

# THE RED FLAG

Monthly Organ of the Communist League (British Section, International Left Opposition)

Number 7. Vol. I.

One Penny.

January 1934

## OUR TASKS. The Political Situation in Europe

by LEON TROTSKY

Our Belgian friends have asked me to write a foreword to the pamphlet which characterises the political situation of Belgium and the tasks of the proletariat. I must admit that in the last years I had not the opportunity of following the inner life of Belgium from day to day. I shall try of course to fill this gap. To-day at any rate, I would not consider myself justified in speaking with the necessary concreteness on the immediate and practical questions of the struggle of the Belgian proletariat. However, there is also no need for it. Our Belgian comrades, as this pamphlet shows, know how to find their road without outside help.

Instead of a foreword I would like to make a few general remarks on the political situation of Europe and on the tasks of the proletarian vanguard following from it. What is said below refers to Belgium as well, insofar as the general crisis of capitalism, the growth of Fascism and the danger of war puts its decisive mark on the inner life of all the countries of Europe.

### FASCISM OR DEMOCRACY.

The victory of National-Socialism in Germany brought about in other countries not the strengthening of Communist but of Democratic tendencies. In an especially clear form we see this in the examples of England and Norway. But the same process is undoubtedly taking place in a series of other countries as well. It is very possible that the Social-Democracy of Belgium in particular will in the nearest future go through a period of a new political ascent. That reformism is the worst brake on historic development and that the Social-Democracy is doomed to failure, this is ABC to us. But the ABC alone does not suffice. In the general historic decline of reformism, just as in the decline of capitalism, periods of temporary rise are inevitable. The candle burns most brightly before it goes out. The formula: either Fascism or Communism is absolutely correct but only in the final historic analysis. The destructive policy of the Comintern supported by the authority of the workers' state has not only compromised revolutionary methods but has also given to the Social-Democracy, defiled by crimes and treacheries, the opportunity of raising up again over the working class the banner of democracy as the banner of salvation.

Tens of millions of workers are alarmed to the very depths of their hearts by the danger of Fascism. Hitler showed them again what the destruction of working class organisations and of elementary democratic rights means. The Stalinists kept

on asserting for the last couple of years that there is no difference between Fascism and democracy, that Fascism and Social-Democracy are twins. On the tragic experience of Germany the workers of the whole world convinced themselves of the criminal absurdity of such assertions. Therefore the further decline of the Stalinist parties under conditions exceptionally favourable for the revolutionary wing. Therefore also the desire of the workers to hold on to their mass organisations and to their democratic rights. Thank; to the ten-years criminal policy of the Stalinised Comintern the political problem presents itself to the consciousness of the many-millioned working class masses not in the form of a decisive alternative: the dictatorship of Fascism or the dictatorship of the proletariat, but in a form of a more primitive and vague alternative: Fascism or Democracy.

We must take the resultant political situation as it is without making any illusions. Of course, we remain always true to ourselves and to our banner; always and under all conditions we say openly who we are, what we want and where we are going. But we cannot force our program on the masses mechanically. The experience of the Stalinists on this score is sufficiently eloquent. Instead of coupling their locomotive to the train of the working class and accelerating its movement forward, the Stalinists set their locomotive with a loud whistle towards the train of the proletariat and sometimes even collide with it so that only scrap is left of the small locomotive. The consequences of such policy are evident: in some countries the proletariat has fallen a defenceless victim to Fascism, in others it has been thrown back to the positions of reformism.

There can be no thought, of course, of a serious and protracted regeneration of reformism. It is really not a question of reformism in the wide sense of the word but of the instinctive desire of the workers to safeguard their organisations and their "rights." From these purely defensive and purely conservative position the working class can and must in the process of struggle go over to a revolutionary offensive along the whole line. The offensive, in its turn, must make the masses more susceptible to great revolutionary tasks and consequently to our program. But to achieve this we must go through the period opening up before us together with the masses, in their

first ranks, without dissolving in them but also without detaching from them.

The Stalinists (and their miserable imitators, the Brandelists) declared democratic slogans under prohibition for all the countries of the world: for India which did not as yet accomplish its liberating national revolution; for Spain where the proletariat vanguard must yet find the ways for transforming the creeping bourgeois revolution into a Socialist one; for Germany, where the crushed and atomised proletariat is deprived of all that it achieved during the last century; for Belgium, the proletariat of which does not take its eyes off its Eastern borders and, suppressing a deep mistrust, supports the party of democratic "pacifism" (Vandervelde and Co.). The Stalinists deduce the bare renunciation of democratic slogans in a purely abstract way from the general characteristic of our epoch as an epoch of imperialism and of socialist revolution. Thus presented the question contains not even a grain of dialectics! Democratic slogans and allusions cannot be abolished by decree. It is necessary that the masses go through them and outlive them in the experience of battles. The task of the proletariat consists in coupling its locomotive to the train of the masses. It is necessary to find the dynamic elements in the present defensive position of the working class; we must make the masses draw conclusions from their own democratic logic, we must widen and deepen the channels of the struggle. And on this road quantity passes over into quality.

