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CONTENTS

	Page		Page
Behind the Scenes in Lausanne. By <i>A. Rosenberg</i>	883	The White Terror	
Politics		Death Sentence against a Russian Communist in Riga. By <i>J. A.</i>	886
The French "Bloc National" and Foreign Problems. By <i>Paul Louis</i>	884	To the Minister of Justice of the Polish Republic	887
The New Kemalist Orientation. By <i>Okhran</i>	885	In Soviet Russia	
The Greek Elections. By <i>S. Romands</i>	886	The Worst Counter-Revolution. By <i>Victor Serge</i>	888
		The New Labor Code. By <i>D. Ginsburg</i>	889
		The Colonies	
		The Dutch Indies. By <i>Hammer</i>	890

Behind the Scenes in Lausanne

By *A. Rosenberg.*

Diplomacy, in its character of the art of concealing thoughts, has been celebrating particular triumphs at the peace conference of Lausanne. The participators, and the press organs behind them, glide skillfully around the matters which they have most at heart, and hold long speeches and write endless leading articles on questions long since disposed of and of no interest whatever to anybody. The Turks form the sole exception; they do not need to help the Entente to play hide and seek. The Turkish delegation declares openly that at Lausanne they will demand the possession of Mosul. Besides this they demand Karagatsch, the suburb of Adrianople, in which the railway station of this city is situated; and thirdly they demand a plebiscite in the districts of Arabia which were separated from Turkey. With their demand for Mosul the Turks have uttered the decisive password, for the petroleum fields of Mosul form the main object of contest in Lausanne, however little they may appear in the official declarations.

The question of the Dardanelles, of Constantinople and Thrace, should not really form any subject of contest at the peace conference, for these matters have been settled in their essentials by the September agreement between the great powers of the Entente, an agreement based on the armistice of Mudania. The English government was obliged to declare itself in agreement with the restoration of East Thrace, with Constantinople and Adrianople, to Turkey. The sole reservation made was that the Straits should be free. France and Turkey declared themselves equally in agreement with this. The present disposition of political power does not permit of there being any question of the freedom of the Dardanelles being secured by English garrisons. The solution of the problem will have to be sought in the way recently indicated in the Parisian press, that is, by evacuation of all military forces from both shores of the Dardanelles and of the Bosphorus, and by a control of the Straits by an international commission headed by a Turk. In Paris the inclination is not to refer this question to the League of Nations. This would be a concession to Soviet Russia, who will have nothing to do with the League of Nations of the capitalist robbers. The question of the station at Adria-

nople, and of the fate of Thrace west of Maritza, where Bulgaria is seeking its outlet to the sea, form in themselves no danger to the peace of the world, and are not likely to disturb the slumbers of the worthy diplomatists of the Entente.

There is however a strange contradiction in the fact that while on the one hand, everything is so satisfactorily settled yet the English government was nearly entangled in an oriental war during Lloyd George's last days. A war of incalculable extent was threatened, for the sole reason apparently of deciding whether the English troops should have the right of occupying a wretched little place called Tschanak, on the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles, for a few weeks. But the conflict was naturally not on account of the few chimney stacks of Tschanak, but was plainly a despairing protest of English capitalism against abandoning its Constantinople position without even an attempt to hold it by force of arms.

The English policy of renunciation has meanwhile involved further consequences. The English capitalists are seriously concerned as to what is to become of the debts which they consider owing to them by the Turkish government, but are not recognized by Kemal Pascha, and of the railways in Asia Minor, of which the English owners have been deprived. And behind all this there is the greatest worry of all, the fear of losing the oilfields of Mosul.

Now that reliable experts have expressed the opinion that the petroleum fields of both states may be exhausted within two years, the race for the oil sources has been greatly intensified among the great petroleum trusts of all countries. In the Near East there is a struggle for the oilfields of Roumania and Mesopotamia. A short time ago the well known Anglo-Greek billionaire Sir Basil Zaharoff spent some time in Roumania, and endeavored to obtain petroleum concessions there. At the same time a group of American financiers were negotiating with the Roumanian government in pursuit of the same object. America is showing an equally lively interest in the petroleum springs of Turkey and Mesopotamia. A few days ago the world was surprised by the news that a special representative of American economic interests, a Mr. Ambry, had arrived in Angora. At

the same time the American government expressly emphasizes that the American delegation at the peace conference in Lausanne have no notion whatever of merely playing the part of spectators, but that America is going to take action to the utmost of its power for the protection of its economic undertakings in the Near East. That is plain enough: The Standard Oil Company is reaching for the oilfields of Mossul. At the same time the Parisian press reminds the English that France possesses the right, according to contract, to a part of the Mossul petroleum production. The district of Mossul is that part of Mesopotamia, belonging to the English sphere of interests, which lies directly on the frontier of Turkey. Mossul is a bone of contention between the English and Turks, and in Paris there are malicious voices which maintain that up to now the frontiers there have not been legally settled at all. England may come to an agreement with Turkey if she can. It is thus to be seen that England's dominance over the oilfields of Mossul is not only threatened by Turkey, but by French and American capital as well.

What is the present English government, the government of "peace and anti-waste", to do in this embarrassing situation? The best means at hand are resorted to. An uprising in the district north of Mosul, aided by the Turks, was recently suppressed by the generous use of English aeroplane bombs. It remains to be seen what the increased forces of the Labor Party in the House of Commons will say to these methods of British democracy. Further, attempts are made to give the Angora government as much trouble as possible. The Sultan deposed by the Turkish national assembly was conducted, with every possible sign of honor, on board an English warship, and taken to Malta. And now we even hear that the king of Mecca, who maintains friendly relations with England, has invited the fallen Sultan to come to him. The object of this manoeuvre is perfectly obvious. The Sultan, friendly to England, now having been obliged to fly from Constantinople, is to be proclaimed Caliph, the spiritual head of Islam, in Mecca, the holy city of the Mohammedans; with English gold a counter-movement against Kemal Pascha and his new caliph is to be manufactured in the Arabian population. But this manoeuvre has but small prospect of success.

