

- INTERNATIONAL -

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C O N T E N T S

In the International

Theses on the Tactics of the October Retreat and on the next Tasks of the C. P. of Germany

Relief for Germany

Edo Fimmen: The Trade Unions and the International Workers' Relief

Fascism

G. Masci: Letter from Italy

Our Problems

L. Trotzky: On the Peasant Question

The Women's Movement

The Women's Movement in China

The Youth Movement

Prepare for the Commemoration Day of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg

Red Relief

The Red Relief at its Post

Appeals

Do not forget Mateu and Nicolau!

Book Reviews

D. B. Ryasanov: The Posthumous Writings of Marx and Engels

IN THE INTERNATIONAL

Theses on the Tactics of the October Retreat and on the next Tasks of the C. P. of Germany.

(Elaborated and laid down by order of the majority of the C. C. of the C. P. of Germany.)

I.

The Situation before the October Events.

The political situation in Germany before and during the October events was objectively revolutionary in the highest degree. The November republic was completely exhausted by the international complications of Germany resulting from the liquidation of the Ruhr adventure, by the rapid economic decay and by the increasing class antagonisms. Civil war seemed unavoidable. The Coalition parties hastened to do away with the democratic form of state through fear of the imminent proletarian revolution. They surrendered power to the Fascist generals, in order to save the bourgeois society and the capitalist form of ownership from the proletarian dictatorship. The Social Democratic Party of Germany including all tendencies, was a helper and an accomplice of the White Dictatorship, which alone could still save the domination of the great bourgeoisie.

II.

Mistakes of Preparation and of Strategy.

The retreat of the party in the October struggles is to be explained not only by organisatory, military or technical defects, nor by the unfavourable general proportion of forces, which was far more unfavourable when the Party adopted its measures for struggle than in the decisive month, but before all by the mistakes in regard to the tactical and strategical attitude of the party in the struggle for winning over the majority of the proletariat, which was the first premise for success. These mistakes were the result of a false valuation of the Party's role in these struggles. The main mistakes to be recorded are the following:

a) The Party did not perceive at the right time the impor-

tance of the great proletarian mass struggles in the Ruhr District, in Upper Silesia and of the Cuno strike, and hence it did not change its position accordingly. These struggles were clear signs of increasing vigour and desire to fight on the part of the German proletariat.

b) The Party, furthermore, began its preparation for an armed uprising not at the same time as it declared the dissolution of democracy (Cuno epoch and Ruhr occupation), but only immediately before the arrival of the White Dictatorship, from which resulted the feverish, eleventh hour preparation for the military struggles and the feeble arming of the workers in the decisive days.

c) The Party tried to delay elementary mass movements before the October events up to the „final stroke“ and thereby hindered mass movements, instead of furthering them. The press and the united front organs were utilized too little for preparing the struggle politically and for engaging in it. As a result, the struggle was taken up almost entirely as a struggle of the Party and not as a united struggle of the proletariat; the party failed to connect its final aim: Dictatorship of the Proletariat, closely with the transition demands and with the partial struggles.

d) The Party has misjudged the role and the character of the left Social Democratic Party's leaders and has allowed the rise of the illusion within the ranks of the Party, that these leaders would fight together with the proletarian vanguard.

e) In the governments of single states, the Party has not sufficiently utilized the strategic positions for mobilizing the masses for organized resistance.

f) The cardinal mistake of the strategic attitude was, however, the Party's preparing itself exclusively for a „final struggle“ for obtaining political power and its rejecting and preventing partial struggles, struggles with partial demands and with less aggressive means and methods of struggle.

g) Following on this cardinal mistake, there was constructed an abstract calculation of the proportion of forces, without knowing or having examined the real proportions of forces. The examination of the proportion of forces and the determination of the date of final struggle can only be calculated and fixed by following these struggles themselves. This false theoretical strategy led to the evasion of any fight.

h) Finally, in the decisive days for the Party, the importance of the number of arms was generally over-estimated, while the enormous subjective force and the readiness of the proletarian

vanguard to offer sacrifices (lessons of the Hamburg struggles) were generally under-valued.

i) The fixed determination only to pass from the defence of the position in Central Germany to the final struggle, was false. As a consequence, after the White troops entered Central Germany, a great disorientation took place.

III.

The Role of the Party in the October Crisis.

The Party mobilized resistance against the attack of the White Dictatorship with all the forces and means at its disposal. In the decisive moment, however, after the enemy had engaged in the most violent offensive, it evaded this struggle. This abdication without struggle made the masses confused, weakened confidence in the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, lessened the great sympathies existing for the Communist movement, strengthened the vigour and the self-confidence of the enemy, hindered disintegration and derangement within the ranks of the White bands, and thus in an objectively revolutionary period, made more difficult the future struggles of the proletariat. The retreat of the Party during and after the Chemnitz Conference resulted from the great mistakes in the preparations for the final struggle, mentioned above.

The retreat without struggle was false, because

a) the Party and the active portion of the proletariat, being ready for the final struggle, did not understand the surrender of the positions in Central Germany without a struggle and did not comprehend the necessity of this retreat.

b) Among the hesitant and those portions of the proletariat and the impoverished middle strata sympathizing with the C. P. of Germany, confidence in the revolutionary solution of the economic, political and national problems by the Party became weakened.

IV.

Perspectives of the Revolutionary Development.

The question put on the order of the day within the Party after the October defeat: Revolutionary rise or a deep decline of the revolutionary wave? can only be answered by the perspective of international development. This question is most closely connected with the question of the development of the capitalist system and of the aggravation or mitigation of the relations of the imperialistic powers, groups and States of Europe. Germany being cut off from her sources of raw materials and from her most important industrial districts, is more than ever dependent upon the international groupings of the powers and upon the international reciprocal relations of these groups. In spite of the apparent pacifistic improvement afforded in the last weeks, an essential aggravation of the international relations can be reckoned with as a result of the French bourgeoisie utilizing its victory in the Ruhr District. In the sphere of economics also these are no symptoms whatever of a consolidation of capitalism but, on the contrary, an increasing aggravation of the class antagonisms. Before all things, in Central Europe (Germany, Poland, Austria) an extraordinary sharpening is to be expected before long. The rise of the revolutionary wave in Central Europe is therefore immediately imminent. It will take place at a quicker or a slower rate, accordingly as subjective revolutionary forces influence objective revolutionary crises in an accelerating or in a retarding manner. In this, readiness for struggle and desire to fight on the part of the German proletariat will be of decisive importance.