### THE BOLSHEVIK EXPERIENCES.

Let us recall once more that in 1917 when the Bolsheviks were immeasurably stronger than any one of the present sections of the Comintern, they continued to demand the earliest convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the lowering of the voting age, the right of suffrage for soldiers, the election of officials, etc., etc. The main slogan of the Bolsheviks "all power to the Soviets" meant from the beginning of April up to September 1917, all power to the Social-Democracy (Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries). When the reformists entered into a governmental coalition with the bourgeoisie, the Bolsheviks put forth the slogan "down with the capitalist ministers." This signified again: workers, force the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries to take the whole power into their hands! The political experi-

ence of the only successful proletarian revolution is perverted and falsified by the Stalinists beyond recognition. Our task here also consists in re-establishing the facts and drawing from them the necessary conclusions for the present.

We, Bolsheviks, consider that the real salvation from Fascism and war lies in the revolutionary conquest of power and the establishing of the proletarian dictatorship. You, socialist workers, do not agree to this road. You hope not only to save what has been gained but also to move forward along the road of democracy. Good! As long as we've not convinced you and attracted you to our side we are ready to follow this road with you to the end. But we demand that you carry on the struggle for democracy not in words but in deeds. Everybody admits—everyone in his way — that in the present conditions a "strong government" is necessary. Well then, make your party open up a real struggle for a strong democratic government. For this it is necessary first of all to sweep away all the remnants of the feudal state. It is necessary to give the suffrage to all men and women who reached their 18th birthday, also to the soldiers in the army. Full concentration of legislative and executive power in the hands of one chamber!

### FOR REAL STRUGGLE.

Let your party open up a serious campaign under these slogans, let it arouse millions of workers, let it conquer power through the drive of the masses. This, at any rate, would be a serious attempt of struggle against Fascism and war. We, Bolsheviks, would retain the right to explain to the workers the insufficiency of democratic slogans; we could not take upon ourselves the political responsibility for the Social-Democratic government; but we would honestly help you in the struggle for such a government; together with you we would repel all attacks of bourgeois reaction. More than that, we would bind ourselves before you not to undertake any revolutionary actions which go beyond the limits of democracy (real democracy) so long as the majority of the workers did not consciously place itself on the side of revolutionary dictatorship.

For the coming period this should be our attitude towards Socialist and non-party workers. Having taken together with them the initial positions of democratic defence, we must impart to this defence immediately a serious proletarian character. We must firmly say to ourselves, we shall not allow that which occurred in Germany! It is necessary that

(Continued on page 3, column 1.)

# DEATH OF A HERO

The heroic figures of the German Revolution are passing from the scene: Clara Zetkin soon after Hitler came into power, now Max Hoeltz is reported "drowned while boating" on the Oka River in the U.S.S.R., last September. His death has received little notice in the Comintern Press: his great fighting nature had little in common with that of the marionettes whose puppet play now occupies the Moscow stage. Hoeltz stood in the direct line of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who but two years ago were so foully slandered by Stalin and his hacks. By his activities Hoeltz became a symbol to the German workers of all that was best and bravest in the band that carried on the struggle — arms in hand — for a Soviet Germany.

Born in 1899, the son of a farm labourer, he went from job to job and studied hard in his efforts to win a decent living. It was the war which first caused Hoeltz to question the existing order and made

found the local section of the Communist Party.

## WORKERS' RULE.

Organising the unemployed, he immediately came into open struggle with the authorities. The mayor, faced with the anger of the unemployed, sent for the military who arrested the entire Unemployed Council. Hoeltz escaped, and with three other unemployed went to the Town Hall to demand that the troops leave the town. The officer in command pleaded for time. The answer of the unemployed was to storm the Town Hall, disarm the soldiers—who were none too willing to fight—and made them leave the town.

