

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Clara Zetkin

A tribute to a great leader
on her 70th birthday

Against the War Danger

Clara Zetkin

New Developments in the
French Trade Union
Movement

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Clara Zetkin and the Comintern

WE do not intend to repeat here what has already been said in appreciation of the personality of the grey-headed leader of the Communist International. She and her work are well known to the proletariat and the Communists of every country. Neither shall we attempt to portray the life of a revolutionary who from her earliest youth has given her all to the service of the revolutionary cause.

That would take us too far, for it would call for a new history of more than fifty years of the European working-class movement. It would involve writing the story of the heroic struggle of the German Social-Democrats under the special laws, the growth of the world working-class movement and the fight of the revolutionary wing against reformism.

It would mean writing the history of the suffering of the German proletariat since 1914 and the organising of the masses under revolutionary leadership. It would mean, finally, a decade of history of the life and growth of the Communist International.

Clara Zetkin's biography is the history of the last fifty years of the European working-class movement, observed and experienced through the eyes of a human being who, inspired with revolutionary ideals, with enthusiasm, with the loyalty born of conviction, and with a deep Marxist knowledge, lived through all phases of this half-century.

We shall limit ourselves to an estimation of her as the embodiment of the experience of the most progressive section of the west European working-class movement, the synthesis of the traditions of the proletarian fight before the foundation of the Second International with those of the period of the organising of the proletarian masses during the time of the Second International and the struggle for power in the period of the Third.

Franz Mehring, who worked and fought together with Clara Zetkin decades ago, and who was one of the most important fighters in the struggle to free the working class from the spirit of reformism, called her, with truth, the inheritor of Marx's spirit. If ever anyone in the German working-class movement earned this tribute it was she.

In the period of the foundation of the Second International she did not belong to those who already at that

time saw the salvation of the proletarian movement in a parliamentary majority, but to those who still carried in their hearts the living memory of the heroic struggle of the Paris Commune and the silent, untiring fight of the persecuted German Social-Democrats in the years from 1878 to 1890. She herself wrote in an article which appeared in this journal at the time of the fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Communist International:

"When it (the Second International) was founded in Paris in 1889 the way forward was illustrated by the stars of true proletarian class-consciousness and a revolutionary urge forwards. The fiery spirit of the Communist Manifesto animated it. Among the French proletariat the wounds of the glorious Commune, not yet fully healed, prevented the overclouding and obscuration of class-consciousness by democratic illusions. . . . The Second International was founded as a revolutionary fighting organisation for the overthrow of capitalism, of bourgeois domination. It was to be a weapon, a powerful weapon, for the annihilation of the enemy in the class war, and not under any circumstances 'an instrument of peace.'"

IT is not necessary to tell how the hopes of the revolutionaries, and with them the hopes of Clara Zetkin, were deceived in the development of the Second International. The fight of the left wing among the German Social-Democrats is a living witness of that. The organ of the women Social-Democrats of Germany, "Equality," which was edited by Clara Zetkin for more than a generation is a speaking document. On every page we find the spirit, not of the Second International, but of revolutionary Marxism, as it lived in the First International and still lives in the Third International.

Clara Zetkin's position in the Second International was conditioned by the fact that she was older than the Second International, that she, contrary to the more and more petrifying organisation, guarded the traditions of Marx and Engels.

Her fight against the leaders of the German Social-Democrats, against the poison of opportunism in the

Clara Zetkin and Comintern—continued

ranks of the workers is written in the pages of the history of German Social-Democracy, is witnessed in the debates of the numerous Party conferences, at which she was always found, together with Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Julian Marchlewski and the Würtemburger Left, headed by Westmeier, on the extreme left.

She fought for her ideas, for the annihilation of opportunism among the Social-Democrats, as long as she believed the Party could be saved, as long as she could believe that the good spirit of the workers would triumph over the treachery of Noske and Scheidemann. She stood for the unity of the Party, not as a written organisational unity, but as an ideologically unified block. It was at the Chemnitz Party Conference that, in her polemic against the Social-Imperialist, Hildebrandt, she said:

“Freedom of opinion of individuals is in opposition to the best interests of the Party, within which we should not allow any deviations which disturb unity of action. The Party is not a playground in which amiable and interesting enthusiasts can play. The building is a fortress in which we must all stand and fight, armed and united.”

And at the Magdeburg Party Conference in 1910 she appealed to those who tried to justify coalition with bourgeois “parties” in the interests of the unity of the Party:

“There is nothing of greater importance to Social-Democracy in these grave times than to maintain organisational unity and to close the ranks. But the question is, At what price, on what basis do we want unity? Do we want it by a step to the right on the quicksands of a policy of concession, a policy of opportunism, with ‘ifs’ and ‘buts,’ or do we want it on the firm rock basis of essential ideas on which up to the present Social-Democracy has stood, on which it still stands, and on which it must stand if it is to remain what it is: the political expression, the political organisation of the fighting revolutionary working class?”

WE know that at the time Clara Zetkin had in no way altered her ideas, and that to-day, just as fifteen years ago, she fights against the “interesting enthusiasts” who attempt to break up the ideological unity of the Bolshevik Party.

The war, and with it the necessary split in the German Social-Democratic Party, was a decisive point in the life of Clara Zetkin, although she was not so startled by the turn affairs had taken as others who had not struggled for decades against the right wing leaders of the Social Democrats.

To separate from the Party with whose development, growth and life Clara Zetkin was bound up, and whose ruin she was unable to prevent, could not have been an easy decision of a few hours or days. To break away from Social Democracy—that would mean to break away from work with which she was connected, that would mean separation from many dear friends and comrades

in the fight who did not belong to those with whom she took the decisive step.

This decisive step in her life, which for her was no less than a consequence of all her life, of all her actions, made her capable of always understanding the difficulties which exist for old, long-organised Social-Democrats, in the process of separation from their Party. This process, with all its difficulties, repeats itself everywhere, and only those who have experienced all these difficulties can win these workers for us.

Clara Zetkin undoubtedly saw, towards the end of the war, how two big groups had formed within the working-class movement: the workers, who had gone through the school of pre-war Social-Democracy, and those workers who had only been won to the class struggle by the fact of the war, who through disillusionment and rebellion had found the way to their class.

A PROLETARIAN party which took the class war seriously, a Communist Party, must be the synthesis of these two elements. It had to link up the best revolutionary workers from among the old Social-Democrats with the newly-arisen working-class ranks, with the new army of fighters.

Clara Zetkin understood this better than the others, because she was older than the Second International, and because in herself she united the traditions and experiences of a generation of organisational work and propaganda for the class struggle with the uprising and the revolutionary temperament of youth. Carrying along with her the masses of the newly-won workers, she fought at the same time, along with the faithful friends of the pre-war period, to free the Social-Democratic workers from the grasp of reformism and to lead them into the Communist Party. She realised well enough that the process of forming a revolutionary mass party was not finished by entering the Communist International.

THE history of the Communist International since its foundation is the history of a continuous struggle for the correct policy, a continuous struggle for ideological clarity and unity.

Comrade Clara has never taken part in a decision of the International without having actively co-operated in its formation and execution. Not one party in the Communist International, which at any time asked for the advice of the Comintern on important questions, has received it without comrade Clara taking part.

If we glance over the records of the congresses and conferences of the Communist International we see that few have struggled for and contributed so much towards ideological enlightenment as Clara Zetkin.

The Communist International was not always in agreement with her ideas. Sometimes the combat was very fierce. But the tremendous differences between the discussions with Clara Zetkin and the discussions with

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Clara Zetkin and Comintern—continued

“members of the opposition” was that comrade Clara, whatever she said and whenever she was not in agreement with decisions and conclusions, took up her position exclusively on the basis of a desire to help the Communist International, and not to carry on barren criticism.