The European questions in connection with Turkey are already cleared up in their essentials; the real significance of the conference of Lausanne lies in the fresh unfolding of the Asiatic problems. The Turkish national government demands the establishment of an independent Arabian kingdom in the former Turkish countries of Mesopotamia and Syria. This projected Arabian state is to be supported by Kemal Pascha's Turkey. The masses in Mesopotamia and Syria, weary of being exploited by foreign capitalists, welcome this idea. But this plan threatens not only the English dominance in Mesopotamia, but also the French power in Syria.

Despite all the skilful diplomacy of the Angora government, which has managed to play off the various conflicting capitalist interests against one another, and which may even succeed in solving this question in Lausanne, two great fighting fronts are plainly being formed. Here western capital and there the proletarian peoples endeavoring to liberate themselves. The one and only sincere friend of the Turkish nation, and of the other peoples of the Orient who are struggling for freedom, appearing at Lausanne, is Soviet Russia. The Turks have returned to Europe, and have thus broken the Balkan treaties of 1919. Victorious Turkey assails the most sacred possession of the British world empire, its petroleum springs. The fight for the oilfields may lead to a conflagration which will sweep away all readiness for peace in Bonar Law's government, and many other things besides.

POLITICS

The French "Bloc National" and Foreign Problems

By Paul Louis.

Three problems are to-day demanding attention from the French Bloc National. This coalition scents trouble coming, for all eyes are turning critically upon it, and the financial crisis is beginning to disquiet its warmest partisans. In vain, does it attempt to conciliate the peasant proprietors by freeing them from the revenue-duties and by raising barriers against the importation of agricultural products. Even in purely rural communities, it is covered with discredit. It has been unable to restore the economic household or to balance the budget, and the oscillating middle class, has withdrawn its confidence from it. The Bloc is no longer able to count strongly upon the great bour-

geoisie, whom it has served most faithfully and for whom post-war years have been as fat as the years of the war itself.

That is why it is very anxious to achieve some success on the foreign political field, in order to regain some of its lost prestige. But in that direction too, the Bloc meets with all kinds of resistance, and the solutions which it anticipated are disappearing so far out of sight, that it sometimes grows desperate.

I.

Naturally, what continues to concern it most, are the reparations. The entire policy of the Bloc National, as formulated at the 1919 elections, rested upon the struggle against Bolshevism (the knife between the teeth) and on the promise that Germany would pay. An incalculable number of debates have taken place at the Palais Bourbon and at the Senate, on the measures which should be adopted in enforcing the Versailles Treaty. More than one hundred times, the same phrases have been heard but the famous phrase of M. Plotz, M. Clemenceau's minister of Finances, "Germany will pay" has not yet become fact. The practical absurdity of the Versailles Treaty has become so evident to the eyes of all, that successive conferences have reduced the figure of the milliards of gold marks to be demanded from Germany; then came the crushing crisis of the mark, to which M. Poincaré attributed as the only cause, the investment of German capital outside of Germany!—and he sees no other cause—such as the Treaty of Versailles itself and its economic and financial effects. The Bloc National sets forth aggressive and violent proposals, but in fact, contents itself with words. Against the attitude of the French workers, and in spite of British and Italian opposition it has boldly threatened to occupy the Ruhr (and this threat is always conserved—in portfolio), without daring to proceed from threat to action. Lately, M. Poincaré, forced to reply to the questions of the Chamber, has declared that he was renouncing nothing—meaning his sanction of violence, but he takes good account of the fact that the Bonar Law cabinet would oppose any Trans-Rhine operations just as much as the Lloyd George Cabinet. It is yet to be known whether he has not negotiated secretly with the British Government, and whether he has not in some form or another, advanced this famous barter: *Constantinople for the Ruhr*.

For the Bloc National will not want to present itself before the electorate in 1924—or perhaps sooner, if there is a dissolution—without having obtained something from Germany. And if the Treaty of Versailles, is really impossible in some of its clauses M. Poincaré refuses to recognize the impossibilities. The great French bourgeoisie, which has augmented its power and its prestige by the putting in motion of this diplomatic ract, is not resigned to an avowal of its disaster.

The question of inter-allied debts is closely connected with the question of reparations. As the Bloc National is at bottom really convinced that it will not receive the expected billions from Germany, it would lend its support to a proposal to reduce the German tribute, if England and America would to the same degree reduce their claims against France. But so far they find the hoped-for co-operation neither at Washington nor London. And it was undoubtedly intended to allay the antagonisms which this subject aroused in the States that M. Clemenceau crossed the Atlantic.

II.

We thus get a glimpse into the close connection between the Orient and reparations.

France has taken various attitudes with regard to Asia and Constantinople. At first she was at one with Britain in the dismemberment of Turkey, then France believed that Great Britain had taken the lion's share and left her only the remains, and at the same time she feared that Kemal's success might have a reaction in her own African colonies peopled by Musulmans. Then France concluded a secret treaty at Angora with the head of Nationalism. French imperialism and British imperialism were running up against each other in the Orient as on the Rhine. More recently, M. Poincaré refused Mr. Lloyd George the co-operation of the French Army in order to conduct an expedition against the Turks, but in Mid-November, on the eve of the Lausanne Conference, he signed an agreement with Lord Curzon. This agreement ran, that he would not go to Lausanne, unless a preliminary Anglo-French agreement with regard to the solution of the Eastern question is reached. Since he was at Lausanne, the preliminary agreement was evidently reached, and the English press declared that M. Poincaré had promised the London cabinet eventual military cooperation against Turkey. Since the sharpness of the conflict of interests which exists between the French and British capitalists in the East is well known, the question arises:—what has M. Poincaré obtained on his side? Can it be the Rhine?