The Unemployed Council then took over the administration: profiteers' food hoards were seized and distributed, and the local capitalists compelled to grant credits to the town for the purchase of foodstuffs for the starving workers. One incident is typical of Hoeltz's methods. When an employer, refusing to give an old farm hand an increase in wages, said "Go to Hoeltz, perhaps he will give you something," Hoeltz replied by ordering an increase for all his landowners' employees, or his horses would be sold by the Unemployed Council who would distribute the proceeds among the workers on his estate. The landowner agreed.

The workers' rule was ended by the arrival of troops sent by the Social Democratic Governor of Dresden. Again the movement was suppressed: again Hoeltz escaped. For weeks he remained in the district while the soldiers sought him: so unsuccessfully that small boys would follow the soldiers around shouting "Here is Hoeltz, I've got him in my pocket." Hoeltz, after working in other districts, escaped over the border.

## THE REACTION.

The news of the Kapp Putsch—when troops under General Luttwitz marched on Berlin, drove out the Republican Government and established a military government—brought him back at once from safety into danger. In the General Strike, which overthrew the military government, and in the struggles that followed, Hoeltz played a prominent part. Returning to his own district, he organised Red Army recruiting stations and, with the regular payments of money levied from local capitalists, the Red Army was maintained, and revolutionaries all over Germany were supplied with aid and with arms. For quite a period Hoeltz and his armed workers bands controlled Falkenstein and surrounding districts and repelled the reactionary troops. The Government, after having suppressed the rebel movement in the Ruhr, surrounded the district with 50,000 regular troops, armed in the most modern style. In the face of this Hoeltz and his comrades, after some skirmishes, disbanded their army.

The widespread revolt of the

workers failed, in the words of Hoeltz himself, because "during the period of the Kapp Putsch the most essential factor which might have brought about the ultimate victory of the revolution in Germany, was lacking: a clear-sighted, well-disciplined Communist Party, which would have acted along firm revolutionary lines, did not exist in Germany."

The abortive rising in Central Germany in the following year again found Hoeltz organising his workers' guard and playing a courageous part in the struggle against the Government troops. This rising too was crushed and, after several escapes and continued activity, Hoeltz was betrayed by a spy and arrested. In prison he was treated with great brutality, but at his trial he made a great stand. He was charged with the murder of a landowner: this charge he declared false. But for all the acts of his workers' army and organisation he accepted responsibility and declared without hesitation that the workers' victory could not be achieved save by force of arms. While he was making this stand, Brandler, in another court was stating that the Communist Party could get power by peaceful means, a statement that greatly distressed Hoeltz. Indeed, his autobiography avoids rather pointedly more than a passing reference to the Party in these struggles.

## IN PRISON.

The death sentence was demanded but he was sentenced to penal servitude for life on the false charge of murder, and it was not until 1923 that hunger-strike and outside agitation secured his release. His health had suffered through imprisonment and he went shortly after to the Soviet Union. He returned to Germany and was wounded by a Fascist and had to go back to the U.S.S.R. Hoeltz, unlike so many others, did not regard his stay in the Soviet Union as marking the end of his revolutionary activity. He had entered the movement, without theoretical knowledge, under the influence of great events: he now set to work to acquire a thorough grasp of Marxism. This, he hoped, would prove a valuable weapon for his work in Germany, which all the time he longed to take up again. As far back as last February, at the time when Hitler became Chancellor, Hoeltz addressed a request to the Comintern to allow him to return to Germany to aid in the fight against Fascism. This was denied him.

## FOR THE NEW PARTY.

Hoeltz shared the views of his old comrades Wolf and Wollenberg, recently expelled, on the reasons for the collapse of the German Communist Party. In March he declared his support for the view that a new party was needed to replace the broken and besmirched Communist Party. At that time he held discussions in his hotel room in Moscow and repeatedly expressed the opinion that the defeat of the German Party was due to the false

policy of the Comintern and to Stalin's "Socialism in One Country" theory. He held the expulsion of Trotsky and the Opposition to be one of the greatest crimes of the Russian Communist Party. Had he been able to return to Germany, there is little doubt but that he would have followed so many of his comrades in breaking with the Stalinist International and aiding in the rebuilding of the German revolutionary movement.

The workers of Germany and of the world have lost a great fighter. We mourn his passing. His memory will live, an inspiration to the youth. The fight goes on: our ranks will be the weaker for his death, the stronger for his great example.

G.

## A Note on Max Eastman,

To the Militant, Jan. 28th, 1933.

Dear Comrades:

Recently I have repeatedly had opportunity to convince myself of the fact that Max Eastman is carrying on a systematic fight against materialist dialectics, the philosophical foundation of Marxism and scientific Communism. In its con-

## THE PRICE OF RECOGNITION!

What did the Soviet Union and the world's workers pay for the recently concluded agreement between Litvinov and Roosevelt?