Her path to Lenin and to Bolshevism was not a blind acknowledgment, but a long process of examination and deliberation, a process in the course of which she was ever concerned to place her rich store of experience at the service of the propaganda of Marxism.

In all important questions and in all decisions of the Comintern we can see Clara Zetkin at work. When misery and the consequences of famine threatened the Russian working-class population it was she who took the lead in the Workers' International Relief Committee, which was the beginning of powerful solidarity action by the European working class. When the Communist International was dealing with the question of war danger in 1922 it was she who brought the ideas, which Lenin held in common with her, before the Executive.

AND, finally, in the period of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union it is she who stands as a living witness against the lies of the Social-Democrats, and shows the working class of the whole world what is happening and what will be done. She, who has seen the struggle for 50 years, who has witnessed defeat after defeat, and who all the time has guarded in her heart the hope of the victory of the proletariat, says to the workers of all the world: The land of your hopes, the land of your future is the Soviet Union. Your ideal is there becoming a reality.

Clara Zetkin affirms the building up of Socialism. She affirms the mighty work which has been done in the Soviet Union and the necessity to defend this great work. The revolutionary enthusiasm which animates her is the source of her strength. If we want to understand in what she differs from the numberless Social-Democrats, from the fighting comrades of her youth who have grown senile, we see that it is her revolutionary temperament, and with it the recognition that not only is a good organisation necessary for the revolutionary struggle, but also the revolutionary spirit and revolutionary education.

WHATEVER mistakes Clara Zetkin has made they never arose from pessimism or hesitation. Clara Zetkin possesses an unmistakable optimism and belief in the victory of the proletariat and in its will to fight. It is this optimism and this belief that make Clara Zetkin irreplaceable for us.

Her whole life was dedicated to the education of the most backward section of the working class, the women. In the Social-Democratic Party she fought continuously for Marxist education and Socialist culture.

Believing in the invincible fighting strength of the working class, in the possibility of rousing the will to fight of the proletariat, she found herself in this at one with Lenin, who was her teacher, as he is the teacher of the Communist International. She found in Leninism, in the Leninist employment of Marxist theory, the best weapon in the fight for winning over the minds of the working class.

In the struggle for the hearts and for the minds of the workers, Clara Zetkin, with her wealth of experience, with her deep knowledge, with her revolutionary temperament, is our teacher and our example.

The Communist International, which expresses the wishes of the revolutionary workers of the whole world to fight together with Clara Zetkin for many years to come for the liberty of the working class, believes with her in the seizure of power by the proletariat, by our generation. And the seventieth birthday of Clara Zetkin shall mean to us anew what Clara Zetkin, at the fifth Congress of the Communist International, put forward as the task of all Communists:

“Let us learn from Lenin the unequivocal belief, that in the breast of every simple proletarian, every poor oppressed worker the Promethean defiance slumbers, proclaiming even to the most tyrannical power, ‘And still you cannot kill us.’ Let us, in his spirit, teach Prometheus bound to burst his chains and forge them into weapons which shall liberate and into tools which shall construct. Let us, like him, be firm, consider calmly and dare boldly.

“Then the proletariat, the masses of miserable and burdened toilers of the whole world will stand up as an International of action. Then these masses and this International, welded together into one will and for one fight, will wage victoriously the battles of the world revolution.”



Against War and the Danger of War

Clara Zetkin

[We publish here the concluding section of comrade Clara Zetkin's speech at the enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in March 1922. Her revolutionary call to the workers of all countries and her recognition of the tasks of the Communist Parties have not lost their value today. We think that the 70th birthday of our grey-haired champion cannot be better celebrated than by the publication of this speech.]

THE Second International, at its congresses at Stuttgart, Copenhagen and Basel, passed excellent resolutions that the workers of all countries must unite determinedly to oppose the threatening war danger. It seemed to the illusioned leaders and masses that eternal peace would be rung in when the representatives of international Socialism made their entrance in the mystical twilight, and amidst the tolling of bells, into Basel Cathedral.

A short time passed, and then it turned out that the death knell of the Second International was rung in Basel. August, 1914, came. And the same men, who in Basel had sworn a holy vow that at the outbreak of war they would rouse the proletariat to the struggle, now confirmed with holy vows the duty of "defending the fatherland," and hitched the workers for four years to the war chariot of imperialism dripping with blood and mud.

Comrades, the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions, under whose banner resolutions about the General Strike, etc., are now being taken, is of the same flesh and spirit as the Second International, which destroyed the revolutionary united front of the proletariat of all countries in order to build up the national united front between the exploited workers and the exploiting bourgeoisie.

Our Duty

We must not be satisfied with the joyful fact that the "radicalisation" of the organised masses drives their leaders forward to radical resolutions.

Let us do our duty to "radicalise" the proletarian masses further, to enlighten their understanding, to strengthen their will, so that they shall press forward, shall become ripe to translate these resolutions into fact. The enthusiastic revolutionary spirit alone—however highly I value it, however indispensable it is in the proletarian struggle for freedom—does just as little as resolutions on paper. The proletarian masses must be systematically prepared much more, both ideologically and organisationally, for the fight against the war danger and against war. The decisive moment must find them ready. When that is the case even the most cunning leaders will not act as brakes, will no longer be able to mislead and mystify, will not break their promises to and deceive the masses. Leaders and masses will be equal to each other, and as a strongly bound unity take up the fight against war danger and war, and carry it through with the utmost resoluteness.

To prepare the masses ideologically and organisationally for their fight is the task of the Communist Parties, of the Third International. The firm basis of this work of preparation is the recognition that the only effective protection against threatening war is the proletarian revolution. For it overthrows capitalism, and by that ensures the building up of a socialised economy which destroys the conflict of interests between States, as well as the contradictions between classes.

History puts to humanity the question: World war or world revolution? The proletariat must give the answer to that. We must convey this knowledge to the masses, hammer it into their consciousness, so that it may become their unshakable will and unlimited desire to carry on the revolutionary class war without fear of sacrifice and without fear of danger.

Practical Methods

To arm the broad proletarian masses mentally, politically and organisationally for the keenest revolutionary class war for averting war, I propose the following methods:

1. A systematic enlightenment of the working classes, particularly the youth, as to the causes, character, etc., of war.
2. The placing of all problems and decisions in foreign policy, on armaments, etc., before the broadest masses.
- 3*. . . .
- 4†. . . .
5. The strengthening of the revolutionary will of the masses to oppose an imperialist war by all other means at their disposal, by street demonstrations‡
6. The creation of legal and other organs which will work for the carrying out of these tasks.
7. The setting up of legal and other organs and institutions to ensure a united energetic international co-operation among the Communists in those countries between which the conflict of interest is sharpest.

It seems to me superfluous, after what has already been said, to substantiate these demands separately. Only three will be emphasised. The workers—to a certain extent also the reformist trade unions—frequently

* A clear statement is given here on the question of propaganda among the armed forces. Owing to "freedom of speech," as interpreted under the capitalist dictatorship of Great Britain, it is omitted. Our readers will be aware of the very great importance attaching to this question, and of the position of the International upon it.

† A statement on the need, in the event of the outbreak of an imperialist war, to deal with the question of the transportation of munitions and troops has had to be omitted here for the reasons given in the preceding note.

‡ References to the General Strike and to armed uprisings have been omitted here for reasons given in a previous footnote.

Against War—continued

adopt on economic and world political questions a petty bourgeois attitude; it does not concern them "if somewhere in Turkey the people are struggling among themselves": that is "high policy" on which they have nothing to say. This idea must be rooted out. The masses must learn to understand that questions of foreign politics are also questions of home politics, their most urgent concern, because in their working out they interfere with their lives.