The Bloc National persists in its black and furious hatred against the Russian Revolution, and in its desire to cast the Soviets out of Europe, and its hope is not dead of bringing back to power in Moscow or at Petrograd, the counter-revolutionary parties. But its embarrassment is extreme. Not only have the Bolsheviki conquered their enemies from within and from without, but having introduced a new economic policy, they are negotiating contracts for concessions with the Powers. The French bourgeoisie, whatever may be its hostility against the Peoples' Commissars, watches the actions of its bourgeois rivals with jealous attention. It would indeed like to resume relations with Russia, without having the appearance of doing so, and to make a profit out of Russia without French diplomacy being forced to mingle with Soviet diplomacy. Its greed is only equalled by its hypocrisy. That is why, while refusing to recognize the Soviet Government, M. Poincaré has looked with favor upon Herriot's trip to Russia, and that is why the Chambers of Commerce, the stronghold of the ruling class, while hurling anathema against Lenin and Trotzky, are sending commercial agents to Russia. The Bloc National itself is forced to recognize that its entire counter-revolutionary policy has today collapsed and that it has wasted billions in pure folly to the profit of Koltchak and of Wrangel.

The Versailles Treaty is, in one respect no more than a peace of paper. The Peace of Sévres is null; and a Turkey has arisen which is tougher than the Turkey of 1914; the Bolchevik Revolution has celebrated in complete security, its Fifth Anniversary. What disasters for the Bloc National! But now, it is against the Left Bloc, the expected successor of the National Bloc, that we will have to struggle.

The New Kemalist Orientation

By *Okhran* (Secretary of the Turkish Delegation).

The recent repressions and arrests to which the Turkish Communist Party was subjected, must attract the attention of Soviet Russia and of the entire world proletariat, for this is not a case of communists who have revolted against a capitalist government. This blow aimed at the communist party at a time when the Angora government is preparing for the Lausanne Conference, indicates a change of foreign as well as of home policy.

In order to understand the cause and the sense of this new orientation and the prospects for the future, it seems to me that it is essential to know the origin, the social composition and the true intentions of the nationalist government which hitherto directed the struggle for national independence, and which at the moment when it is going to reap the fruit of the great sacrifices brought by the working masses, wants to sabotage this independence.

Previous to the bourgeois revolution of 1908 the non-Turkish elements predominated in commerce and trade and acted as intermediaries and brokers of Western capitalism. After the revolution, the Unionists wished to consolidate the young Turkish bourgeoisie at the expense of the non-Turkish elements, but the capitulations prevented the realization of their plan. It was only after the participation of Turkey in the world war, that they were able to realize, at least in part, their pre war plan by establishing national export and import and other companies which were nothing but vast organizations which carried on speculations for the benefit of the young Turkish bourgeoisie. In order to facilitate the work of these companies, the Young Turks provided them with considerable financial means, and in order to make them independent of foreign capital, they founded the National Bank. The governors and the commanders who were given full powers to regulate at their sweet will the import and export of all goods, profited considerably by their privileged position and amassed colossal fortunes. On the other hand, the unionists placed at the head of these alleged organizations and enterprises of "national economy", deputies and high functionaries who, under the protection and with the assistance of the civil and military authorities, grew enormously rich by purchasing food and other products at a very low price and by selling them, frequently, at three hundred times the cost.

Thus, there was established, somewhat artificially, a powerful commercial bourgeoisie which after an intensive two years development, was on the point of overcoming the big non-Turkish bourgeoisie which hitherto had played the role of the agent and representative of Western capitalism.

However, the defeat changed all this. The victorious imperialist governments, installed in Constantinople and in the other Turkish towns have either wiped out or occupied these

institutions of "national economy", thus re-establishing the former situation. Turkey which had saved some of its industry during the war, was now on the road to total extinction. The working masses, which were groaning under the unbearable burden of taxation and under enormous privations, had to feed the armies of occupation.

On the other hand, the arrogant attitude of the Entente military officials incited the people to revolt, and the occupation of Smyrna by the Greeks was the last straw. . . . This anger, this unanimous revolt of the people was very cleverly exploited by the new Turkish bourgeoisie, which had been expropriated by the victorious imperialism, and which, only waiting for a favorable opportunity to organize national resistance succeeded in putting itself at the head of the masses which were aiming at deliverance from the foreign yoke. In this way it hoped to regain its former privileges. On the other hand, as the former leaders of the Party of "Union and Progress" were compromised in the eyes of the people by their policy of speculation, massacres and deportations. The least compromised politicians, who during the war were forced into the background, and especially Kemal Pasha who was very popular owing to his defence of the Dardanelles his opposition to the reactionary and pro-German policy of the unionist leaders, put themselves at the head of the liberation movement.

Such is the origin of the nationalist movement, and one must admit that the Angora government, the direct representative of the big Turkish bourgeoisie, could only organize the resistance and lead the struggle to a definite victory owing to the sacrifices of the peasant and proletarian masses, the attitude of the imperialist States and also the material and moral support of Soviet Russia.

One should bear in mind that the chief aim of the nationalist bourgeois government is to regain its former privileges, and that on the day when it obtains the exclusive right to be the only pioneer of Western capitalism in the East, it will be only too glad to make peace with the latter and renounce the struggle for independence, in which the masses have sacrificed so much. As to the good relations and the alliance with Soviet Russia, they are, for the Angora government, only the means to facilitate the achievement of its aims. It is for this reason that the nationalist bourgeoisie, which previous to the London Conference was full of hatred against Imperialism, has changed its policy of war to the bitter end, into a policy of concessions and betrayal for the proposal to have a share in the exploitation of the Turkish working masses. The nationalist bourgeoisie has ceased to be revolutionary since the London Conference. It is for this reason that the Angora government, which wants to obtain at the Lausanne Conference the peace conditions which are necessary for its existence and for the interests of the big bourgeoisie which it represents, is preparing to make concessions at the expense of the "National Pact" and the working masses. This is proved by the agreement with the French on Cilicia and by the Mudania Conference; and the recent repressions against the Communists confirm the truth of this assertion.