Number 8 of the "Communist" contains the facts. No other workers' paper in this country has so far published them. The supply is limited.

Price: Post Free 1 3/4d.  
Per dozen 9d.

## WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE GERMAN COMMUNIST PARTY?

The sensational declaration of Maria Reese, Communist deputy in the Reichstag and the letter of Karl Friedberg, one of the oldest members of the German C.P. and one who has held prominent posts in the Party and in the International.

With an introduction by L. Trotsky.  
Price: Post Free 1 3/4d.  
Per Dozen 9d.

him ask "what use this butchery could have for any one." While serving on the Russian front he heard of the Revolution. Hoeltz himself says that the news "made a tremendous impression even on those of us who were not Socialists. . . . Almost all of us were filled with the same thought: that this, at least, was the beginning of the end of the war."

Discharged from the army in November, 1918, his homeward journey through Germany enabled him to see something of the changes then taking place in the country. "On the journey," he wrote "I began to feel the enormous power of the crowd, which was quite able to march forward and to act without officers. . . . I suddenly realised that these men threatened to crush everything that stood in their way." He heard of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils then being set up all over Germany. On reaching his home town, Falkenstein, he found that no such Council existed there. He at once called a meeting and got one going. At that meeting he came into conflict with the local Independent Socialist Party leader, a conflict which, after some months in their ranks, grew with the sweep of the movement and led Hoeltz to

tent and its theoretical tendency this fight does not differ in any way from the other varieties of petty bourgeois revisionism, beginning with Bernsteinism (in its philosophical-theoretical parts). If Eastman while so doing keeps his warm sympathy for the October revolution and even for the Left Opposition this crying illogicality is subjectively honourable for him but does not raise by one iota the value of his criticism of Marxism.

I could have left the Croton variety of revisionism silently to its proper destiny, if I had not been bound for a long time to Eastman himself by personal and literary ties. Eastman recently translated three volumes of my History of the Revolution into the English language. I have expressed to him my sincere thankfulness for this, and am prepared to repeat it here. But as soon as Eastman attempts to translate Marxian dialectics into the language of vulgar empiricism, his work provokes in me a feeling which is the direct opposite of thankfulness. For the purpose of avoiding all doubts and misunderstandings I consider it my duty to bring this to the knowledge of everybody.

With Communist greetings,  
L. TROTSKY.

## OUR SPANISH COMRADES SLOGANS.

The working class of Spain is in mortal danger of repression.

The Reaction has taken yet another step, and prepares itself to terminate with violence the revolutionary period, to liquidate the minimum conquests obtained over the two years and to undertake at the very foundations an offensive against the proletariat.

The moment is critical, but it would be a crime to consider the battle lost, and let things slide by discouragement.

The Spanish working class, which has displayed such amazing vitality, is willing to struggle. To do this, the will to struggle must be organised; nothing will achieve this as effectively as the immediate formation of the United Front of all the industrial and political organisations of the proletariat. The E.C. works actively to this end, and has a strong hope of seeing its efforts crowned with success.

The District Cities and the Local Groups must second these efforts by putting the United Front proposal to all district and local organisations. This United Front must be sought with the immediate aim of building up a barrier against the reaction; in organising the joint action of the working class our slogan must be "Action struggle against the Reaction: prevent the assembling of the elected Cortes."

Around these slogans it is possible to group all sections for struggle.

The groups must communicate at once to the E.C. the result of its activities along the lines laid down. E.C. Communist-League of Spain.

OUR TASKS. (Continued from page 1.) every class-conscious worker permeate himself through and through with the thought of not allowing Fascism to raise its head. It is necessary systematically and persistently to surround workers' homes, publishing houses and clubs with a circle of proletarian guard. It is necessary just as persistently to encircle the hearths of Fascism (newspapers, clubs, fascist barracks) with a proletarian blockade. We must make fighting agreements political, trade-union, cultural, sport, co-operative and other working class organisations for common actions for the defence of the institutions of proletarian democracy. The more serious and thoughtful, the less loud and boastful character the work will have, the sooner we will gain the confidence of the proletariat, beginning with the youth, and the surer it will lead to victory.

That is the way I picture the basic characteristics of a truly Marxian policy for the coming period. In different countries of Europe this policy will, of course, assume a different form depending on national circumstances. To follow attentively all the changes in the situation and all the shifts in the consciousness of the masses and to put forth at every new stage slogans flowing from the whole situation—in this consists the task of revolutionary leadership. Nov. 7th, 1933.