The White Dictatorship will not be able to maintain itself in Germany for a long time, since the foundations on which it is basing itself, are already beginning to waver. The forms of resistance, which it is not able to master, are the following:

a) The international dependence of Germany and the opposition of France against its strong armament;

b) the economic bankruptcy, accompanied by increasing unemployment which is becoming obviously chronic, before all as a consequence of the flight of Rhenish-Westphalian heavy capital into the spheres of French imperialism, a fact by which Germany is deprived of her most valuable provinces;

c) the complete bankruptcy of the finances of the Reich, the states and of the municipalities;

d) as a consequence of the financial bankruptcy, impossibility of maintaining for a longer time the forces of the state and also the military forces;

e) the increasing antagonisms in the very ranks of the interested bourgeois groups, antagonism of great land owners, middle propertied class and of heavy industry;

f) the proletariat, it is true depressed by the White Dictatorship, but not beaten;

g) the large strata of officials, employees, technicians and of the self-dependent petty middle classes, being proletarianized and becoming ever riper for the class struggle;

h) the agrarian proletarian and semi-proletarian population, becoming revolutionized at an ever increasing rate;

i) Fascism, decomposing ideologically itself owing to the open treason of heavy industry.

For all these reasons, a tremendous tension and huge proletarian mass struggles are to be expected in Germany in the next months.

V.

The role of the Party.

The Party is not only a portion, but the vanguard of the proletariat. Its position in the labour movement and in the struggles of the proletariat is not only within the masses, but one step in advance. When retreat becomes necessary, the Party has to render it comprehensible to the masses, in an unflinching manner, and it will thereby maintain the confidence of the masses in itself even in rearguard struggles. The Party is at the same time the brain, the nervous system and the revolutionary will of the masses.

Acceleration of the pace of revolution depends upon its activity, its resoluteness, its courage, its clearness and insight, its tactics and strategy, its capacity for remaining in the closest contact with the proletarian masses and of leading them in the mass struggles in a skilful and comprehensive manner.

VI.

The next Tasks of the Party.

a) The immediate and most important task of the party is to reorder the Party ranks so that they offer perfect resistance to the attacks of the White Dictatorship, that it conserves absolutely its character as a mass Party and maintains and strengthens its connections with the masses;

b) the fight against the prolongation of the working time, against the abolition of the eight hour day and against the reduction of wages must be organized by the Party everywhere by rousing propaganda and by extending and leading the defensive struggles. Even in cases where such struggles lead to a defeat, the masses must perceive clearly and distinctly, that the Communist Party has tried with all its forces to take up and to lead this struggle;

c) the Party must stand everywhere at the head of the unemployed, lead their struggles, and unite them; all the unemployed must recognize, that the Communist Party is caring for their needs and is fighting for their interests;

d) the connection of the Party with the working masses by the coordination of the movement of the unemployed with the organs of the Weimar Conference, with the Factory Councils, with the movements of Control Committees and of the "Centuries", as well as with all other united front organs of the proletariat, intensification of the Factory Councils movement, so as to make them the strongest organs of the united front in all the struggles of the proletariat;

e) the leadership of the economic struggles of the proletariat expressed in elementary outbreaks in connection with the Factory Councils movement and with the united front organs;

f) the political demonstrations of the employed in the shops with the unemployed, with clear and distinct slogans, with economic and political demands;

g) especially intensive work among the strata of the officials, the employees and technicians, as well as among the proletarian agrarian population;

h) the winning and the saving of the Trade Unions, which has become easier as a result of the present debacle due to the reformist leadership;

i) destruction and disintegration of the Social Democratic Party by ruthless exposure of its counter-revolutionary character; before all in this, endeavour must be made to rid Social Democratic workers of any illusion as to the possibility of an eventual improvement and radicalization of the Social Democratic Party of Germany by the "left" leaders;

j) the leadership of the struggles having partial aims or the leadership of general struggles throughout the Reich with partial aims, together with the united front organs;

k) the fight against the White Dictatorship with the very methods and means employed by the White Hirelings against ourselves;

l) the Party must, in an intelligible and vivid manner, oppose against the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie, of its generals and its Fascist unions the slogan of the Proletarian Dictatorship, concretizing and utilizing it in all vital problems of the proletariat for propaganda purpose;

m) for this purpose, the Party must set up a program of salvation showing the Proletarian Dictatorship as the only way to the social and national emancipation of the working strata of Germany.

VII.

Organizational and inner political Tasks.

The next organisatory tasks of the Party are the following:

a) The transformation of the Party upon the Shop Nucleus system, so that all functions of the local organizations are transferred to the shop nuclei and are carried out by them under the control of the Party;

b) the transformation of the Local and District Committees, so as to secure the deciding influence to the representatives of the shop nuclei;

c) in the Zentralausschuß (enlarged C, C) the greatest influence must be secured to the representatives of the most vitally important undertakings and of the most important branches of industry.

The next inner political tasks of the Party are:

a) Closest knitting together of all the forces of the Party;

b) Fighting against any attempt at division, from which ever side it may come, denouncing it as counter-revolutionary;

c) the centre of gravity of the inner party discussions must be transferred to the ideological camp, and not to the organizational, keeping however, perfect communist discipline;

d) maintaining, deepening and employing in a corresponding manner the united front tactics, as they have been fixed at the Congresses of the Communist International.

RELIEF FOR GERMANY

The Trade Unions and the International Workers' Relief.

By Edo F i m m e n (Amsterdam).

Speech delivered at the World Congress of the I. W. R. in Berlin on December 9, 1923.

Comrades and friends. It would fill me with pride and joy were I able to stand here today and speak as an official delegate of the International Trade Union Movement. Unfortunately, I stand here today only in my individual capacity, as a member of the International Central Committee of the I. W. R. But in spite of that I very willingly complied with the request to speak a few words here, because I regard it as necessary that the words of a trade unionist should be uttered from this platform which will go out to the workers in the different countries, in order to tell them what is their duty today, when the German working class is starving. For we must not allow ourselves to cherish any illusions. I believe it is necessary before all to state candidly and openly what the position is. Today there are still millions of organized workers outside of the International Workers' Relief. The International Workers' Relief is the relief for the workers, but it is still far from being the International of the workers which comes to the relief of the German working class.