The Communist Party and all the communists of Turkey who are facing two enemies, the bourgeois nationalists and foreign imperialism, momentarily neglected, the class-struggle in order to support the government against western imperialism which was at the moment the greater enemy. This attitude was dictated by the interests of the large sections of the population of which the party is the only qualified representative, and at the same time by the superior interests and exigencies of the world revolution. The foreign policy of the party therefore, was quite clear, and there is no doubt but that military victory has been gained, thanks to the great sacrifices and heroism of the workers and peasants.

Comrade Radek the other day advised the Turkish communists to support the Nationalist government, and the Turkish communists, not being Utopians, and grasping the revolutionary necessities of the period and understanding the national and international importance of this struggle against imperialism, have not ceased to support and encourage those who were at the head of the fight for independence. These are not empty statements.

As to the international policy followed until now by the Turkish Communist Party, and by all the members thereof, this consisted in demanding certain democratic reforms and in obtaining an improvement in the lot of the workers, peasants and poor intellectuals. The activity of the communists of Turkey, as one may see, has never threatened the existence of the government, particularly because the latter has always declared itself in favor of these democratic reforms.

The Angora government, being of the opinion that the Communist Party of Turkey would consent to no sacrifice of

national interests and would continue the struggle until complete national independence were attained, has judged it necessary to crush those forces which could unmask its treacherous policy and demand the realization of those democratic reforms which the government had promised in order to win over the workers and peasants and secure the aid of Russia. In consequence, the blow struck at the Party is a blow struck directly at nationalist policy, which until recently had been defended by the government itself, at the same time that it opened a fight against the Sultanate when Imperialism had by no means ceased to be a threat, and when Turkey had greatest need of internal revolutionary forces, of Russia, and of the world proletariat.

The latest news received from Constantinople informs us that the government has just closed up the headquarters of the Turkish Workers Union under the pretext that they have been engaged in Communist propaganda. The logical consequence of this blind and anti-national policy is its certain defeat in the struggle against European Imperialism.

The Turkish Communist Party, the sole qualified representative of the masses, once more requests the government to cease its policy of persecution of the communists by liberating our imprisoned comrades. Moreover, we ask that at Lausanne only a peace which shall guarantee the complete political and economic independence of Turkey be accepted.

If the Government of the National Assembly does not wish to consider this appeal seriously, the Communist Party of Turkey, strengthened by the sympathy and support of the working masses and the support of Soviet Russia and the world proletariat, will continue the struggle for independence which the treacherous Nationalist government has not sought to lead to its goal, thus rendering vain all the sacrifices and privations suffered by the people.

The Greek Elections

By A. Romands.

At the new elections which are soon to take place in Greece, the victory of the Venizelists and the Republicans over the agrarians—the only opposition of any weight—may be predicted. The pro-electoral work of the Liberal-Republicans (Democrats) is supported by the Revolutionary Committee and by the Provisional Government which is only the state's *alter ego*.

With King Constantine exiled—the majority of the secret votes which had brought back the king in November 1920, and which at the same time gave a tremendous majority to the "royalist" party which had never before existed but which sprang up with mushroom-like rapidity out of the ballot-boxes—the majority of these votes, as I say, will probably go to the other anti-Venizelist parties—to the popular parties: Strates-Métaxas (sympathetic successor of Gounaris), Agrarian, Dynastic, and finally to the Workers' Party.

The electoral system in Greece is based on universal suffrage (that is for males 30 years of age), on the secret and obligatory ballot, with one chamber of the Parliament whose number of deputies is not yet fixed—for good reasons...

The General Confederation of Labor which comprises in its trade union and co-operative organizations all branches of national production, that is to say, more than 250,000 workers, is non-political in principle. In reality, according to their categories—maritime industries, the peasants, the farm laborers,—the unions belong to their *masters*. Unfortunately, it can be said that our Communist Party will not have one half of the votes of the C.G.T. Harrington's "Revolution" and the liberals have neither encouraged nor helped our propaganda very much. However, the rebellious soldiers, and a number of workers from Pirée d'Athènes, from Volos, and from Salonica are on our side. That is something and if the number of deputies are seated in proportion the total number of votes cast for each party, we shall have more than twenty-two elected members.

But we are calm. No matter what bourgeois chamber will emerge from this struggle for power it will have to concern us, because it will continue to load on the bruised backs of our already bewildered proletariat, all the terrible weight of the Greek debt, 20 billion drachmes, for less than 5 million inhabitants, of whom less than a million and a half are producers.

The budget deficit has already passed the billion mark, and this will become at least two billions for 1923. And our proletariat with its million refugees will soon feel how much misery a mistake may cost. This "soon" is very near,—taking into consideration the poverty of the Greek soil and the laziness as well as the stupidity of the politicians who are always turning

towards the tyrants of the west. And soon at the feet of the Acropolis, events will take place which will above all astonish those who believe that there is nothing to be anxious about from the stupid passivity of the descendants of Hercules. Patience and faith, comrades.

THE WHITE TERROR

Death Sentence against a Russian Communist in Riga

By J. A. (Moscow).

On October 28th the Court Martial of Riga condemned to death the Russian communist functionary Kliav-Kliavin, accused of having offended against paragraphs 100 and 102 of the old Tsarist criminal code. For Lettish democracy employs the old Tsarist code of criminal law against communists, and that with a cruelty surpassing that of the bloody executioners of the murderous Tsar.