## OUR CRITICS

In the Official Discussion Organ of the I.L.P., "Controversy," for November, an article by Comrade Trotsky appeared, entitled "Whither the I.L.P.?", (which develops the material printed under the same heading in our last issue). The "Daily Worker," devoted space to a reply, headed; "Mr. Trotsky Points the Way to the Morass — Counter-Revolutionary Advice to the I.L.P.". Objection is taken to the way in which Comrade Trotsky criticised the relationship which existed between the bureaucracy of the British Trade Union movement and the Comintern through the medium of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee, and the results which followed the General Strike in 1926. "British workers who know the facts about this episode in British History, and can see the impudent distortions of Trotsky, will be wary of Trotsky's "history" with regard to Germany and China."

Let us turn to the "Communist International" for October 15th, 1926, where J. T. Murphy and Page Arnot said: "Whereas the viewpoint of the opposition in the Soviet C.C. demanding the rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee is profoundly erroneous, so on the other hand the refusal to criticise sharply the treacherous conduct of the General Council leaders is also a grave error. Such a position, shielding "generous" endeavours to preserve the Anglo-Russian Committee at any cost, objectively means aid to the opportunists. This tendency has several times displayed itself in the ranks of the British Communist Party." This is what actually took place and the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee was a disgraceful episode in the revolutionary movement of this country.

## THE CULLEN-GASTER R.P.C.

In the December issue of the Bulletin published by the Revolutionary Policy Committee of the Independent Labour Party a survey is made of the present relations between the I.L.P. and the Communist Party. The R.P.C. says that the N.A.C. of the I.L.P. has continued an association with certain dissident elements on the Continent which, "combined with the Left Opposition" must lead it in support of a "line of opposition to the present Soviet rule that may well endanger socialist construction in Russia, or into an impotent isolation from the workers of the world." We do not think that these comrades actually mean that the alternative to impotent isolation from the workers is opposition to Soviet rule!

They also say: "we do not welcome the formation of the Com-

munist League whose primary purpose is to disrupt the revolutionary movement." No arguments are given in proof of this charge, and it seems that the views of those responsible for this statement have been influenced by the "Daily Worker," which J. Gaster (one of the editors of the Bulletin), not so long ago described as "continually guilty of the most blatant misrepresentation in respect of everything and everybody who does not see entirely eye to eye with the C.P." Charges of disruption are easily made, but we must again recall that Gaster described the Communist Party's United Front approach to the I.L.P. as "apparently simply a platform from which to expose the 'treachery' of the I.L.P.". Pollitt replied that "No Murrays, Cullens, or Gasters can give this (revolutionary) lead to the I.L.P."

## THE "DAILY WORKER"

The "Daily Worker" devoted a review to the Bulletin, and gloried in the fact that the R.P.C. does not countenance any playing with "Trotskyism." The now notorious quotation of Losovsky on the policy of the R.I.L.U. was referred to with his "repudiation." We shall return to this question in a forthcoming issue. In the meantime we would suggest that the R.P.C. asks for the French, German, and Russian editions of the R.I.L.U. Magazine containing Losovsky's speech and see whether this was mistranslated. Significantly enough the "Daily Worker," asks the R.P.C. to examine "communist practice in the trade unions in Great Britain during the last twelve months." Surely this gives away their case?

Efforts are now being made to cover over the ultra-left trade union policy which led to the formation of "Red Trade Unions." In this connection it is as well to recall the Leeds Communist Party Congress of 1929 at which the British application of this policy received endorsement. Summing up the decisions of the Congress in the "Labour Monthly" for January 1930, William Rust wrote: "The Congress succeeded in establishing clarity in the question of the formation of new unions, pointing to the great revolutionary significance of the United Miners' Union of Scotland and the United Clothing Workers, declaring in principle for the formation of new unions, but at the same time explaining the conditions which rendered it necessary to form them and rejecting all tendencies which endeavoured to show that the general formation of new unions was the present task of the revolutionary movement." (Our emphasis).

## POSTSCRIPT TO THE 'PORTRAIT OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM'

The first anniversary of the Nazi dictatorship is approaching. All the tendencies of the regime have been taking on a distinct and precise character. The "socialist" revolution which appeared to the petty bourgeois masses as the necessary complement to the national revolution, has been officially liquidated and denounced. The fraternization of the classes reached its peak when the possessors waived their right to hors d'oeuvre and desserts on a day especially proclaimed by the government in favour of the dispossessed. The struggle against unemployment has culminated in dividing the existing half-starvation rations in two. There remains only the equalization of the statistics. Planned autarchy proves to be nothing more than just another stage of economic decadence.