Foreign Policy and the Workers

For that reason we must drag all problems and important phenomena of foreign policy out of the dark rooms of governments and diplomats and the debating clubs of Parliamentary Committees and sessions and bring them before the masses. The masses must be able to judge and decide upon them, for they are those who pay the cost of such decisions. Marx, in his inaugural address to the First International, expressly demanded that the proletariat should no longer leave foreign policy to the bourgeoisie and their governments, but themselves interfere decisively with a powerful hand.

German Social-Democracy in the pre-war period refused to carry out special "barracks agitation," and even more, to carry out of such propaganda by illegal methods. Among the parties in the Second International those sharing this standpoint were predominant.*

These circumstances stand as a symbol of the revolution, the class enemies, proletariat and bourgeoisie, conflicting sharply. The bourgeoisie itself, when the proletariat would use the legal system for its own struggle, destroys the basis of that very system. The proletariat has indeed no reason to be more legal than its enemy. It undoubtedly uses the foundations of bourgeois legality to its most utmost limit of possibility, but† . . .

Legality and Force

It must not be forgotten that the legality of bourgeois States, although it bears a democratic cloak, is nothing but the power of the possessors and exploiters in a crystallised form, to be held sacred by the exploited because they were created for the use of others. Faced by this power, the proletariat must appeal to its historic right and its historic duty of revolution, which will give rise to a new legality, engendered in the struggle. Does that mean—with reference to the matter in question—that the Communists shall play the part of mutineers, shall found secret societies and revel in organising defence corps without rhyme or reason, as the forces of the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat in Germany succeeded in doing, senselessly and uselessly, under the influence of the war and of the November uprising?

By no means! The Communists, in their propa-

* A reference to the Communist attitude towards bourgeois legality, and respect for it, is omitted here, for reasons as preceding.

† The end of this sentence has been omitted.

ganda* . . . will not turn to stone before every police official and every paragraph of the law as if they had seen the head of a Medusa. They will fulfil their task on the broad legal road as long and as far as that is possible† . . .

Our revolutionary fight against war urgently requires that special international organs and institutions for its execution must be created. It is not sufficient, comrades, that there are periodic international conferences and congresses of the Communist Parties, which put forward good, first-rate theses and pass ringing resolutions, that Communist leaders from the various countries confer with each other on particular measures. No; constant systematic work must be done internationally, so that in the various countries mighty masses of workers are mobilised who, instead of being drawn into war, will force forward the revolution. That is impossible without organs to do this work and without measures which, on the basis of international understanding, will be realised co-operatively.

International Aid

The most closely organised international co-operation among Communists is particularly necessary in those countries in which the conflicting interests of the bourgeoisie, and therefore the dangers of war, are particularly great.

This is further of the greatest significance in the large centres on the west and south borders of Germany, where the continental, nay, the European, economy is based on the production of a large amount of raw materials, where the international focal points of this economy lie. The flower of the revolutionary solidarity of the proletariat grows out of the same historical soil which, among the primary impacts of the class contradictions between exploiters and exploited, is rent violently asunder by the national struggles of the bourgeoisie for profits and power.

The desire for war and the fear of war of the international bourgeoisie trifle diplomatically with each other, until the volcanic powers of capitalist society, the antagonisms of forces, burst in a frightful world-war catastrophe.

The proletariat must oppose to his frivolous game and self-evident danger its most determined and iron will to revolution. And this will excludes both fear of

* Six words omitted here.

† The end of this sentence has been omitted.

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Against War—continued

revolution and playing at revolution. It must be an international, firmly welded together in resolute readiness for war.

Comrades, the world bourgeoisie challenges the world proletariat to prove its readiness for war. At the Genoa Conference it intends to form an international united front for the reconstruction of capitalist economy, which means an united front against the proletariat. The proletariat must oppose that conference by its own international revolutionary united front. It is the task of the Communists to appeal to the widest masses of the workers of all countries to build this united front, and themselves, guiding and directing, to take their place in it.

Reconstruction of capitalist economy! What does that mean? Armaments and war. Placing the gigantic burdens of the last war and the gigantic costs of reconstruction on to the working people and the only workers' State—Soviet Russia. That is, intensification of exploitation of the masses until they sink into the deepest misery. That is, heightening their oppression to the most complete slavery. That is, the most unscrupulous violent class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat.

Faced with these conditions the proletariat must express internationally by mighty proclamations that it denies that the world bourgeoisie and their governments have the capacity and the will to build up a higher and more complete economic and social edifice, in which humanity shall live in culture and peace. It must prove its unshakeable resolution to protect itself and Soviet Russia against the raging desire for plunder and power of international capitalism by the bitterest class struggle. In defending Soviet Russia the international proletariat is defending itself. The fate of the exploited of the earth is indissolubly bound up with

Soviet Russia. The world revolution welds them together. Their progress must be made with the most active reciprocity and co-operation, a common fight against capitalism, a common victory over it. The proletariat of Soviet Russia, with a sacrifice worthy of admiration and heroic courage, has by fighting made the recognition of this connection a fact.

War or Revolution?

It has been till now the glorious champion of the proletarian world revolution, the conscious, progressive force of history. The proletariat of the still capitalist world must no longer bear the ignominy of being only the passive object of history, a withered, confused mass of leaves, with which the clouds and winds of bourgeois domination, of capitalism play.

It must finally align itself with Soviet Russia, and fulfil its duty towards the world revolution. Its actions in the world revolution will be the evidence of the historical maturity.

World war or proletarian world revolution, not as an academic problem, as a question of dull theory, which we may discuss and philosophise about in tranquility of mind. No, comrades! As a burning practical question of the day, which we must deal with as the alpha and omega of our "programme of action," which enters into all the present needs of the exploited but must in its further aim go beyond them and their alleviation.

The fight against war and the war danger, in which we, the proletarian masses, must lead, is an essential and significant part of the fight against capitalism, and is a decisive step forwards to world revolution. The revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat is the seed of world peace. Only the overthrow of capitalism can save humanity from the fury of war. Only the world revolution leads humanity to freedom. Let us act! Let us fight! Let us prepare the masses for the struggle!

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This Side and the Other Side of the Barricades

A. Martynov

ON the 9th June, 1927, the Collegium of the G.P.U. published its considered judgment on the execution of twenty counter-revolutionaries. They were not hostages, as the yellow press has invented—they were criminals, members of a monarchist organisation, who had been convicted of planning murders, attempts to murder, conspiracies, espionage, etc., on the territory of the Soviet Republic. They were ordered to be shot by an exceptional procedure because the situation after the rupture of diplomatic relations between England and the Soviet Union had become an exceptional one.

Soviet Russia and the whole world are in danger of war. Comrade Voikoff was murdered at a signal from London, and in the same way in the course of a few days murders and attempts on life followed quickly after each other, committed by White Guards who were supplied with instructions, money and weapons by agents of the foreign Secret Service.

The execution of the twenty awakened an extremely strong echo. But the echo on the other side of the frontier in the camp of the social traitors sounded differently from that of the echo of the working and peasant masses in the Soviet Republic. In this respect the effect of the shooting of the twenty is extremely instructive. It shows clearly who will be on the one side and who on the other side of the barricade when the thunderstorm bursts, when the campaign against the Soviet Union is opened. Most cynical and shameless was the reaction to this execution, of—if we may be allowed to call them so—the “Socialists.” Herr Sensinov, a social revolutionary, former terrorist, thought it necessary, with two other S.R.’s, to present himself at the Mass held for the souls of the “murdered” in Paris among the Russian monarchist emigrants. Let it be noted here that in the name of these very monarchists Schulgin, the most moderate among them, demanded the heads of 50,000 Russian Communists. Only one idea satisfies them: to celebrate a bloody orgy on the ruins of the proletarian State.