When at the end of 1919, the working class of Vienna found itself in a similar, perhaps even in a worse situation, than that of the German working class at the present time, the trade unions of all countries spontaneously afforded help. Scarcely a week had elapsed after the appeal had gone out to the world that in Austria almost a million organized workers were starving, when the relief trains, laden with provisions, were steaming in from all parts Europe. And if today the Austrian working class is stronger as regards organization, and perhaps also in its striking force, than some other sections of the international trade union movement, it can doubtless be partly attributed to the fact that, at that time, the workers recognized their duty and, not out of vague philanthropy or maudlin humanitarianism, but out of class-conscious solidarity, despatched bread, potatoes and fat to Vienna in order to save the Austrian working class from physical and moral collapse. When in the months of June, July

and August 1921 the news went through Europe that in Russia the crops had failed, and that from ten to twenty million Russian workers must die if relief were not forthcoming, then a wave of solidarity swept right through Europe. The working class, no matter of what tendency, whether radical or reformist whether communist or social democratic, or neutral, rendered help. It is true it was not a centralized relief: they were not all united in the International Workers' Relief. The International Trade Union Federation had its own organization, other organizations were attached to the I. W. R. There were others again who gave to the Red Cross of the various countries; but all workers esteemed it their duty to help the Russian proletariat. Again, it was not merely out of general benevolence or charity, but because the proletariat of Europe was aware that by its relief it not only saved human lives, but by means of the bread etc. that was sent, it was helping the Russian Revolution and thereby, indirectly, itself.

Comrades. The fact is that today one notices as yet very little of a general feeling of solidarity on the part of the working class of the different countries towards the German proletariat, which finds expression in deeds. It is true that the International Trade Union Federation and the International trade union secretariats affiliated to it have decided to help the German trade unions by means of collections of money. I do not doubt for a moment that sums will be collected which will enable the German trade unions to carry on their work and which will therefore preserve the German trade unions from collapse. But with regard to inaugurating an international relief action in order to help the German proletariat itself, the trade unionists betray not the slightest inclination thereto.

How does this come about? Why is it that at the present moment the attitude of the international working class towards the German proletariat is not precisely the same as it was to the proletariat of Vienna, as it was to the Russian proletariat when the famine prevailed? Have the workers of France, England, Scandinavia, Holland and Switzerland less sympathy for the German workers than they had for the workers of Vienna? Is their feeling of solidarity with the German workers less strong that it was with the Russian peasantry? I do not think so. But the fact is that at the present moment the labour movement of all countries is far weaker by a long way than it was in 1919 and 1921. The working class of each country has its own troubles. In the years 1919, 1920 and 1921, a trade boom prevailed. At that time a certain degree of democracy still existed in most countries. Today there reigns everywhere the blackest political and economic reaction. In the Balkans, in Italy, in Spain, Hungary and, I can venture to add, in Germany also, Fascism is reigning. In the rest of Europe there prevails, perhaps not Fascism in its most blatant form, but the tendencies are there. There also reaction is strutting abroad and a feeling of despondency has fallen upon working class. Each thinks of itself and international solidarity is weakened.

From the economic point of view the situation is no better. I have already said that in 1919, 1920 and the beginning of 1921 a trade boom existed in the various countries. At the present time the working class of all countries has to contend against great unemployment. In England there has been for over two years, one and a half to two million unemployed; and in most of the other countries with a good valuta, from which the money must finally come, the situation is not much better. In addition to this the workers of all countries are having to fight in order to maintain the eight hour day, in so far as it exists at all. In principle, the eight hour day can everywhere still be said to exist, but what is the use of the most beautiful principles if the practice is otherwise! In practice, the eight hour day has been abolished in most countries, it is only in certain branches of industry that it is still recognized.

In addition to this, wages are being continually depressed. The workers are attempting to oppose the reduction of wages, but mostly without success. The political and economic reaction and the economic depression have as a result, that the working class today is less in a position, perhaps is even less prepared, to help the German proletariat than when in 1919 and in 1920—21 it rendered aid to the Viennese working class and to the Russian proletariat.

To all this there is something else to be added. This morning the representative of the city of Berlin said: The German people cannot help itself, it is not in a position to work its way out of its present misery. It appeals, and is obliged to appeal, to the foreign countries. This impression does not exist every-

where abroad. The words which comrade Münzenberg quoted this morning, and which I believe were spoken by Count Westarp in the German Reichstag, that the German people are starving in the midst of plenty, has lit up the situation in Germany for those abroad in the most vivid manner. It is not only with Hoover and the American bourgeoisie that the idea exists, that if there are certain classes in Germany who consciously and wilfully cause the proletariat to perish, if the German proletariat allows itself to go under, it is not, in the first instance, the business of the working class of other countries to render help to the German proletariat. People abroad are saying: If in the long run the German bourgeoisie is continually enriching itself at the expense of the proletariat, and if there is no need for Germany to starve if the German bourgeoisie were only prepared to set the economic life going again, and not under its own exclusive terms but under decent human conditions, must then the English, the Scandinavian, the Swiss, the Czecho-Slovakian workers, whose wages have already in many cases sunk below that of the pre-war level, part up with their pence in order to help the German proletariat while its own people did nothing for the German working class which, at the beginning of the year spontaneously sacrificed itself in the Ruhr area? I say this opinion exists among the working class in other countries and I believe that it is as well we should allow ourselves no illusions in this respect, but plainly declare how the situation stands.

In the third place great masses of the organized workers regard the I. W. R. with more or less mistrust because they are told it is a disguised instrument of Moscow, that it is a piece of communist scheming and every true social democrat would be wise not to have anything to do with this body. In this manner the feeling in the foreign countries is turned against the I. W. R. and thereby indirectly against the actual provision of relief by the working class of the different countries for the German proletariat. The result of the incitement against the I. W. R. is that the German proletarians of all tendencies do not receive from their comrades abroad what they could and would receive if it were not for this incitement.