Kliav-Kliavin, who had gone to Latvia from Russia in May of this year, was arrested in the dwelling of his old mother, whom he wished to see after 10 years of separation. On October 24 Kliav-Kliavin was handed over to the court martial, doubtless as a reprisal for the criminal proceedings instituted against the Lettish spies arrested in Moscow, and was faced with a double charge; first of being a member of the communist party, and secondly of threatening the safety of the state. This latter accusation is so ridiculous, and at the same time so fantastic, that the Lettish prime-minister continually assured the friends of the accused that he would be speedily set at liberty again.

The court martial, (as a perfect instrument of the forces of oppression) has never even attempted to keep up the appearance of a so-called court of justice. But despite this, this trial was an unheard of scandal, even for a court martial in a small counter-revolutionary country long familiar with the methods of the White Terror. The whole charge was built up on the uncontrollable denunciations of the police spy Latunin. This paid agent reported that he had "seen" how the accused had handed secret papers and sums of money to a "most suspicious looking unknown man". As Kliava-Kliavin naturally protested energetically against his arrest, the chief of police accused him of insubordination. (!) During the proceedings the chief of police asserted, as witness, that his police had been shot at *during* the arrest of the accused. But immediately afterwards he was obliged to admit that he was mistaken in this assertion, and had meant an incident which actually took place several days *after* the arrest of our comrade.

Despite the revolting bias shown by the court martial judges, the proceedings brought to light a few instructive details. Kliav-Kliavin and his old mother, who on their arrest had been dragged to the police station, were there brutally mistreated in the manner of which the police are masters, until they lost consciousness; in addition to this, they were entirely robbed. As evidence for the condemnation of the accused the auditor laid communist pamphlets before the court martial; these pamphlets were said to have been found *near* the dwelling of the mother of the accused.

The counsel for the defence, Schablovsky was rejected by the representative for the prosecution. A number of witnesses for the defendant were not heard. The motions of the defense were not included in the minutes of the proceedings. After the court had consulted for two hours, a length of time required by the difficulty in finding legal grounds for a verdict decided upon in advance, Kliav-Kliavin was condemned to be hanged by the neck until he was dead, for belonging to the communist party, for conspiracy, propaganda, and outlawry. The sentence was to be carried out within 24 hours. The accused gave notice of appeal.

We do not know whether the execution has meanwhile been carried out. Shall we have to add the name of our comrade Kliav-Kliavin to the long list of victims of the White Terror in the miserable Baltic "democracies", the list to which we have already had to add the names of Kingiseppu and Arnold Burin, victims of murderous "justice" in the course of this year in Riga and Reval?

Kliavs-Kliavin is an old and well known functionary of the Russian Communist Party, and is held in high esteem among the workers of Petrograd.

To the Minister of Justice of the Polish Republic in Warsaw

We, the undersigned political prisoners, who have been kept in custody on remand in Lemberg for 10 months on the accusation of belonging to the Communist Party, apply to you as Minister of Justice; we accuse the judicial authorities of Lemberg of a course of action deriding every feeling of right and every elementary principle of justice, and we enter this protest against them.

Our reason for applying to you, as minister of justice of the Polish republic and government, is that Poland occupied East Galicia by means of brute force, by means of suppressing the right of self-determination of the people; that Poland forced the Polish state organization upon East Galicia without allowing the population the possibility of making use of the bourgeois rights of liberty guaranteed the Polish democratic republic by the constitution of March 17, 1921, and which it had enjoyed under the Habsburg monarchy.

We are accused of belonging to the Communist Party of East Galicia, or to that of Poland. This accusation was brought by the Lemberg police authorities, who took preliminary action in the matter, and was taken over by the Lemberg court of inquiry; the judge of the court of inquiry, Hut, characterized the charge as one of high treason, coming under paragraph 58 of the Austrian Criminal Code of 1852.

This paragraph, after having fallen for many years into complete disuse by the royal imperial Austrian administrators of justice, is drawn forth from its obscurity by the democratic Polish republic to serve for the suppression of a revolutionary movement of the masses of the working people, a movement directed against the tyranny and usury of the Polish propertied classes. The Polish authorities have kept us for nearly a year in prison, in utter disregard of the constitution of the Polish republic of 17/3. 21, which guaranteed freedom of opinion, freedom to form societies and to hold meetings, and personal freedom; they do so because they suspect us of belonging to the Communist Parties, though it might be thought that it would be their first duty to observe the fundamental laws of the state. Setting aside the question whether it is possible to keep any one in prison, in defiance of the state laws of Poland, solely on account of membership to a communist party, we must most emphatically state that there is no proof whatever that the majority of those arrested are members of the communist parties at all. This fact, so compromising for the Lemberg judicial authorities, will have to be admitted even by a court of justice composed of our class enemies, just as similar facts have come to light in the course of communist trials in Cracow, Samber, Lemberg and Tarnov—that is, of course, if it comes to a public trial. This lack of proofs of guilt does not however prevent innocent people—innovent even from the standpoint of the rusty old paragraph of the Austrian code of criminal law—from being kept in prison for months. This obvious innocence is demonstrated by the fact that 7 comrades, arrested with us for the same reason, were released after 8 months "remand". In order to keep up the appearance of the necessity of keeping us so long in custody for purposes of inquiry, the investigations are complicated by setting up an artificial connection between arrests made in other places, and later than the 30. October 1921, and our arrest on the 10. October 1921, in the buildings belonging to St. George's Church in Lemberg. Such a combination of unrelated facts has naturally had the effect that the judicial inquiry originally fixed for the month of January—as we were assured by the judge conducting the inquiry, Mr Hut—has been postponed from month to month, and is now indefinitely adjourned. How can this be otherwise, when the arbitrary retention of innocent people in prison, innocent even according to the royal imperial Austrian legislation of the year 1852, involves no penal responsibility.