Poisonous Venom

The principal organ of German Social-Democracy chimes in with the choir of the social revolutionaries. In an article headed “Twenty! (the Shooting of Hostages in Moscow)” in their issue of June 11th, on the one hand they pleaded the cause of the English Conservatives and the murder of comrade Voikoff in every way, while on the other hand poisonous venom was hurled at the Soviet power.

“Vorwärts” wrote: “The intentions of the English Conservatives are not, as a matter of fact, to go to war in the military sense. . . . The breaking off of diplomatic relations by England seems at first to be a manoeuvre of which the consequence was extremely doubtful; the murder of the Russian Ambassador in

Warsaw may be taken as the solitary act of a young fanatic, which is not in the least capable of shaking the structure of the Soviet Republic.”

English imperialism, which, as is well known to the “pacifist” “Vorwärts,” is most energetically preparing a war against the Soviet Republic, and the Russian monarchist emigrants, who, as is well known to the “democratic” “Vorwärts,” commit common crimes on the territory of the Soviet Union at the command of the English, are portrayed as innocent lambs. These gentlemen find other colours in which to paint a portrait of the Soviet power:

“A State which acts without the slightest necessity, as the Russian State has done, will be called barbarous by all humane men. . . . The shooting of the twenty is a confession of weakness and fear. In the whole world—with the exception of the small minorities who approve of and glorify everything that the Russian Government does—there arises a cry of horror and protest.”

England not Barbarous

For these “Socialist” vermin, who lick the boots of their capitalist masters for the crumbs which are thrown to them from the richly-laden table, the Conservative English Government which can turn the wheel of history far back is not a “barbarous” Government. This Government, in a period of proletarian revolution, deprives the English proletariat of all that it has gained in the last half-century, and is trying to reintroduce the mediæval powers of the Upper Chamber—and still it is not a “barbarous” but a “civilised” Government. At a time when millions of colonial and semi-colonial peoples are fighting for freedom, it disdains no means to reimpose the yoke on them—and still it is not a “barbarous” but a “civilised” Government. To obtain the surplus profits of the English capitalist magnates and landlords it is preparing to destroy the first workers’ State of the world, and to plunge all Europe and Asia into a new war chaos, for which purpose it will use the most reactionary, Fascist, monarchist, feudal elements—and still it is not a “barbarous” but a “civilised” Government.

On the other hand, of course the young Workers’ Republic is “barbarous” when, surrounded by an entire world of enemies, it allowed twenty counter-revolutionaries from the dregs of the monarchist parasites to be shot by exceptional legal procedure in order to defend the achievements of millions of workers and peasants.

“Such mass shootings,” continues “Vorwärts,” “can be understood in the necessities of a civil war; that does not prevent them from being an abomination, as indeed the civil war in general is an orgy of accumulated abominations. During civil war, moreover, no economic construction is possible, at least construction in the Socialist sense.”

This Side and the Other—continued

And if the Soviet State in the tenth year of its existence is again compelled to enter civil war, that signifies its bankruptcy. That is how "Vorwärts" reacts to the Soviet Republic's act of defence against the Fascist terror and against the stirring up of a world war by the Conservative diehards.

This judgment, raised to the ranks of a principle, and too cynically candid even for the Social-Democrats, that every civil war, and consequently every revolution, is an "orgy of accumulated abomination" can only repel those workers who have long been under the corrupting influence of Social-Democracy. For this reason the left wing of the Social-Democrats, which includes the more radical working-class masses, attacks this question cautiously and Jesuitically.

Glorious Traditions

The "Leipziger Volkszeitung," organ of the left wing Social-Democrats, in its issue of June 11th, tries very gently to connect the present wretched policy of the Social-Democrats with their old "glorious traditions":

"The Social-Democratic movement has always taken up its stand on behalf of 'Reigns of terror.'"

"And the greatest historical achievement of the First International, the International Working Men's Association, was its intrepid appearance for the Paris Commune, which for decades has been painted to the dull-witted bourgeois as a bugbear in the bloodiest colours. For that reason we are not in principle against such measures if they are taken as acts of self-defence, and when they appear necessary to guard against the attacks of counter-revolutionary efforts. That is the essential point.

"Whether these premises were existing at the time in Russia we do not need to decide. The probability, however, is great. The Soviet State, in consequence of geographical and political facts, cannot be harmed by the military strength of England. Therefore the methods of penetration from within were employed and attempts made to provoke the Soviet Government to actions such as those now occurring in Moscow."

Left Wing Attitude

The "left wing" "Leipziger Volkszeitung" therefore apparently justifies the principle of shooting the twenty: for these left wingers, however, revolutionary "principles" are only a pretence to cover their counter-revolutionary practice. The author of the paragraph quoted above continues in the same spirit:

"These measures of repression serve to uphold the Soviet dictatorship. We fear, however, that by such measures the contrary will be effected."

And generally the author prophesies that the Soviet power is approaching its ninth of Thermidor, and explains this for the uninitiated:

"On the 9th of Thermidor the regime of the guillotine ended to make room for the terror of the capitalist class."

Exceptional measures, according to him, are, generally

speaking, admissible, but in concrete instances, however, they serve the cause of the bourgeoisie.

It is difficult to say which is meaner—the open cynicism of "Vorwärts" or the Jesuitry of the "Leipziger Volkszeitung." In any case, one will not be mistaken in maintaining that meaner than either of these is the Menshevik journal, "Der Sozialistische Bote."

Mr. Dan takes up the "moral" standpoint of "Vorwärts" in an article published on June 20th, and devoted to the shooting of the twenty under the title "The Red Terror." After having given a picture of the attacks being prepared against the Soviet Union he declares:

"All this can certainly be traced back to the unspeakably mean act of the unjust murder of the twenty hostages. . . . The moral judgment on this mean execution admits truly of no differences of opinion. . . ."

In the "moral" judgment on the murder of comrade Voikoff Mr. Dan similarly seconds "Vorwärts," while he dissociates himself from the monarchists and arch-reactionary English imperialism, by speaking of the necessity of making "an unbridgeable gulf" between their policy and "ours."

A Jesuit

This Jesuit, like the "Vorwärts," speaks of a "humane sympathy for the young muddle-heads like Kowerda, who sacrifices his life for a pernicious idea"—an evaluation which sounds particularly charming when said in the same breath which expresses his "indignation" at the barbarity of the "red terror."

While he speaks of the necessity for a dissociation from English imperialism, this Jesuit, just as the "Vorwärts," says: "Baldwin's Government undoubtedly desires no war"; and in connection with the attempts at murder organised by the English Secret Service on Soviet territory, which are enumerated in the official report of the Soviet Government, Mr. Dan, again following in the trail of "Vorwärts," says the following:

"One must not accept without further enquiry the proofs of the omnipresent 'English hand,' which Bolsheviks mention in their official and unofficial reports. The majority of these declarations probably consist of that wilful nonsense with which all governments, who conflict with one another, try to rouse the imagination of the masses of the people—and try to poison their understanding."

So speaks Dan's right face. But this Jesuit has also got a left face. Just as the "Leipziger Volkszeitung," unwilling to break its historical tradition, connects Social-Democracy with the traditions of the Paris Commune and the great French Revolution, so Dan makes his little bow to that side.