Comrades! These are the three explanations why up till now, millions of organized workers are not doing for the German working class what they cheerfully did for the Viennese workers and the Russian working class. I wish to declare plainly and distinctly, to the working class of all countries, that by not fulfilling their duty to the German proletariat they are injuring their own cause. I have already on another occasion pointed out, that the cause of the European proletariat will be decided here in Germany; that the question whether the proletariat in Germany will be victorious or defeated is decisive for the position of the working class of all the other European countries. The working class of all countries must grasp the fact, that a starved, weakened and exhausted German proletariat will no longer be capable of winning back what has been taken from it during the years following the revolution, that such a proletariat is not in a position to retain what it still has at the present moment. If the eight hour day in Germany is finally done away with, if ten eleven or twelve hours are worked, and if the German workers have to work for wages equal to those of a Chinese coolie, that means that the working class of all countries, no matter how strong its organizations, will not be able to defend the eight hour day and will not be able to maintain its standard of living at anything like the same level which it has at the present time. There is a certain theory which maintains that hunger has a revolutionary effect. That is true up to a certain point. But once that point has been passed, then hunger has the exact contrary effect. A hungry proletariat is, in the first stage of its hunger, perhaps prepared and in a position to revolt; a starving proletariat will perhaps be ready to and capable of plunder, but certainly not to make a revolt, and it is quite certain it would not be in a position to carry out a revolution. Every worker of Europe, no matter whether he be left or right, every trade unionist who desires the welfare of his class, has at this moment, in his own interest, no higher duty than to see to it that the German proletariat remains capable of offering resistance. I go yet further: everyone who really desires Socialism, every worker who wants the Revolution, can serve his cause, our cause, in no better way than by sending bread to Germany. I hope that from this session of the I. W. R. there will go forth such an urgent appeal to the working class of all countries, that the trade unions and the trade unionists will not be able to do otherwise than to link up in one way or another to the I. W. R. and to send their money through the mediumship of the I. W. R. to the German proletariat.

FASCISM

Letter from Italy.

By G. Masci (Rome).

At the Conference held on the 19th December under the direct auspices and in the presence of the Prime Minister Mussolini, between the leaders of Italian industry and the principal leaders of the Fascist Trade Unions, the complete failure of the programs and the practice of Fascism in the spheres of Trade Unionism had to be recognized.

The feverish attempts made by Facism, before and after having obtained power, in order to create a trade union movement which would be at its service, are well known. It is also known, how these attempts, while succeeding to a rather considerable degree in the agrarian field, have failed almost completely in the industrial sphere. It was easy for the Fascisti, in view of the life and working conditions of the poor peasants, and of the rural workers dispersed in a great number of villages with feeble ties between the Trade Unions, to destroy the Socialist organizations of the land workers and to force the rural masses by means of physical terror and of the economic boycott, to enter into their corporations. It was otherwise in the industrial sphere, except with the railway employees, amongst whom much can be obtained by state coercion and by the ever threatening menace of discharge, and also with the dockers who had already their strictly guild-like organization determined by the conditions in the traffic at the Italian ports which is developing very spasmodically, in relation to the preponderance of exports and imports and to the seasonal activities for grain, coals and coffee.

In the large industrial towns, the Fascists only succeeded in gathering inconsiderable groups, consisting nearly everywhere of unemployed and of criminal elements, who, by means of the Fascist party ticket obtain impunity for sabotage, theft in workshops and personal violence against foremen. And yet it was necessary for Fascist politics to win the masses at any price.

The Fascist Government can only maintain power for any time so far as it renders life impossible to other organizations which are not Fascist. Mussolini bases his power on large strata of the petty bourgeoisie, which (since they have no function in the productive life and hence do not feel the antagonisms and the contradictions resulting from it), in fact believe the class struggle to be a diabolical invention of the socialists and communists. The entire so-called hierarchic conception of Fascism is dependent upon that fact. It is indispensable for this conception that no independent organization of a typical class character exist and that the modern social life be organized in a series of petty corporations subject to and controlled by the Fascist elite, being the concentrated expression of all the prejudices and utopian visions of the petty bourgeoisie. Hence the necessity for Integral Trade Unionism, which is a revised conception of the Christian democratic Trade Unionism, substituting the defied nation for the religious idea.

This program was resolutely opposed by the industrials, who refused to enter the Fascist corporations, viz. to allow themselves to be controlled by Rossoni and his like. The Fascists, some months ago, in face of the repulses by the industrials, began a demagogic fight, which went so far as to their announcing and propagating in great style a general strike of the metallurgical and textile workers. The campaign against the industrials culminated immediately after the visit paid by Mussolini to the Fiat works of Turin on the anniversary of the Fascist "March on Rome". The workers of the Fiat, six or seven thousand of whom had been gathered in the courtyard of the factory in order to hear a speech by Mussolini, received the leader of the Fascists in a hostile manner. The Fascists accused the Turin industrials of having fostered the anti-Fascist spirit of the masses, of preferring to treat with reformist organizations instead of with Fascist ones, of discharging from the Works the Fascist workers, thus preventing the development of the Corporations and so on; they went so far as to attack personally in a coffee-house the chief of the Fiat, Senator Giovanni Agnelli. The situation became very serious for the industrials as well as for the Government. The Communist Trade Unions Committee intervened in the agitation, inviting the working masses to take part in the struggle against the industrials in order to enlarge the movement, even though the struggle had been engaged in by the Fascists. The agitation was stifled by the central leaders of

the Fascisti, and the Conference held on the 19th of December was convened. In the speech Mussolini delivered there, he recognized, that it is impossible to organize workers and industrials in one and the same trade union. Integral Trade Unionism, according to Mussolini may be applied, only in the sphere of agrarian production. The Fascists have to respect the organizatory independence of the industrials and have to work only in order to avoid the outbreak of class conflicts. The meaning of these words is clear. The Fascists abandon even the keeping up of the appearance, not only of a struggle against the industrials, but also of any attempt to equilibrate, under their arbitrary control, the interests of the classes and they have only the confessed task of organizing the workers in order to surrender them to the capitalists bound hand and foot. This is the beginning of the end of the Fascist Trade Unionism. Immediately after the Conference, many land owners protested loudly against the discriminating treatment shown by Fascism to industry and to agriculture. They denounced the violence which they said the Fascist Trade Union Organizers exercised to the detriment of the owners' interests, by compelling them to respect labour contracts, which of course they declare to be absurd and opposed to the interests of the nation, and they claim to be allowed to reconstitute the General Confederation of Agriculture which had been absorbed by the Fascist corporations. At Parma the agrarians have placed themselves in direct opposition to Fascism, provoking a whole series of incidents and conflicts. At Reggio Emilia, the deputy Corgini, former Under-Secretary of State to the Government of Mussolini, has been expelled from the Fasci and leads a raging campaign in favour of the organizatory independence of the land owners.