The true nature of the democratic governmental system of the Polish Republic is perhaps sufficiently revealed by the bringing of prisoners to trial on the basis of a code of criminal law which is a sad inheritance of the royal imperial Austrian monarchy, but the dependence of the "independent court of justice" upon the police—an organism independent par excellence—is such an unheard of phenomenon, that there will be found but few similar examples in the whole practice of the one-time imperial justice.

It was not until we had been in prison three months that the legal examining authorities submitted to us the "charges" prepared by the examining authorities of the district division of state police in Lemberg. This alone shows that for a period of three months the "independent" court of justice had been using its authority to cover the arbitrary actions of the police.

The legal examining authorities accepted these charges without criticism—charges which are a conglomeration of police assumptions, suppositions, and imaginings, and of the depositions of agents and even of provocateurs, for the most part based on no proper evidence whatever. Besides this, it appeared that protocols had been taken of the preliminary inquiry by the police inquiry authorities, as for instance the protocol with comrade Maria Gizovska. The examining judge Mr. Hut has not taken any notice of these facts.

Imprisonment on account of membership to a communist party is in itself an act of arbitrariness, and the continued imprisonment of those against whom the authorities possess no proof of their belonging to a communist party is a disgraceful violation of the law, but the conduct of the authorities towards our sick comrades is no longer a mere attack on personal liberty, but a crime against the life of political opponents,—the basest of crimes. The council chamber of the Lemberg criminal court of justice, and further, the Lemberg court of appeal, have refused the applications of some of our comrades, whose serious illness had been ascertained by the prison doctor, on the grounds that the accused are under suspicion of having committed acts coming under paragraph 58 of the code of criminal law, a paragraph which provides for punishments from 10 years penal servitude upwards and even for capital punishment (for belonging to the communist party!), so that in this case preventative arrest is obligatory. Thus we, the prisoners of war of the bourgeoisie, cannot even make use of the elementary right of coming up freely to our trial, a right claimed in the democratic republic by usurers, blackmailers, swindlers, and thieves. This right is not permitted the communists, even when they are seriously ill. The class character of the justice exercised by the examining authorities is here fully revealed.

To this we must add:

1. That in cases of illness we receive no medical attention. The police court physician asserts that no medicines are at his disposal for this purpose, no hospital, no suitable food, and finally, no time. We cannot even have a spell of fresh air, the sole remedy costing the state nothing, for our walks are taken in a narrow space, between damp walls, without sunshine, without a current of fresh air, and filled with the evil smells of the adjacent privies.

2. We should be threatened with diseases and gradual starvation had we not the help of our relations, and especially of the trade unions, who supply us with food. It is scarcely credible that human beings kept in prison can be subjected so systematically to the torments of hunger as we were during the earlier months of our captivity. At that time the authorities prohibited food being supplied from outside, or even bought with such of our own means as were in the hands of the prison management. We are subjected systematically to such tortures, as if we were the worst criminals.

3. In order to secure for ourselves the possibility of satisfying our most elementary needs, as walks, baths, books, and newspapers, purchase of food with our own money, and particularly proper treatment at the hands of the supervisors, we have been three times compelled to resort to the last means of defense, to the hunger strike. Despite all this, we are constantly exposed to the machinations of the authorities, and even to the reprisals of the presidency of the court of justice, which metes out disciplinary punishment without granting the accused a hearing, punishments bearing all the characteristics of torture, as for instance complete deprivation of food, even of the daily ration of bread. This behavior on the part of the authorities shows that they are aiming at forcing us into a fourth hunger strike.

4. The ukases remitted from the competent higher control authorities to the lower are obvious machinations calculated to cause constant and inevitable friction between us and the control organs. We may here mention that we are under a threefold control: By the state police, the military gendarmerie, and the prison inspectors. This does not appear to be in order to have efficient guard over us, but also on account of reciprocal control. The sentries are incited against us by being told all kinds of fantastic stories about us, as to our plots to assassinate the sentries, and to escape by the aid of mysterious automobiles, disguised officers, and such alarming fairy tales. It is solely due to the good sense and tact of our comrades that the prison of the Holy Brigitta is not the scene of constant and acute conflicts.

In view of the above facts we establish our statement that we are being kept in prison by the Polish authorities, in an entirely wrong and shameful manner, on the pretext offered by an obsolete paragraph of the criminal code, which was no longer employed even in old Austria, and is in contradiction with the principles of the constitution of the Polish Republic

itself. We raise this protest against the arbitrary action of the legal authorities, and turn to you, as Minister of Justice, with the demand that you quash the proceedings against us immediately.

Should however the laws of Austria be more authoritative for the organs of the Democratic Republic than its own constitution of March 7, 1921, as is proved to be the case not only in occupied East Galicia, then we demand:

1. The liberation of all those who are not proved to be members of the Communist Party.
2. The immediate release from arrest of all sick persons, as practised even by the Tsarist and the occupation administration.
3. The liberation of all the others on security or bail corresponding to the pecuniary position of each individual.
4. The immediate submission of the charges, and the fixing of a term for the proceedings at the next session.

The course taken by these proceedings will demonstrate to the whole working class the reasons which have induced the government of the Polish democratic republic to keep us prisoners.

Lemberg, "Brygidki", 26. IX. 1922.

The political prisoners (signatures).