"In the years 1918-1920"—so he writes—"the Bolshevik dictatorship by the bloody cement of the terror closed its own ranks under the flag of terror, and decisively defeated the armed forces of monarchist Jingo reaction and the imperialist intervention. There were already present in this terror the seeds of the later development of the revolutionary dictatorship into the offensive regime of the bureaucratic police despotism of the Polit Bureau. . . . terror of those years, however, was revolutionary in the same sense as

This Side and the Other—continued

the first stage of the terror of the great French revolution. . . . The Bolshevik dictatorship had a demagogic appeal to . . . the revolutionary instinct . . . it said to the village poor: I am shooting the 'kulak' (large farmer) so that you and your like may divide his property among yourselves. It said to the soldiers: There shall be no more generals and officers with gold epaulettes. . . . It said to the workers: There shall be no more bourgeois capitalists. Take the factories and manage them yourselves. . . . 'Red tunics' and 'red terror.' "

Fond of Red Terror

While paying this little compliment to the red terror of the past, which Mr. Dan once violently opposed, he now makes a tremendous fuss about the assumedly newly-risen terror of the Soviet Union, which in the circumstances of N.E.P. no longer appeals to the revolutionary instincts but "to the counter-revolutionary instinct of nationalism and Chauvinism, degenerated by N.E.P." While he sketches a picture of the new red terror, of a Thermidor terror Mr. Dan asks:

"Where will the bloodthirsty hand of the hangman stop? Everyone will feel the danger. Not a single person opposed to Communism will feel secure."

The same tune is played in the same number of the "Sozialistische Bote" by the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, which appeals to all Social-Democratic workers of the Soviet Union as follows:

"This is the first step towards an inhuman terror. But where will its last step lead? Will it, beginning with the nobles and merchants, stop before the huts of the peasant or the slums of the workers? Will it, intoxicated by the blood of the enemies of the revolution (the monarchists and White Guards) hesitate before the opponents of Communism? Who can, nay, who will dare, forget the unhappy experiences of the years 1918-20?"

All Together

We see how the links in the chain of the anti-Soviet front are being welded together. The one-time terrorist Sensinov, who now takes part in Paris at a Mass for the arch-reactionary monarchists, is followed by "Vorwärts," and that by the "Leipziger Volkszeitung," both of which in their turn are followed by Dan and the Menshevik Central Committee. The latter bring against the Soviet Republic arguments, not only from the right but also from the left, and they are joined by the ultra-left renegades, the one-time Communists, Ruth Fischer and Maslov, who, in their organ, "The Banner of Communism," accuse the Soviet power of Thermidoric degeneration, and, with Dan, write:

"The execution of the twenty shows how the opposition will be liquidated."

The execution of the twenty has thrown a bright searchlight on our enemies, and particularly those who have been the agents of the bourgeoisie within the working class. The execution of the twenty has clearly shown

that when the war clouds burst, when the open campaign against the Soviet Union begins, all these ladies and gentlemen, beginning with the social revolutionary Sensinov and ending with Ruth Fischer and Maslov, will be on the other side of the barricades.

The execution of the twenty has, however, also thrown a bright searchlight on the camp of our friends. The execution of the twenty decided upon by the G.P.U. with special legal proceedings, at a moment when heavy clouds are passing over the Soviet Union, has not only the purpose of intimidating monarchists, but also of inducing the people of the Soviet Union to be alert. This execution said to them: "The monarchists raise their heads, under the protection of the decaying English imperialism, which is preparing war against us. The achievements of October are in danger. Be on your guard!"

Workers Respond

The peasants as well as the workers of Soviet Russia immediately responded to this call. The vice-president of the G.P.U., comrade Jagoda, published in "Pravda," July 6th, "details" of the most recent operations of White Guards in the Soviet territory. Every proletarian on the other side of the Soviet frontier must acquaint himself with these details, for in them is reflected the present feeling of the broad masses of peasants and workers of the Soviet Union.

We are here concerned with the manner in which the G.P.U. succeeded in liquidating that monarchist triple team (Opperput, Sachartschenko-Schultz and Vosnesenski), which soon after the murder of comrade Voikoff attempted to blow up the building of the G.P.U. with melinite of English origin. Comrade Jagoda writes:

"The peasant population of the border provinces who were carefully instructed by the local organ of the G.P.U. concerning the personality of the fugitives, showed an instructive example of the understanding of the task of the workers and the exact relation of the peasantry to the enemies of Soviet rule. One must bear in mind that the Governments (provinces) of Smolensk and Vitebsk were crowded with bandits at the time, from among whose ranks the Savinkoff gangs were recruited. Just in these governments the peasants have now most actively supported the combating of these bandits. The way of the White Guards is along two directions. . . ."

"Opperput, who fled alone, was on the 18th June already in the Janov distillery, where he aroused suspicion, and was almost arrested. During his flight he armed himself and wounded a soldier, Lukin, a worker, Kraftsov, and the peasant Jakuschenko. His flight was successful. Comrade Sirniz, who was acting chief of the special department of the Information Service in White Russia, received the help of the peasants from the villages Altuchofka, Tchernikov and Brjujewka in the Government of Smolensk. This careful and methodical encircling made it possible to discover Opperput, who was hiding in some dense undergrowth. He was shooting from two Mausers, and was killed by the shots of his pursuers.

This Side and the Other—continued

"The other terrorists took the road to Vitebsk. Towards the frontier Sachartschenko-Schulz and Vosnesenski were met by an automobile which was on its way from Vitebsk to Smolensk. The fugitives stopped the car and commanded at the point of the revolver that they should be carried to their destination. The chauffeur, comrade Grebenjuk, refused, and was shot on the spot. The other occupant, comrade Golenkov, was wounded by the White Guards, but was not able to make the car unfit for use.

"Sachartschenko-Schulz and her companion left the car and hid again in a wood. The trail of the fugitives was, however, again discovered in the Detum district. And again, thanks to the active co-operation of the peasants, a raid was successfully carried out. . . . Vosnesenski being killed immediately, and the woman Schulz dying of wounds a few hours after capture. . . .

Plans for Murder

"A diary was found on Opperput containing details in his own hand of a prepared murder on the life of Lubianka. Several other incriminating notes were discovered which will be of great value to the G.P.U. for investigation."

These particulars are very significant. The social traitors of all countries paint the G.P.U. as a despicable body which terrorises the whole country and suffocates the liberty of the "people." The real people, however, and not the one devised by the foreign press, is ready at the first call of the G.P.U. to offer its life for the defence of October's achievements. Chauffeurs face certain death and die like heroes so that they may prevent monarchists from escaping the punishment of the Soviet power. The soldier Lukin, the worker Kraftsov, the peasant Jakuschenko were killed while pursuing monarchists at the request of the G.P.U. The wife of the Red commander, comrade Rowkova, was also hit by a bullet when she gave the alarm to the peasant guards, in order to capture the woman terrorist Sachartschenko-Schulz. Peasants of large groups of villages carried out raids at the request of the G.P.U. in order to catch the enemies of the Soviet power.

How does this picture tally with that painted by Messrs. Dan and Co., with that of the decay of the Soviet State, of the Thermidorian degeneration of the Soviet power, of its "kulakisation," of its separation from the masses, such as the gentlemen like Dan, the left Social-Democrats and the ultra-left renegades would have us believe? They speak of a Thermidor; they groan: "At a moment of war danger the Soviet Republic will again burst into civil war, and again will reign that terror which will not hold its hand before the miserable hut of the peasant and the worker: this will be the triumph of the bourgeois counter-revolution."

It is hard to say what is greater in this groaning, the miserable lie or the idiotic blindness. During the years of the N.E.P. the Soviet power was able not only to build up its economy, but also to show the workers that a Socialist administration is again being built up and is growing: it was able to show the middle and poor peasantry that its most vital class interest consisted in the preservation and strengthening of their alliance with

the proletariat. During the period of militant Communism the peasantry supported the Soviet Government, but it was still on trial: for this reason peasant risings against the Soviet power flared up here and there at that time. As recently as 1925 a kulak could still in many places in the Soviet Republic kill a workers' correspondent; but now, when the Soviet Republic is threatened with war, there is no instance of a hostile demonstration of the peasants, still less one of the workers, against the Soviet Government.