It is to be remarked how great a success was obtained by the tactics applied by our Party, in order to unmask before the masses the Fascist Trade Unions Leaders who had raised such a hub hub against the industrialists. It is true, these tactics procured to the Fascists the satisfaction of having meetings attended by many thousands of workers, but they led also to forcing the Fascists to the wall, to causing them to eat their words and to discrediting them even in the eyes of the most backward portion of the working masses. If these tactics were generalized and also extended to the agrarian field, it would be possible to accelerate in a high degree the disintegration of Fascism and hence the reorganization of the revolutionary forces. But against this there are the reformist socialists as well as the maximalist socialists who still have control over the Trade Union Centrals and of the only periodicals of a proletarian character still published in Italy. Thus they demonstrate yet once more that they do not really intend to fight against Fascism. It is true, they risk much if they want to attack Fascism in order to contend with it, within its own Trade Unions or in the agitations sometimes got up by it, for control and leadership of the masses entering the movement. On the other hand, it is certain that large strata, not only of rural workers, but also of factory workers who have no other chance of fighting against the bourgeoisie are drawn to these agitations by the Fascist demagoguery, hoping thus to wring something from their employers. The intransigence shown by the reformist and maximalist gentry, is in fact no intransigence against Fascism, but against the poorest and most backward portion of the workers. Moreover, it is never true to itself and makes many concessions to the Fascist who are governing.

OUR PROBLEMS

On the Peasant Question.

By L. Trotsky.

I am often asked by some party comrades, what are the grounds for my special attitude relative to the peasant question, and wherein they differ from those of comrade Lenin. Other comrades put the question in a more exact and concrete form: they ask if it be true, that I „underestimate“ the role of the peasant in our economic development and hence do not accord to the economic and political alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry (Smyschka) the importance, which it warrants. Such questions have been put to me orally as well as written. „Where have you got hold of all this?“ I asked with great astonishment, „On what facts do you base these assertions?“ The answer was

mostly, „we do not possess any facts, it is a question of rumours, which are circulating.“

At first I did not trouble much about these rumours until a letter which I received recently impelled me to think over the matter and to consider the origin of the rumours. And quite by chance it came to me that already four or five years ago such rumours flourished richly in the Soviet soil. At that time they had a more simple form: „Lenin is for the peasants, Trotzky against them.“ I looked up the printed material on this question. In my article of 7th February 1919 in the „Isvestia“ as well as that of comrade Lenin of 15th February in the „Pravda“ these rumours were strongly repudiated as falsehoods.

The rumours however apparently still live. There is a French proverb: „If you slander long enough, something will stick in the end“. At present it is no longer the landowners and capitalists who have recourse to such rumours. Their empire is long at an end. In their place, however, have appeared the „Nep“ men in the town, the merchant and the rich farmer in the village. There can be no doubt that these circles have great interest in creating confusion and doubt as to the relation of the communist party to the peasantry. Is it just the rich farmer, the speculative buyer, the newly established merchant, the city middleman, who seek to set up connections on the market with the peasant as grain producer and buyer of industrial products and to exclude from this combination the authority of the Soviet State. It is just here that the decisive battle is now beginning to develop. Here also politics are serving economic interests. It is easy to see that when the private middleman wants to attach himself to the peasant and gain his confidence, he will gladly furbish up the old lies of the landowners and put them once more into circulation, of course with more caution than the landowner in his day, because since then the Soviet Power has been strengthened.

A clear, simple and exhaustive description of the mutual dependence existing between the peasantry and the proletariat, or in other words, between the State industries and agriculture was given by Comrade Lenin in his well known article: „Better little, but good“. The main idea of the article can be summarized as follows: During the coming years we must adapt the Soviet State in every possible way to the necessities, requirements and power of the peasantry, although we retain its character as a Workers State; we must adapt the Soviet industries, which we call State industries that is Socialist industries, on the one hand to the market demands of the peasant and on the other to the taxability of the peasantry. Only in this way shall we be able to maintain equilibrium in the Soviet State so long as the revolution does not disturb the equilibrium in the other capitalistic countries. It is not the reiteration of the word „union“ in every possible strain (although in itself it is a good word) but the practical adaptation of industry to the agricultural basis which can give us an effective solution of the central questions in our economy and politics.

This brings us to the problem of the „shears“ (In Russia one understands by shears the strong disparity between the gold prices of agricultural and industrial products: this disproportion takes the form of a pair of shears in the graphical representation of the gold price. The expression was originated by Comrade Trotzky. Ed.) The adaptation of industry to the peasant market presents us in the first place with the problem of the unconditional reduction of the cost price of industrial products. The cost price is not only dependent upon the method of manufacture in the factory concerned, but also upon the whole organization of the State industry, the State transport System, State finance and the State commercial apparatus. When there is a disproportion between the various parts of our industries, it means that the State has at its disposal a large amount of dead capital, which burdens the whole industry and raises the price of every piece of calico and every packet of matches.

Under capitalism the natural, and in the end, only economic regulator is the crisis, that is to say it is the only means of bringing the different branches of industry together and the total production of industry into harmony with the market demand. But in our Soviet economic organization, which presents a transitional one between Capitalism and Socialism, industrial trade crises can in no way be regarded as the normal or even the only means by which the single parts of the peoples' industry can be brought into harmony with one another. The crisis destroys or squanders a certain part of the State resources and a part of this falls into the hands of the jobber, of the speculative buyer, that is to say into the hands of private capital.