Dr. Grosser Czeskawa, Gizowska Maria, Koch Olga, Leitner Frieda, Malinowski Michal, Schneider Josef, Popiel Vladimir, Matwijow Jurko, Rappaport Moritz, Wantuch Iwan, Krolkowski Stephan, Meszaros Ladislaus, Bergmann Abraham, Ursaki Adolf, Iwanenko Hryc, Kuschnir Semen, Kuschnir Peter, Dyrkawiec Nikolaus, Schwarzmann Abraham, Chiel Chaim, Jaworski Alexander, Helo Josef, Semec Ilko, Josefsberg Samuel, Krilyk Osip, Barschowski Tomas, Tesluk Michal, Korbutiak Wasil, Senyk Isidor, Ciura Alexander, Chomin Nestor, Cybuch Eustachius, Mojsa Demeter, Djus Johann, Rappaport Hermann, Semec Onufrij, Cichowski Kasimir, Langer Adolf, Kuyawinski Anton, Leczycki Franz.

IN SOVIET RUSSIA

The Worst Counter-Revolution

By Victor Serge.

A very cunning play on words. — "Do you know what V.S.N.Kh. means?", you are asked. In Russia this is the abbreviation for the Supreme Economic Council. But a little phrase has been adapted to these initials, which means: "*Steal without fear, there is no master!*" — The worst kind of counter-revolution has sometimes adopted this as its slogan. But in one thing this counter-revolution errs. The Revolutionary State which they believed would be overthrown, has survived and now demands an accounting as often as possible.

The Revolutionary Tribunal of Moscow has just tried (from October 26th to November 3rd) a frightful case of economic counter-revolution, at the textile factories of *Orehovo-Zonev*. The managers of one of the State trusts of the textile industry, had to answer to the charge of "systematic embezzlement of the State's resources—in connection with the stock of the *Orehovo-Zonev* trust—with a view to creating private capitalist enterprises".

Let us review the facts of the case. The Commercial Bureau of the trust confided the sale of its products to business men and to private enterprises (*Prodextile*, *Russobalte*, *Mutualite*, *Mercure*,—illegal firms in which certain administrators of the trust were personally interested). The trust turned over to them the materials at prices below that of replacement which they simply neglected to calculate. . . . The merchandise was delivered by preference to the villainous speculators swarming around the trust, on the eve of rises in prices, which were very easy to foresee. . . . In order to restock the factory, contracts were concluded with big contractors, who were shrewd thieves, and who were paid in kind. One of these men, named Wells, had begun his operations without a cent, and finished by owing the trust four trillions of roubles (1921 issue), or more than 600,000 measures of cloth.

The result? The accounts of the trust revealed a deficit of seven figures: 1,385,885 gold roubles. In reality, the deficit is even greater: for some debts of the trust, not recoverable, such as the debts of citizen Wells, are carried as assets. . . .

27 defendants have to answer for this outrage. Among them are two Communists, *Serebriakov*, the ex-president of the trust, and *Bogatov*. The others are department heads, engineers,

directors, all men provided with a professional education and possessing the fatal "business experience" of the old regime. . . . But let us consider for a moment the two Communists. The ex-president of the trust, *Serebriakov*, is twenty four years old. At 22, a militant formed by the civil war, he took over the management of an enormous industrial enterprise. But he stole nothing, he neither plotted nor conspired. But he assumed his responsibilities without being able to manage himself any better than he could take charge of others. He was merely a tool. He lacked energy and cleverness. He sometimes interpreted decrees without any respect for the legal text. In truth, this young revolutionary, promoted to the office of President of an industrial council of administration, at a period of a new economic policy, was overcome by circumstances and duped by scoundrels, that is, old exponents of the good old business methods. The Communist *Bogatov*, too, has neither stolen, nor become enriched. He too, was a victim of conditions. He permitted circumstances and men to take their course without interfering.

What a contrast to these, is the old engineer *Petrov*, a member of the factory for 24 years, who boldly signed contracts without dates, in which the figures were not fully expressed, and who ignored purposely the abuses committed outside of his own department. . . .

The chief defendant, *Semionov*, is a sharp businessman, who explains all his actions with shrewdness. If he did sell under bad conditions, it was because he had to realize money quickly in order to pay off salaries. He admits only one wrong: contrary to the decrees regulating State trusts, he sold preferably to private individuals and not to the nationalized enterprises. If the latter wished to obtain any materials from the *Orehovo-Zonev* factories, they had to start in motion the central administration at Moscow, a tedious process, or in order to quicken matters, to pay "tips". *Semionov* received from the private company "*Mercure*", of which his wife was a member, large dividends—evidently well earned.

Thus a gang of rascals organized into commercial associations is ravaging the nationalized industries. They pretend to place themselves at the service of the Communist State, but above all are only exploiting it for their own ends. The trust was being undermined and spied upon by men belonging to the old bourgeois regime, who only entered into the enterprise in order to pilage it.

One important fact to be noted: the technicians who may really be so-called, who are fairly numerous at the *Orehovo-Zonev* factories, are working there with a real devotion; they are totally ignorant of the whole dirty business. It is in the administrative department of the large enterprise, in the managing office that the enemy crept in.

The Revolutionary Tribunal has sentenced thus: for sabotage and economic counter-revolution, nine of the principal defendants, including *Simionov*, have been sentenced to death. Three others whom we have mentioned, *Serebriakov*, *Bogatov*, and *Petrov*, likewise condemned to death, but for criminal negligence, have had their sentenced commuted to ten years imprisonment. "We know", — so writes the correspondent of the *Pravda*, *V. Douborskoi*, a propos of this verdict, — that the severest measures will extirpate neither theft nor corruption, and that they must be combated by good organization in our enterprises. We do not doubt this. But we cannot wait until we are completely robbed, before being able to place our affairs in order. Which might well be. . . . If we are surrounded by brigands let us fight them with all the power of the Soviet state. It is tremendously useful. . . .