They are on Guard

The particularly significant facts just cited are eloquent evidence of the fact that the peasants and workers look upon the defence of the Soviet Republic not merely as the business of the Soviet Government and the Red Army, but as their own most vital concern. Let the proletariat of every country know! When the war clouds burst over Soviet Russia, then on the other side of the barricade there will be the entire Social-Democratic leadership; on this side of the barricade all the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union who, without question, will be supported by the working class of the whole world.

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Trade Unionism "on Several Bases"

J. Chavaroche

IN the organisations and the press of the Unity Confederation of Labour (C.G.T. Unitaire) a discussion has been going on for some months on the subject of "Trade unionism on several bases" ("Syndicalisme à bases multiples") The National Committee of the C.G.T.U. had a special report before it on this subject at its meeting on April 4th, and a resolution was adopted on the lines of the report. Some militants of the C.G.T.U. have been specially studying the question for two years. The next congress of the Federation (in the autumn) is going to consider it also; the question has been put on the agenda.

What is this weird formula, "trade unionism on several bases"? There are plenty of comrades who might think it was something quite new and extraordinarily original. And comrades who are not French might—not without reason—shrug their shoulders with astonishment at it.

All too often the trade union movement ("mouvement syndicale") is identified with syndicalism. In France almost everyone uses these two notions as if they were synonymous. And that, naturally, is at the expense of clearness of thought.

In reality, the trade union movement is the trade union movement, in the sense used universally, internationally; while French syndicalism is not simply the trade union movement, but quite a particular sort of trade union movement. The idea, and the actual thing in fact, has had historically the meaning of a working-class Party, a "Party of Labour," as it used to be called at many congresses of the old C.G.T.

What "Syndicalism" Is

French "syndicalism," and more particularly what is called "revolutionary syndicalism," had one characteristic trait: it formed a grouping of those who thought alike, and remained almost always a grouping of "active minorities"; these claimed, attempted (and sometimes, though rarely, managed) to be the leaders of great mass movements. But they were always an "active minority." And the way in which their organisation was built tallied with this.

No one joined the C.G.T. just because he was a worker drawing wages. On the threshold of the C.G.T. it was necessary to declare acceptance of a programme of political ideas, a veritable political creed.

We have no idea at all of considering this attitude of the working-class organisations, at this period, as a crime which they must expiate for ever. It is obvious that this attitude was an instinctive reaction of the workers' movement against the many parties and political groups, Labour and Socialist, whose practice it was systematically to deceive the working class. It was a reaction against the ugly tendency towards demoralisation and corruption due to bourgeois parliamentarism, so that alongside the different Socialist parties, and frequently against them, there stood a "revolutionary syndicalism" which sought to be "sufficient for all" and "sufficient unto itself."

But even during the period of the "division of territory," when the Socialists had got the "political field" (actually only the parliamentary) and the unions got the "economic field," "revolutionary syndicalism" still considered itself an "active minority," organised according to the similarity of ideas.

"Revolutionary syndicalism" has never been a mass trade union movement. For all too short a time the C.G.T. included about two million adherents. On the other hand, even at the time of "revolutionary syndicalism" of the purest water, the practice of making agreements and linking up with parties or political personages to the right of the Socialists, or even with ministers, was not completely dropped.

No great change has taken place in the trade union movement in France since the split and formation of two general confederations of Labour. There are still no mass trade union organisations. To-day, as previously, the immense majority of the workers—ninetenths—remain outside the unions. To-day, as previously, there is scarcely a worker who has not been at some period, for a short time or for a long time, organised in some union or other.

"Corridor Unions"

Before the war the active members of the unions used to bemoan the fact that the unions were "corridor unions" through which the workers flowed. The same complaint is to be heard to-day. When spirits are high in view of an attractive fight on, when "blood boils" before a struggle just starting, there are very many workers who come into the unions. A little later they drop out—swearing meanwhile that they are ready for battle when a new struggle comes along. The only change—within the limits of the theme which interests us here—since the formation of two C.G.T.'s is an increase in the political polarisation. The C.G.T.U. has become closely linked up with, and friendly towards, the Communist Party of France. The reformist C.G.T. has become an auxiliary of the petty-bourgeois political parties. Not only the Herriot ministry—of ridiculous fame—but also Poincaré's ministry have shown their sympathy for the C.G.T., and asked for the advice and the collaboration of its leaders. For these reasons there is still in France no mass trade union movement. The reformist C.G.T. is too political, in the sense of being an organisation for election purposes (we are talking about the leaders, not the workers in it), to be able to become an organisation of the masses.

So here is the C.G.T.U., heir to the "revolutionary syndicalists," trying desperately to find ways and means—action and organisation—that can help it to create a mass trade union movement! It is in their search for these that the militants of the C.G.T.U. have been discussing, for some months, the question of "trade unionism on several bases." And the formula "trade unionism on several bases" simply means the transition from "revolutionary syndicalism" (a semi-political sect holding the same views) to a mass trade union organisation.

"On Several Bases"—continued

Is it an accident that this question has cropped up in the C.G.T.U. now and in this way? Not in the least. The militants of the Unity Confederation have been convinced for a long time of the necessity for mass unions. The proletarian revolution in Russia gave them the chance to assimilate the idea of the usefulness, the indispensability, of mass unions; and at the same time the teachings of Lenin became accessible to them. But it is only now, since the economic crisis and the unemployment of last autumn (with the strike movement that preceded it) that they have realised—and, above all, the workers themselves have realised—the uselessness of trying to fight effectively with skeleton trade unions.

Another reason for the present return to the campaign for "mass trade unionism" is to be found in the changes that have taken place in the structure of French industry and in the employers' organisations. The centralisation of companies and of capital, the selling rings, trusts and similar capitalist groupings, are influencing, and will continue still more to influence, the workers' organisations.

Union Benefit Funds

Against powerful and centralised employers' organisations the proletariat can only effectively resist by strong mass organisations. We must repeat: it is with this idea that the Unity C.G.T. is examining at present the question of "trade unionism on several bases."

Concretely and in ordinary language it is a question, in this situation, of trade union benefit funds ("le mutualisme"). It is a question of enlarging and reorganising the structure of the C.G.T.U. by setting up a "National Solidarity Fund" with which benefit funds can be started in the unions.

It is not a simple business. To introduce benefits in the workers' unions in France is something of an event. Above all, when it is the C.G.T.U., the heir to "revolutionary syndicalism," that is taking the step. For when one looks at the past history of the trade union movement in France one sees that the only people who have been in favour of "mutuality" up to now, and have built up benefit funds, have been the extreme right wing of trade union reformism.

Let us take for example Keufer, the most noted advocate of reformist trade unionism and of "mutuality." He called himself a "Positivist," a follower of Auguste Comte. He stood for "peaceful organic trade unionism," for conciliation between employers and workers, and for the regulation of disputes by impartial commissions. Many of his followers were members of the mixed unions of workers and employers. He himself had founded employers' unions.

He spoke at the congress at Bourges (the 1904 C.G.T.), held after a series of strikes, including a strike throughout the mining industry, and violent struggles with the police and soldiers. At this congress Keufer said:

"We cannot admit that the moral transformation will take place by a brutal revolution. We need other means to bring us to the ideal towards which all of us aspire. We need a long mental preparation, a moral change among individuals.

"As for direct action, we consider it bad for

the workers—not out of prejudice, but because we believe that violence is not the best way to get satisfaction. . . .