Since we received as a heritage from the past an extraordinary disintegrated industry, and moreover, one in which the various parts stood before the war in quite a different relationship with one another than that required today, the regulation of the economic system, the adaptation of the parts of the industry to one another — and also in such a way that the whole of industry can, by means of the market, be brought into harmony with agriculture — becomes one of the most difficult problems. Were we to decide to bring about the necessary reconstruction entirely with the help of so fearful a shake-up as is provided by crises, that would soon indicate that we had given a great impetus to private capital, which in any case is aiming at setting up a barrier between us and the villages. Private trading capital today is securing enormous profits. But in addition it is restricting itself more and more to agency operations. Is it attempting to organize the small producers, or to lease industrial undertakings from the State. In other words: it is repeating the history of original accumulation — first in the sphere of trade and next in the sphere of industry. It is quite clear that every failure, every loss, which we suffer brings profit to private capital: first in that such losses weaken us and secondly in that a large part of our losses unavoidably pass into the pockets of the new capitalists.

What then are the weapons which we can use under these circumstances in the struggle against private capital? Are there any such weapons at all? Yes, and these are the conscious, deliberate, systematic tackling of the market, and above all the task of economic organization. The most important productive agents, transport and credit, lie in the hands of the Soviet State. We do not need to wait until a universal or a local crisis reveals the disproportion between the various elements in our economic organization. We need not become the blind plaything of economic forces, for the trump cards in the market game lie in our hands. We will — and we must learn to do so — observe with ever greater accuracy the fundamental elements of our economic system, the development of factors which are related to them, and on the strength of our calculations bring all sections of the industry into harmony. We shall learn to understand, quantitatively as well as qualitatively, to adapt them to one another and also to establish the necessary relationship between industry and agriculture. Therein lies the real work in the union of the proletariat and the peasantry. He who maintains that everything lies in the union and not in the plan of production does not understand the essence of the thing, for the way to union leads through the accurate systematic, proportional development and guidance of the industries. There is no other way and there cannot be one. If our planned economics commission (Gossplan) carries out its tasks in the correct manner, it will already be a direct step towards the best and most successful solution of the peasant question — not through abolition of the market but on the basis of the market. The peasant, up till now, does not understand this, but we must understand it, every Communist, every progressive worker must understand it. The peasant will realize sooner or later the effect of the activity of the economic Commission upon his economy. Naturally this problem is very difficult and extraordinarily complicated. We shall not solve it with a stroke of the pen. Its solution demands a continued system and exact and energetic measures.

Not less important, of course, is the advancement of agriculture. This process, however, manifests itself in a much more primitive form, and hence in one less dependent upon the influence of the State than the reconstruction of industry. The Soviet State must also support the peasant with agricultural credits (as far as our means will reach!) and help to make easier the placing of the products of agriculture (Corn, Meat, Butter, etc.) upon the world market. The way to the extension of agriculture leads, again, principally through industry — if not directly then indirectly. Agricultural machinery and tools, artificial manures, cheap domestic wares must be provided at prices within the reach of the peasant. The introduction and development of an agricultural credit system demand from the State the mobilization of superfluous pecuniary resources. For this it is necessary that the State industries prove profitable, and this is impossible without the establishment of a correct proportion between their parts. In these lie the real, not demonstrative, but practical problems of the union between the working class and the peasantry.

In order to further this union politically, and to be able to meet the lying rumours whose breeding place is provided by the apparatus of private trade, we need an effective peasants' newspaper, — such a newspaper as would really get into the hands of the peasant and which he would understand, and

which would strengthen the relationship between him and the proletariat. A newspaper with a circulation of from 50 to 100,000 copies can and would only be a newspaper which perhaps spoke well-wishingly over the peasant, but it would in no way be a peasants' newspaper because it would not reach him but lie stranded on the way amongst our different authorities. We need for the peasant a weekly newspaper (for a daily paper we have not the necessary money nor the suitable means of distribution), which in the first year would have a circulation of two million copies. Such a newspaper would „teach“ and in no sense „demand from“ the peasant, and describe what is taking place in the Soviet Union and abroad, with particular attention to that sphere of life with which the peasant comes into near and immediate contact. The new post-revolution peasant will soon acquire a liking for newspaper reading, if we only understand how to provide a suitable one. The circulation of the newspaper would grow from month to month and — be it in the next period only a weekly one — will secure contact between the Soviet State and many millions of peasants. But the newspaper leads us back to industry. Regard must be had to the technical demands. A peasant newspaper must be not only in editorial, but also in typographical respects, a model newspaper, as it would be a pity to place week by week in the peasants' hands a sample of our city slovenliness.

That is all I wish to say for the time being about the peasant question in reply to the questions put to me. If this answer does not satisfy the comrades who approached me in the matter, I am ready to elucidate it further, supported by exact material obtained from our six-years activity in Soviet enterprise, because this question is of the greatest possible importance.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The Women's Movement in China.

By K. G. Hsiang.

The present Women's Movement in China shows three separate tendencies:

The Working Women's Movement, Feminism and the Women's Christian Social Movement.

The Working Women's Movement.

As a result of the development of international imperialism, the barriers which separated China from the outside world have been broken down and the country industrialized. Upon the ruins of the patriarchal regime, modern factories have arisen which, for the greater part, belong to foreign capitalists. The textile, silk and cigarette industry employ a whole army of women workers. The foreign capitalists, as everywhere, take advantage of the backwardness and the unorganized condition of the women workers in order to subject them to a double and threefold exploitation. Want and misery force the working women to participate in the class war.

Thus, there took place in the year 1922 and the beginning of 1923 a great number of strikes which bear witness to the awakening class consciousness and activity of the women workers. The far greater number of the strikes occurred in Shanghai, which is chiefly devoted to the textile industry and the cigarette industry. Two important strikes, each of them involving three thousand women workers, took place in a large cigarette factory in Hubei. The extent and force of the movement are evidenced by the fact that in some instances the strike lasted three or four weeks and involved 20,000 women in twenty two different branches of the concern. The strikes, some of which were successful and some of which were without success, were carried out for various sorts of demands, all of which, however, bore the stamp of the outspoken class struggle against the capitalist exploitation: For increase of wages and salaries, against wage reductions, against the worsening of the factory rules, for the shortening of the working day and, it is interesting to note in repeated cases, including the largest strike, for trade union rights and the creation and recognition of organs for conducting struggles.

The total number of strikes from the period from February 1922 till January 1923 amounted to 18, the number of workshops involved in the strikes 60, and the number of working women taking part in the strikes 30,000.

The Feminist Movement.