The more impotent the police regime of the Nazis is in the sphere of economy, the more it is forced to place the weight of its effort upon the field of foreign policy. That corresponds completely to the internal dynamics of the so thoroughly aggressive German capitalism. The startling sudden turn of the Nazi leadership towards peace-loving declarations can astonish only those who are completely lim-

## SPAIN!

To understand the recent events in Spain you cannot do better than read "The Spanish Revolution in Danger" by L. Trotsky which gives a complete analysis of the forces in Spain and which predicted the recent uprising.

Post Free 9d.

## RUSSIA!

Soviet Economy in Danger, by L. Trotsky. Post Free 7ld.

ited in their outlook. What other method than this has Hitler at his disposal to throw off the responsibility for domestic misery on the shoulders of the external enemy and to pile up the explosives of nationalism under the pressure of the dictatorship? This part of the program which was outlined even before the Nazis assumption to power is being fulfilled today with iron determination before the eyes of the whole world. The date of the new European catastrophe is determined by the time necessary for the rearmament of Germany. It is not a matter of months, but neither is it a matter of decades. A few years suffice to stagger anew into a war, if the internal forces of Germany do not themselves stop Hitler in time.

L. T.

## OUR PAPER IN DANGER!

We missed the December issue through lack of money. This number is brought out under great difficulties. We ask you to send every penny you can spare.

## SAVE THE LIFE OF CHEN DU SIU!

We, the undersigned, draw the attention of all working-class organisations to the arrest and imprisonment of Chen Du Siu, an outstanding and courageous leader of the Chinese workers' movement, now undergoing a sentence of 13 years imprisonment by the Chinese Nationalist Government.

Chen Du Siu has a long record of service in the struggle of the Chinese people for their freedom. Born in 1875, in his early years he worked mainly in the sphere of editing radical and literary papers and in educating the youth of China, founding for this purpose the monthly "The Youth," a paper which played an important role in the development of the Chinese social and cultural movement. During the years 1916-1919 he played a prominent part in preparing the ground for the development of the mass National movement, which began with the students' anti-Japanese Demonstration of May 30, 1919. At the height of this agitation Chen was imprisoned by the pro-Japanese Peking Government as the author of a seditious leaflet.

After his release he went to Shanghai where he founded the Chinese Communist Party. Twice arrested during 1921-1922 by the French authorities, his release was secured by the protests of the Chinese workers. From that time until 1929 Chen was General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, playing a prominent part in the National movement of that period. Following upon his break with the leaders of the Communist International, and his expulsion from the Chinese Communist Party, he assisted in the founding of the Chinese Section of the International Left Opposition. The Chinese National Govern-

ment, under the influence of the notorious Chiang Kai Shek, long sought his arrest, but they were not successful until October 1932, when he was put on trial for working to overthrow the Chinese capitalist Government.

Obviously, this sentence of 13 years upon a man of 58 is a death sentence, especially under the conditions existing in Chinese prisons. We urge all working-class bodies to join in the demand for the release of our fellow fighter in the cause of the emancipation of the working-class. All protests should be sent to the Chinese Embassy, 49 Portland Place, W.1, and to the Socialist and Communist press.

Signed by:

Tom Mann, C.P.  
James Maxton, I.L.P.  
Feiner Brockway, I.L.P.  
W. Harris,  
Alec Gossip,  
A. E. Harvey,  
Albert Thomas,  
Percy J. Johnson,  
A. J. Bickell,  
J. L. Swift,  
C. W. Taylor,  
Walter Randall,  
John Jagger, N.U.D.A.W.  
Dick Beech, Pres. Chem. W. U.  
Edwin W. Markwell, Nat. Org.  
Chemical Workers Union,  
Arthur Gillian, Gen. Sec. C.W.U.  
Jack Tanner, Organiser, A.E.U.  
W. Howells, Engineer, A.E.U.

(A copy of this appeal was sent to Harry Pollitt of the Communist Party and to A. G. Walkden of the T.U.C. General Council. No reply has been received).

## THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE of ACTION

A DISCUSSION ARTICLE.

A call has been issued jointly by the Independent Labour Party and the Communist Party for the organisation of a great national Hunger March. The march has already commenced; to co-incide with the arrival of the marchers in London a great conference of "action" is to be held. While the exhortations and calls have been numerous the actual work of this conference remains uncertain. It is to be a conference of action; it is to rouse the workers to fight around certain immediate demands. This much we know — but this is by no means sufficient.