"That is why we maintain our opinion, our preference for reformist methods, without trying to take away the liberty of other organisations who think in terms of revolutionary action: they will take such action at their own risk and peril."*

A Real Right Winger

Keufer, with Coupat, Renard and Niel, contributed to the "Trade Union Movement," a journal edited between 1904 and 1910 by Albert Thomas, which was entirely reformist. Finally he was, during the war (together with, incidentally, most of the revolutionary syndicalists) a Socialist patriot and "Boche-eater."

And this was the man who introduced benefit funds into the unions and defended them against the resistance of the C.G.T.! He took other countries as examples:

"We have thought it necessary to institute sick benefits, unemployment benefits, funeral benefits and strike pay; this is because we had before us the example of other countries, because it is the best way to secure the support, the single-mindedness of all our members in a fight."—(Fourteenth Congress, p. 96.)

This point of view was bitterly opposed by the "revolutionary syndicalists." But to tell the truth, "revolutionary syndicalism" at this time was dominated by anarchist ideas, and the anarchists put forward, against the idea of any mass organisation, the slogans of "Active minorities," "A General Strike leading to insurrection." They even organised "General Strikes" to secure the abolition of the official labour exchanges!

Naturally, since "mutuality" has, in France, a tradition of this sort behind it, some disquiet is shown when the question is raised to-day. But the militants of the C.G.T.U. have been careful from the very beginning to make it clear that the "mutuality" they want to introduce does not in any way mean that the C.G.T.U. should become a reformist organisation accepting capitalism and bourgeois society.

Monatte's View

So far as we know, the "Revolution Proletarienne" has been alone up to now in opposing "trade unionism on several bases." In a note, probably written by Monatte (No. 30, 15th March, 1927), a thesis is formulated against it. It should be said that not all the disciples of the "Revolution Proletarienne" share Monatte's viewpoint; in No. 32 of April 15th, J. de Groote declares that he is strongly in favour of a "National Fund for Solidarity." But to return to Monatte: his argument is the more interesting in that he is one of the "revolutionary syndicalists" of long-standing. This is what he writes:

"The initial aim is to help towards the forming of mass trade unions instead of our present unions through which the members flow.

"In my view, such bases are a negation of revolutionary trade unionism. They are a triumph for the reformism so dear to Keufer and Coupat.

* Report of the Fourteenth National Congress, 1904, p. 132.

"On Several Bases"—continued

"They mean making ourselves at home in a regime which it is our mission to destroy, accepting the stability of this regime and postponing the revolution to the Greek Kaleuds.

"The formation of benefit funds in our T.U. organisations will doubtless increase our numbers, but, alas, with what elements? There will come into the unions the workers hitherto hostile, to get advantages clearly established, to enjoy rights fixed by the rules; the timid, the poor-spirited, always inclined to bargains, to shameful compromises, to abdication before the masters. A majority of cringing cowards might annul the efforts of the most conscientious, brave and active comrades. The result: a decrease in the spirit of combativity, of revolt, of initiative."*

In these lines Monatte shows clearly enough the sectarian character of his present position. The further he gets from Communism, the more he comes under the power of the commonest watchwords of "pure trade unionism."

A Clear Position

The position of the C.G.T.U. has been made clear in several articles in the "Vie Ouvrière." In No. 404 (25-2-27) this organ of the C.G.T.U. had a "Preliminary Project" with the sub-title of "Mutuality in the Trade Unions." The "mutuality" ought to fulfil the following needs:

- "(1) To keep in the unions, by offering permanent benefits, the workers who join up at periods of trade or social struggles, but tend to abandon their organisations when the period of action is over.
- "(2) To guarantee complete security for the mutual aid funds which ought at all times to be independent of the union funds for administration and propaganda. . . .
- "(4) Never under any circumstances to cause any deviation from the struggle against capitalism."

The "Voix Ouvrière" has also had articles on the same subject by Rabaté (25-3-27), Racamond (11-3-27), Monmousseau (25-2-27), Teulade (6-5-27), etc.

How is the argument put in these articles, in favour of "trade unionism on several bases"? Rabaté puts forward the question—as title of his article also—"Mass unions or Syndicalist Party?" He demolishes the fears of those who can see the mechanical repetition of the ideas of Keufer. "Under the pretext that the champions of 'several bases' for the unions were Keufer, Renard, Coupat and other confirmed reformists," writes Rabaté, "our excellent logicians have concluded would trade union funds for insurance and solidarity would lead straight to class collaboration." While recognising that "so far as 'mutuality' is concerned, it was the reformists of that period who spoke most clearly for the idea of mass trade unionism," Rabaté points out also that "the anarchist leaders of the C.G.T. fought against 'trade unionism on several bases' more in reality as a fight against mass unionism than as a battle against reformism."

Rabaté recalls also the fact that "in spite of us—against us if need be—the workers go in for mutual insurance. There were in 1923 five million producers organised in bourgeois insurance societies. Five million workers are outside the range of our influence. Impossible to make a revolution, impossible even to carry through strikes, without them—that is the fact of the matter."

The other articles and reports follow the same lines, with the exception of that by Teulade, who puts forward some reservations. The same line is also taken by the resolution of the National Committee:

"The National Committee declares that the industrial unions cannot achieve their aims until, by the number of their adherents, they become mass organisations responsive to the needs of the class war. Only unions that give their members, in addition to defense against the employers, permanent and lasting advantages can expect to keep their effectives in a permanent and lasting way. The introduction of (financial) solidarity into the unions affiliated to the C.G.T.U. is therefore put forward as a way to realise mass trade unionism. . . ."

At the same time, the resolution emphasises that "unity can and must be obtained by a mass trade unionism opposed to the idea of sectarian unionism," while the "active minorities have their part to play in the mass unions . . . as the enlightened fractions of the proletariat."

Should be of Service

Such is, briefly outlined, the question of "trade unionism on several bases" as it is being discussed at present in the organisations of the C.G.T.U. in France.

Of course, the establishment of a "National Solidarity Fund" with high contributions, at first to be voluntary, to meet the needs of union members during strikes, unemployment, etc., is no novelty in other countries. In so far as the C.G.T.U. foresees and gives warning against the dangers and deviations possible in this field (and particularly in so far as it repels systematically every illusion about such a fund being able to take the place of the struggle against capitalism and the bourgeois State), "mutuality" ought to be of service to the trade union movement in France.

One thing, however, seems to me uselessly complicated and likely to give rise to confusion: the formula of "trade unionism on several bases." What, after all, is the use of this formula?

Finally, a point that does not yet seem to have been cleared up sufficiently is the rôle and nature of the "fractions of active minorities" within this "trade unionism on several bases."

However this may be, the very fact that the C.G.T.U. has overcome certain survivals of anarchist-syndicalist traditions gives hope of an easier change by it towards mass unionism, towards the realisation of trade union unity. Yes, we agree completely with Rabaté: "The moment has come when trade unionism must be considered otherwise than as a political and economic party of the working class, and must be given its real part to play"—that of a class organisation of the workers effectively including the masses.

* "Revolution Proletarienne," 15-3-27.



Towards Balkan Unity

LA FEDERATION BALCANIQUE. Organ of the National Minorities and the Oppressed Peoples of the Balkans. (Vienna: Fortnightly. First year, No. 1 to 23; second year, 24 to 58; third year, 59 to 65. Pages, 1,264 + 8.)

THE Balkan volcano is again active. The Jugo-Slav—Greek conflict for Salonika is not at present a burning question, the Italian—Jugo-Slavian conflict has for the moment been shelved and the latest Jugo-Slavian—Albanian conflict, which even led to a break of political relations, will also be “shelved.” This “shelving” takes place, and must take place, because the gravitational centre of the war, of the coming world war which will be further eastward, is aimed at the Soviet Union, and therefore not at the Balkans. . . . The present interest of world imperialism, of British imperialism primarily, is to throw cold water on every spark which appears in the Balkans.