The feminist movement in China dates back to the Revolution of 1911, in which the women also participated. Although imme-

diately after the overthrow of the dynasty this movement displayed a lively activity, it weakened noticeably during the time of the reaction which lasted until 1919. With the setting up of the government in the South, the feminist movement also revived, especially in Canton. A group of women intellectuals demanded equal civil and political rights for women. These demands were eagerly supported by the youth of both sexes and in January 1920 were crowned with success. A woman was elected to the municipal council of Canton, and other women were appointed as inspectors of education, as municipal officials and officials in the state service etc. In the year 1922 the students of Canton founded a political society which set itself the task of fighting for the economic, political and civil rights of women. Similar organizations were formed in Shanghai, Tientsin, Nanking, Peking and other large towns. Their object is to fight for civil equality between men and women.

The activity of the Chinese feminists consists in joint petitions and demands to parliament. The feminist program contains the following demands for women:

1. Political Rights.
2. Right of inheritance and independent disposal of property.
3. Equal pay for equal work.
4. Equal marriage rights.
5. Equality in instruction and education.

The feminist association of Shanghai has in addition, its program of demands for the women Postal employees, as well as the demand for the eight hour day for the women employed in the silk factories, further the prohibition of the employment of children under 14 years in the factories and, finally, the demand for a weekly day of rest for women workers.

The lumping together of women's demand which bear an outspoken bourgeois character with those which would be entirely in place in a proletarian class war program of working women, reflects the two-sided character of a women's movement which as yet has no clear orientation with regard to the classes. This is due to the fact that capitalism and bourgeois democracy in China have not yet reached that stage of development when the illusion of the universal sisterhood of the women of all classes and of every social standing, as opposed to the men, has been torn aside.

The Women's Christian Social Movement.

Finally there exist in China Christian Women's Organisations. (Christian Youth, Anglo-American Associations of Christian women.) They are fairly numerous and work for benevolent aims. These societies occupy themselves more or less with the working women, but in a purely petty bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic reformist sense. For instance, they set up situation bureaus for women, societies for mutual help and schools for young women. They send delegates to the International Congress for the Protection of Women's Labour. The society in Shanghai has, for example, addressed the following requests to the municipal council of Shanghai.

1. Prohibition of night work in factories for children under twelve years of age.
2. Organization of obligatory courses in the factories for the education of young working women.
3. Hygienic conditions of work in the factories.

It further demands the organization of creches in the factories for the children of the women workers and also sought to mediate on behalf of the working women on strike in the silk industry.

* * *

Of these three kinds of women's movement in China it is only the working women's movement which is a mass movement. The feminist movement is limited to the intellectuals and relies upon a purely petty bourgeois ideology and opportunistic facts which do not permit of the least revolutionary act. In spite of this however, it is to be noted that many members of the Chinese women's organizations actively support the national revolutionary movement and thereby enter into a broader movement of the masses.

The Christian Social movement seeks to draw the masses of the working women into its ranks by demanding reforms for the bettering of the conditions of labour and the living conditions of the women. But this movement stands quite under the influence of foreign capital and continually seeks to stultify the revolutionary movement. Nevertheless, the cultural activity of this movement is accelerating the awakening of the Chinese women and is thereby creating the possibility for organization work among the broad masses of the working women and preparing the ground for bringing them into the Communist Movement.

THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

Prepare for the Commemoration Day of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

To the Working Youth of the whole world.

At a time when the German working class is engaged in the severest struggles, at a time when Fascism is everywhere insolently raising its head, when the White Terror is raging in several countries and when in Germany the White Dictatorship of the Generals is seeking to choke in blood the struggle of the German workers, small peasants and impoverished masses class, it is fitting that the International Proletariat celebrates for the fifth time the day on which Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske treacherously murdered two of our best: Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Today less than ever have we time and leisure to arrange for mournings and death celebrations. The times call imperatively to the fight, to the struggle against the Fascist and White Guardist murderers in all countries, for it is not only in Germany that our best comrades are murdered, but also in other countries; in Bulgaria, in Italy, in Spain and even in the Orient the White Terror is raging against our comrades. In Japan only recently, a whole number of comrades, among them several members of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, were foully murdered.

Young workers and peasants of all countries! It is necessary to set up a Front against this. On the fifth anniversary of the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, we will think of all those who have fallen in the Cause of the Proletariat. Over the graves of the victims in the fight for proletarian emancipation we take a vow to carry on this fight with renewed energy and with the greatest determination.

In spite of everything!

In this we must realize that we have to deal with a powerful and brutal opponent and that hard blows must be exchanged. We must also realize that in this fight we can only rely upon ourselves, while we bear in mind how we have already, on innumerable occasions, been shamefully betrayed by the so-called „Labour Parties“ — the Social Democracy of all countries. On the 15th of January we must proclaim to the four winds that the Social Democrats — the „Left“ just as much as the Right — are the most deceitful enemies of the working class and use every means in order to sabotage the Revolution.

The fight against Fascism, Reaction and White Terror is at the same time a fight against the leaders of the Social Democrats who facilitate the advance of the Whites. It is necessary to expose these before the whole working class and to enlighten the working masses as to the treacherous role played by Social Democracy. The workers must be freed from the illusion that our aims can be realized by means of „Democracy“. The unrestrained White Terror, the Dictatorship of the Generals, of Fascism and of the Social Democrats have shown us quite clearly what this so-called Democracy is. The hour of decision is approaching! We are confronted with severe struggles. We must make use of every minute in order to prepare ourselves for these struggles. We must make ready so that we shall emerge from these struggles victorious. The eyes of the proletariat of the whole world are now turned upon Germany. The fate of the working class for years to come depends upon the issue of the struggles in Germany. We must therefore do everything in order to support the German workers in their arduous struggles. We declare with Liebknecht: No effort is too great, no effort is too great!

Our slogans are:

Fight against the White Terror, against Fascism, Militarism and Imperialism!

For the solidarity of all workers in town and country, against the intervention of the capitalists in Workers' Germany! Everywhere steps must be taken to provide material and moral support to the starving German workers and the victims of the struggle! Set up everywhere Committees of Action for the defence of the German Revolution!

Throughout the whole World a cry shall go up from millions of throats: Hands off Workers' Germany!

In this way shall we best render honour to the memory of our fallen Champions.