This conference is likely to play a prominent part in the activities of militant workers within the coming weeks. For this reason, and because such a conference can perform a useful function at the present time, we offer here some points for the consideration of those taking part in this effort.

## THE PRESENT SITUATION.

In the first place to estimate the tasks before such an assembly it is necessary to see the existing political and economic situation as it is — not as we might like it to be. The exaggerated descriptions of the Communist Party press are far from true and likely to mislead the movement unless corrected. The last few months have seen a weakening of the workers' movement. This is best evidenced by the figures of strikes that have taken place during this year — the lowest for some time past. The long drawn out economic crisis, the heavy unemployment, strike defeats and the cowardly attitude of the reformists — these factors have all played their part in causing a decline of the workers' activities, both in the political and industrial field. To understand and to recognise this is an essential step towards finding the correct policy for the conference.

## THE BREAK.

The first signs of a check to the downward tendency of industry have appeared: here and there it is more than a check: there is even an upward trend. The first to feel such changes are the workers in industry and from this naturally develops a revival, a renewed readiness to fight. More confidence appears in the ranks of the movement. This has not yet had time to find its reflection in the strike figures, although the demands being put forward by several national unions are indications, but it has reflected itself in the recent by-elections. The Labour Party drop of 1931 is seen to be temporary: the figures approach, and in some cases top the peak-

for everything they do, sometimes from the right, and sometimes from the left. In doing this, he aligns himself with the enemies of the U.S.S.R., for what better anti-Soviet propaganda for the capitalist press than that "great leader" of the revolution turning round and attacking the present policy of the U.S.S.R. Now Trotsky lives well on the income derived from his articles for the capitalist press, which he can publish, only because he is recognised now to be on the side of the counter-revolution.

Of course, we do not deny that Trotsky has a good journalistic style. His book may make good reading. But please read the other side of the case. Take Stalin's "Leninism" Vols. I and II, and compare what is said there with Trotsky's story. Trotsky cleverly twists everything in order to show that he was right all along, he hides his fundamental disagreements with Lenin and the Party, and tries to make out that he is a misunderstood hero. But we can only emphasise this fact: if Trotsky had been a good Communist, he would have been loyal and accepted the Party's condemnation of him, rather than turn against the Party. His whole line of action since his expulsion proves the correctness of the Party's treatment of him.

We shall always be glad to hear from you.

Yours fraternally,  
INNA MARR,  
Chief Editor.

year 1929 figures. These are signs, in our opinion, that we can expect, in the coming year, an all-round revival of the movement, increasing strike struggles and growing hostility towards the present government.

## TRADE UNION WORK.

This perspective raises urgently the whole question of our work in the organisations which organise or lead the vast masses of workers. Chief among these are the unions. Here much clarity is needed. The policy of "independent leadership," which has had such fatal results for the Communist Party needs to be abandoned. The policy of "new Unions" must be examined, together with the notorious "united front from below." This is a necessary preliminary to serious work among the trade union workers. The basis of our drive must be the utilisation of the existing trade unions and trades councils for the purpose of securing — not "independent action" which is fantastic — but action by these unions through the pressure of the rank-and-file. Those who attempt to set up "new unions," or to advocate "independent leadership" or to set up "workers' councils" in the face of the existing situation will find themselves isolated from the workers.

## THE UNEMPLOYED.

The Hunger March also raises important points of policy in regard to the unemployed workers' fight. It is not necessarily true that the existence of the N.C.W.M. is an advantage, either to the unemployed or to the revolutionary movement.

Conditions have changed greatly since the N.U.W.M. was first founded. Changed conditions demand, very often, a serious re-consideration of tactics. The unemployed associations set up by the T.U.C. and organised around the existing Trades Councils offers a much wider and more permanent form of work for militants. In our opinion the revolutionaries should agitate for these to be established in areas where they do not at present exist and should, where they are set up, enter them for the purpose of converting them into fighting instruments of the unemployed and as means of bridging the gulf between the employed and the unemployed.

## POLITICAL SLOGAN.

In re-directing its work, in penetrating into the ranks of the reformist workers, the revolutionary movement will soon be faced with the problem of the political slogan most suitable for giving every aspect of the reviving workers' struggle a political content and setting, the immediate objective most likely to give political meaning to the agitation. To cry "Down with the National Government" is not enough. There must be a positive slogan indicating the way forward. No one will suggest that we have reached the stage where we can call for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Since this is so it seems to many that only the slogan of "The Labour Government," on the basis of militant demands, can bring the movement together, bridge the present gulf that lies between the reformist workers and the small revolutionary section and carry the whole movement forward to a higher stage of struggle.

