political," but the building of the Party organisation must be looked upon as a political task of the first importance; in fact, it is the only test of the correctness of our political line, our leadership, and our methods of organising campaigns, and the carrying of them through.

The Thirteenth Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain will thoroughly discuss all the problems that the present situation places before the Party, it will discuss them with Bolshevik self-criticism and with a sense of the responsibility of the Communist Party to the British working class and to the toiling millions held in bondage by British imperialism.

Our Martyrs

The Murder of Comrade Kirov

Communiqué of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.

Moscow, December 2.

The Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. makes the following announcement:—The Central Committee, with great grief, informs the Party and the working class, all toilers of the Soviet Union and the workers of the whole world, of the death at the hands of a traitor, of **Sergei Mironovitsch Kirov**, the outstanding functionary of our Party, the fiery, steadfast leader, the beloved leader of the Bolsheviks and of all the workers of Leningrad, the Secretary of the Central and Leningrad Committees of the C.P.S.U., the member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. The loss of Kirov, beloved by the whole working class of the Soviet Union, the sincere Bolshevik and Leninist, unshakable, steadfast Comrade, who gave his whole, bright glorious life for the cause of the working class and of Communism, is in recent years the most serious loss for the whole Party of the Soviet Union. The Central Committee is convinced that the memory of Comrade Kirov, the brilliant example of his steadfast, tireless fight for the proletarian revolution and for the building up of Socialism in the Soviet Union, will inspire millions of proletarians—all toilers, for the further fight for the triumph of Socialism and for the final extermination of all enemies of the working class.

Obituary Article of the Central Committee in Memory of Comrade Kirov

Moscow, December 3.

The following article "In memory of Kirov" was signed by **Stalin, Orjonokidze, Molotov, Kalinin, Voroshilov, Kaganovitsch** and many other members of the Central Committee.

It is stated:

Our Party has met with a great misfortune. On December 1 Comrade Kirov died at the hand of a murderer sent by the class enemy. Not only for us, his friends and comrades, but for all who know him in revolutionary work, to whom he is known as a fighter, comrade and friend, the death of Kirov is an irreparable loss. A man who devoted his whole life to the cause of the working class to Communism for the freeing of mankind, has fallen at the hand of an enemy. Comrade Kirov was a model of a Bolshevik, who