Moscow, December 1923. The Executive Committee of the Communist Youth International.

RED RELIEF

The Red Relief at its Post!

The Red Relief has made it its task to support all victims of the Class Struggle, regardless of party.

The International Red Relief today has sections in almost every country.

The Red Relief looks after the interests of all political prisoners who languish in prison for a revolutionary idea.

The Red Relief supports and feeds the dependents of the revolutionary fighters and establishes Children's Homes for the orphans of revolutionaries.

In the last six months the Red Relief has paid out 43,265 dollars for the provision of current support.

In the next three months 35,000 dollars will be paid over to the victims of the Bulgarian peasant's revolt.

40,000 dollars have been granted for the support of the political prisoners and their families in Germany for the next four months.

In round numbers, the Red Relief will disburse 100,000 dollars in support in the next four months. This sum is already covered by the collections of the sections in the various countries, as in America, France, England, Austria, Czechoslovakia, etc.

But still greater sums are necessary!

* * *

Have you thought of this?...

Thousands have gone to prison and to their death for you. Thousands also suffer need and cruel torment on your account.

Do not forget them!...

Send them Red Relief!

APPEALS

Do not forget Mateu and Nicolau!

Two innocent men who have been condemned to death by the Spanish reaction, wait in their cells in the hope that the International Proletariat, at the eleventh hour, will come to their aid.

During the trial, the workers of all countries gave expression to their feeling of solidarity; the abominable sentence pronounced by the Spanish Reaction has everywhere called forth the most indignant and vehement protests.

This death sentence has not yet been carried out, it is not yet too late to save our two brave comrades!

Comrades! The whole proletariat is interested in the liberation of Mateu and Nicolau. Anarchists, Syndicalists, Socialists and Communists have the duty to unite in unanimously demanding the liberation of these two innocent men.

Spanish Justice is reckoning upon being able to have these two comrades killed secretly, following the American method. Remember Sacco and Vanzetti! Reaction also hopes to do away with these two in secret.

Proletarians! Comrades! During the last years Reaction has ventured on greater presumptions than it has at any time before. It believes that it has won the game. It regards the moment as having arrived in which to destroy your organizations.

Workers, you must take up the defence! Set up joint Committees of Action, demand the liberation of your imprisoned comrades! Arouse the apathetic, demand from your leaders that they act! Cover the walls with placards, carry your appeal to the masses.

The proletariat can no longer suffer its best sons to be murdered with impunity!

In the face of the offensive of the reactionary dictatorship, set up the united front of the revolutionary proletariat!

For Mateu and Nicolau, for Sacco and Vanzetti, who are cooped up in their cells, whose only hope is the international solidarity of the working class! For the thousands of prisoners who await the revolution. For the World Revolution!

Moscow, December 1923.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Posthumous Writings of Marx and Engels.

By D. B. RYASANOV.

Comrade Ryasanov, after his return from Germany where he investigated the unpublished writings of Marx and Engels, delivered a lecture on the results of his work in the Socialist Academy in Moscow. From this lecture we print the following extract. Ed.

The posthumous writings of Marx and Engels were treated with gross carelessness by those to whose care they were entrusted. The Manuscripts were scattered in Berlin, in London and in the Archives of the German Social Democrats. The huge library left by Marx and Engels to the German Social Democratic Party has almost entirely disappeared. Bernstein and Bebel, who were the trustees of the bequest, considered themselves as the absolute owners and disposed of it at their own discretion.

Mehring was the first who, on behalf of the Party, set himself to the study of these posthumous writings. The great gaps which I found in the collection published by him seemed to render it necessary to go carefully through the manuscripts; the final reasons which induced me to do this, was the incompleteness and inaccuracy of the „German Ideology“, Engels' reference to the manuscript in the preface to „Ludwig Feuerbach“, the pamphlets by Mehring on Marx, which appeared in 1918, and lastly, the Biography of Engels published in 1919 by Meyer, in which some pages referring to the „German Ideology“ plainly contained discoveries.

It is for this reason that I postponed the planned publication of further volumes of the collected works of Marx and Engels (in the Russian language. Ed.) and proceeded to Berlin in order to undertake the study of the unpublished material.

My troubles began in Berlin. I had to fairly wrest the material from its possessor, Bernstein. All the documents lent out by him were photographed. The publication of several documents was made dependent on special conditions.

The most valuable and interesting among the documents found, and till now unpublished, is the M. S. of the „German Ideology“, with a criticism of German philosophy after Hegel, and of the „True Socialists“.

By a comparison of the M. S. with the Bernstein edition, it became evident that the latter contains not more than two fifths of the M. S. As an excuse for this Bernstein stated: „The mice had nibbled away the rest.“ As a matter of fact, the M. S. had not been nibbled by mice but by Bernstein when he finally went over to Revisionism. But this manuscript is only a part of the critique of „German Ideology“, and of that part which contains the critique of Stirner. The second part of the M. S. undeciphered by Bernstein, is dedicated to Feuerbach and contains a criticism of Feuerbach's conception of „Man“. We are endeavouring to publish this manuscript as soon as possible.

Among the notes we found a criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, and outlines for a chapter of the „Communist Manifesto“, in which there is a criticism of socialist literature.

In this collection of notes we find special work on Mathematics, a philosophical fragment, a Greek M. S. etc. Other documents contain unused material for „Capital“. Among other things is a leaflet on the Theory of Surplus Value. Marx wished to publish this material in the fourth volume of his chief work. The imperfection and deficiency of the present edition of „Capital“, is so great that, for instance, the third volume can quite rightly be called an Engels' Variation.

The unpublished material which was found here, amounts to about six volumes.

The next group of M. S. S. brings us to the personal life of Marx and Engels. They reveal to us the vast learning and the extraordinarily systematic spirit and capacity for work possessed by Marx. Engels was occupied, until the death of Marx, with Chemistry, Physics and the natural sciences.

The subsequently discovered letters of Marx and Engels finally form a considerable treasure of Marxian literature. The letters so far published have been edited without any respect for the memory of Marx and Engels. This could be illustrated by a long list of omissions. Ninety five per cent of Marx's letters are already in our hands. The case has been still worse with Engels's letters, but I was able to get many of these also from Bernstein and Kautsky.

These letters will reach the public within the next few weeks.