## A DISCUSSION.

In putting this forward we do so in the hope that consideration and discussion will result in the establishing of the policy most likely to advance the revolutionary movement nearer to its goal. We believe that the policy advocated by Lenin and by the Communist International in its revolutionary days is the one most likely to aid our advance. We refer our readers to "Left Wing Communism" by Lenin. In its pages will be found an outline of tactics which, in our opinion, alone can secure the advance of our movement. We invite the opinions of our readers on this question to which we shall return in future issues.

Published by  
H. Dewar, 36 West Side, London, S.W.4.  
Printed by  
I.N. (T.U.), 129-131 Bedford St., London, E.

## MOSCOW RE-CALLING!

As an example of the devious ways of fighting against the Left Opposition we publish the following letter which was sent to one of our readers in Nelson, Lancashire, who asked for information regarding the treatment of Comrade Trotsky. This letter is from the Moscow Wireless Station, written by the Chief Editor, and is really so amusing that we think our readers will enjoy the joke, although it was not intended as a joke of course by the writer.

Radio Centre, Solianka, 12, Moscow,  
U.S.S.R.  
24.11.33.

Dear Comrades,

We are glad to answer your questions. You remark that after reading Trotsky's book ("The History of the Russian Revolution") you feel that he has been badly treated. Of course, that is just what Trotsky wanted you to feel, but you must study the other side of the question before you decide. Remember that Trotsky was condemned not only by the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., but by the Communist International, because he refused to accept one of the basic principles of the Party, namely, the disciplined acceptance of all Party decisions. He tried to form his own faction in the Party, in opposition, which was a serious violation of Party discipline, and only after that was he expelled.

Now why did Trotsky want to form his own opposition? We may state with all authority that Trotsky never fully understood the line of Bolshevism thoroughly. Before the Revolution of 1917, Trotsky played the role of continual vacillation, according to the way the wind was blowing, and fundamentally, he was at variance with the Bolsheviks on many questions. For a long time, Trotsky was a Menshevik and for a long time held the view that the Bourgeois Revolution could not be carried on into the Proletarian Revolution, which was the Bolshevik view. But when he saw that things were going well for the Bolsheviks, Trotsky came over to our side, and for a time was extremely active, though always having his own point of view . . . almost always in opposition to Lenin. This point of view was based fundamentally on a misunderstanding of the role of the peasants in the Revolution. The Mensheviks, of whom Trotsky had been one previously, had wanted to see a bourgeois democracy follow the revolution, without proceeding to the dictatorship of the Proletariat. Trotsky abandoned this view when he joined the Bolsheviks, but as is common in such cases, instead of

firmly grasping the Bolshevik position, went over to the extreme "Left" from which he put forward a theory of a most rigid form of Proletarian Dictatorship, against the whole peasantry, who were to be an exploited class, subject to the dictatorship of the workers, until the world revolution took place. With this line, Trotsky argued that Socialism could not be built in one country alone, and hence he stood for a "temporary" oppression of the peasants, pending the world revolution.

## THE PEASANTS.

Comrade Stalin, who was always unflatteringly the follower of Lenin, fought strongly against this "Leftism" of Trotsky. He pointed out that once the proletarian revolution had been accomplished, it was essential that the workers should form active alliance with the poor peasants, and should neutralise the middle peasants in developing large-scale socialist agriculture on a co-operative basis, together with the overthrow of the village capitalists, the kulaks. Trotsky's policy would have meant a permanent state of tension, a workers' state continually up against individualist peasants, while patiently waiting for the "world revolution" to solve the difficulties. While Stalin, too, recognises the necessity for world Socialism through revolution and the proletarian dictatorship all over the world, he emphatically pointed out that to take Trotsky's thesis would mean to perpetuate a fundamental contradiction in the Soviet Union, and at the same time to be completely defeatist, since it "was not possible to build socialism in one country." This view, he showed, was completely against the line of Lenin, who showed that once power had been seized it was essential all the time to go forward.

## "LEFT" POLICY.

We refer to the line of Trotsky as "Left" because, once he had joined the Bolsheviks, he indulged in "Left" phrases, suggesting a line of policy "still more revolutionary" than that which was actually adopted. This line, common among those who have come in from parties to the right, unable to discriminate between a really left policy that is practical and the mouthing of "left" phrases that would lead to disaster in practice, is part of the petty bourgeois outlook of Trotsky, who always had the individualist and demagogic desire for leadership at heart rather than the disciplined struggle of the masses.

The real line of Trotsky is revealed now by his attitude. He attacks the U.S.S.R. and the Communist International