But these interests of Western imperialist States, which at the present do not desire war in the Balkans, cannot remove the contradictions in the Balkans, nay, the contradictions of the imperialist world. The Balkans are and will be of interest, and “La Fédération Balcanique” is the only periodical which illuminates clearly the conditions of the volcano.

“La Fédération Balcanique” is to-day the best periodical in this sphere. “Peninsula Balkanika,” which appears in Bucharest, the Parisian “Peoples and Nations of the Balkans,” the Athenian “Near and Far East”—all these are bourgeois, three-quarters government organs, not only because they lack the object and aim of “La Fédération Balcanique,” but also because all of them together do not

publish as much material about the Balkans as “La Fédération Balcanique.”

The first number of “La Fédération Balcanique” appeared on July 15th, 1924, and from the very beginning made its aim not only to be an educational journal, but also a fighting paper. The article “Our Programme,” says:

“The principal task of our periodical is, as the name itself shows, the propagation of the idea of the emancipation and the right to self-determination of the Balkan people, as well as of their federation.”

And what did the editors of the periodical, who not only propagated this idea for decades but also fought for it, mean by the emancipation?

“We want to see”—the article on “Our Programme” continues—“the end of European imperialism and Balkan Chauvinism using the Balkan peoples as their victim. . . . For the Federation alone will destroy the roots of all national conflicts, will guarantee the free cultural development of national minorities, will give to all its members a free exit to the sea and to the large rivers, will assure to each complete political and economic freedom, and will at last bring peace to the Balkans and allow the cultural development of all peoples.”

Further it is emphasised that the “idea of the Federation must become the guiding idea,” that “all movements for national emancipation must pursue the same object,” that “reliance must be placed on one’s own powers,” that “the support of the labouring masses must be sought,” and “the fight will begin, though it will be a bitter one.”

No Easy Struggle

And in reality such a struggle is no easy task. One result of the world war has been the strengthening of Chauvinism in these important Balkan States. There is a mania in Greece, Greater Serbia and Greater Roumania. The editors of the periodical were aware of this difficulty, and since the fight must be carried on for and with the oppressed peoples of the Balkans, “La Fédération Balcanique” had to appear at first in all Balkan languages. To-day every number contains the following languages: Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Croatian, Serbian, Roumanian, Turkish and the French and German languages, French particularly.

This is indeed a good deal for one edition of a periodical, but this periodical was to publish from time to time articles in the following languages as well: Hungarian, Dalmatian, Russian and Slovak. The many millions of these national-

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Towards Balkan Unity—continued

ties in the present Balkan States shall and must be instructed on the general and basic problems of the Peninsula.

Up to January 1st, 1927, the periodical was called "La Fédération Balcanique," but from that time onwards it received the sub-title, "Organ of the National Minorities and the Oppressed Peoples of the Balkans." The fighting character of the journal was thus emphasised and made concrete, but at the same time to all appearances reduced. For when speaking of oppressed peoples it is implied that, firstly, there are unoppressed people in the Balkans, and, secondly, that the emancipation of the former is possible without the co-operation and fighting help of the latter.

The national Chauvinism of the Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian and Roumanian bourgeoisie is so great and powerful that it is possible to speak of "oppressed and dominated" peoples of the Balkans. But if the problem is discussed from this aspect it is hardly possible to speak of the necessity of the Balkan Federation. The problem must be considered from the general position of the Balkans. The position of the Balkan States in relation to Western imperialism is the point of departure for the future Balkan Federation. And that, too, is the whole meaning of the periodical, which has already appeared for three years, which propagates the idea of emancipation of the whole of the Balkans by a Federation of Balkan States. The basis has therefore only apparently been changed. In reality, however, the editors of the periodical understand by "oppressed peoples of the Balkans" **all the peoples of the Balkans**, in so far as they are treated as semi-colonial peoples by the imperialism of the Great Powers and are exploited and used as cat's-paws.

A Wide Enquiry

In propagating the idea of a Balkan Federation the periodical has endeavoured to learn the point of view of public opinion with reference to the fate of the Balkan peoples. An inquiry was instituted and hundreds of persons have replied to the following questionnaire:

1. Do you believe that the present solutions of the Macedonian question are in harmony with the principles of right and freedom as well as in the interest of peace?
2. Do you believe that the right of national minorities under the present Balkan reaction are heeded and guaranteed?
3. What in your opinion can end the oppression of national minorities, and, on the other hand, solve the contradictions among the Balkan States?
4. Do you believe in the possibility of realising a Balkan Federation by the present governments?
5. What is your general opinion regarding a Federation of Balkan States, and what are the conditions necessary for accomplishing this?

Replies to these questions were sent in by bourgeois partisans, Social-Democrats and Communists from practically all over Europe—Barbusse, Jean Longuet, Aulard, F. Buisson, Viktor Margueritti, Peri, Rappoport, Kianil, Balla, Maxton, Cook, Lansbury, Ellenbogen, Istrate, Auguste Forel, Dufour, Soukup, Bartoschek, Nickolau, Husug, etc. Let the following serve as examples of the replies sent in by several Communist leaders of the Balkans:

1. Comrade Kolarov, in No. 58, December 15th, 1926, writes, among other things: "We Bulgarian Communists consider futile all efforts which the oppressors of Macedonian peasants and workers make, by a mutual understanding about the division of spoils, by physical and moral suppression of the will of the masses. . . . The greatest difficulty consists in the moral and material emancipation of the Macedonian revolutionary movement from the 'Protectorate' and the 'Alliance,' from either section of the open or secret oppressors of the Macedonian people."

2. In No. 66, April 15th, 1927, comrade Novakowitch from Jugo-Slavia gave the following reply: "The interests of peace in the Balkan Peninsula can only be secured if identified with the interests of the Balkan people. . . . To us Communists the Balkan problem is as follows: It is primarily a Macedonian problem. . . . In Macedonia, Balkan hegemony is being fought for. . . . The postulate of a Federation of Balkan States means the full and complete emancipation of all Balkan people, and particularly the integrity and freedom of Macedonia."

3. Comrade Rakovsky, one of the best authorities on Balkan conditions, wrote as early as November, 1924: "Without a radical change of the internal political and economic regime of these countries, a Balkan Federation will, in the present circumstances, be a betrayal of the weaker and an object of exploitation to the stronger. Therefore the fight for a real Federation will be completely covered by the fight of the working class, together with the peasants, for their emancipation from the capitalist bourgeoisie and from feudalism."

4. Comrade Mosku from Roumania writes in No. 63 (1-3-27): "The articles and the facts which every number of 'La Fédération Balcanique' publishes, show clearly that the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as the coming into existence of Greater Serbia and Greater Roumania, have not altered the conditions and the fate of the working masses of the Balkans. . . . To prevent a new war among the Balkan peoples the slogan of a Balkan Federation, which can only exist as a Federation of Balkan Republics, must be adopted as the fighting slogan of every day for the workers of town and village, and of all nationalities of the Balkan Peninsula. . . ."

In addition to a thorough treatment of the national revolutionary movement of Macedonia, Albania, the Dobrudja, Croatia, Transylvania, etc., the principal questions of the Balkans are also thoroughly discussed. The national question as a whole, the peasant question and the question of refugees. Moreover, the periodical contains interesting articles on the general economic and political relations of these States to the imperialist Powers of the West. The little entente, the treacherous League of Nations, and the fraudulent Social-Democracy—nothing is omitted by "La Fédération Balcanique." The terror and the reaction in general, the bloody deeds of the Balkan governments, and the courageous movements of protest in foreign countries against those deeds are reflected in this periodical.

The "Fédération Balcanique" is of the utmost interest, and must be read by all who want to be well informed on Balkan matters.

P. K.