In another article in the *Pravda*, *Bukharin* compares the penetration of our class-enemy into the *Orehovo-Zonev*, to an episode in the civil war. The Whites at one time succeeded in creating, right in Moscow, a Soviet Military School, whose students were all old officers, affiliated with counter-revolutionary organizations, and the director of which belonged to the association of the *Aigle Bicephale*. This little crowd was armed, equipped, fed, supplied with legal papers, at the expense of the Soviets. And if the *Tcheka* had not intervened, they would undoubtedly have wrung the neck of the Soviets who were fostering them. "The class-enemy", writes *Bukharin*, has recourse once again to camouflage. Under the Soviet guise of a socialized industry, capitalist business men are calling on all their strength and wiliness in order to destroy the first beginnings of Communism. — And against them we are carrying on "an economic war in which the fate of the Revolution will be decided". Nothing is more true.

Do the workers of other countries doubt the tremendous difficulties which their brothers in Russia are encountering, in the organization of socialized industry under conditions polluted

and rotted by capitalist customs? Do they really know what the proletarian revolution is made up of — and of what the economic counter-revolution is composed? In this struggle too, the Russians need material and moral support, and their unhappy experience should be carefully studied, in order that, in the social battles of the future, the economic counterrevolution may feel immediately the presence of a prepared enemy, resolute to punish strongly, knowing how to punish justly.

The New Labor Code of the RSFSR.

The last (4th) session of the All-Russian Central Executive confirmed a new Labor code. The distinguishing feature of this code, as compared with that of 1918, is the strict and well thought out harmony existing between the regulations of the code and the practical possibilities of economic conditions. Whereas the code of 1918 provided guarantees such as the Soviet Power would have liked to realize, the code of 1922 sets up standards which will have to be adhered to, and whose non-fulfillment will be punished with the full severity of Soviet legislation.

To emphasize this feature of the new code, the session of the All-Russian Central Executive limited the possibilities of deviating from the code to the utmost minimum. Such deviations can only be carried out through the All-Russian Central Executive.

The section relating to the appointment of workers is new as compared with the code of 1918. The 1918 code was issued during a period of almost complete nationalization of industry, and for this reason its fundamental principle was the general obligation to work through the intermediary state organizations: the labor exchanges. The new code does not however exclude the possibility of compelling the citizens of the republic to work, should elementary catastrophes or the defence of the republic require it. This compulsion to work is however regarded as an exception, and can only be decided upon by the Council of People's Commissars.

Several pages of the new code are taken up with the new relations attendant on the new economic policy. The most important section is that on collective agreements.

The 1918 code was based on a fixed state standardization of wages and working conditions. All legal and material guarantees were here dealt with as fixed standards, which left no room for private agreements, and were executed by the administrative organs of the Soviet Power.

The new Labor Code is based on the principle of a minimum secured by the state, while private agreements are permissible for the betterment of all standards of labor legislation.

For the first time we find in the Soviet labor legislation a detailed regulation of the collective agreements, and of the conditions under which each worker is to be engaged.

The collective agreement is placed under the full protection of the law. All stipulations in the agreement by which the position of the workers is bettered beyond the standards of the Code, possess the same obligatory power as the code itself; their infringement is a legally punishable act equal in degree to the infringement of all other laws.

Another new feature of the Code is the system of arbitration boards, whose work consists in the upholding of agreements, and in the adjustment of the conflicts arising. The structure of this network of measures for the solution of labor conflicts reveals the character of the Soviet legislation to be essentially that of a workers' government. The Labor Law Courts have the power of enforcing observance of our legislation, and of rendering contracts legally binding.

Fearing that the usual composition of the People's Courts may not offer the workers an adequate guarantee, and that they will not be able to take sufficiently rapid and decisive measures against infringements of legal and contractual regulations, the Code provides for Special Chambers (Labor Law Courts), consisting of representatives of the People's Courts of Justice, of the labor departments, and of the provincial trade union councils. The majority of the members are thus connected with the organs appointed to protect the interests of the workers, thus guaranteeing to the workers the fairest and most advantageous settlement of all conflicts.

The lowest stage of the arbitration organs is formed by the Wage Commissions in the factories themselves. These Commissions have to control the actual carrying out of the agreement, and to settle on the spot such conflicts as may arise.

Then come the Arbitration Chambers, by whom conflicts which cannot be settled on the spot are arranged, as also the fresh conflicts arising from the expiration or alteration of collective agreements.

The distinguishing feature of our arbitration chambers, as compared with those of Western Europe, consists in the sporadic character of their activity, and the changeability, of their composition. A special court is set up for each dispute, all parties interested being represented. We do not create any permanent organ not responsible for its decisions, but in every conflict we leave the settlement to those who are familiar with all details of the matter, and who have to bear the material consequences of the settlement. The brief period of actual experience with this type of Arbitration Chamber has fully demonstrated its advantages.

Conflicts which cannot be peacefully settled by either of these organs may be laid before an arbitration board by the parties in dispute.

The arbitration board again reveals the entirely proletarian character of the state and its labor legislation.

The task of the trade union in relation to state industry is to avoid conflicts, and to settle peacefully those which do arise. The trade unions may employ the strike as a weapon in state industry, but it is not desirable that they do so, as the strike involves detriment to productive power, and thus diminishes the possibility of a general betterment in the situation of the country and of the workers.

That the trade union tactics in relation to state industry are thus limited in view of the objective task to be accomplished by the workers, is adequately compensated for by the exclusive right of the trade union to demand the decision of a board of arbitration in all disputes with state organs, even if the latter, are not in agreement. In this case the board of arbitration is convened, and its decision is binding on the economic organs.

The like legislative feature is revealed in the manner in which the decisions of the board of arbitration are carried out.

While the decisions — in regard to the employers — are carried out by means of compulsion through the ordinary courts of justice, in relation to the workers they are carried out through the trade unions.

The new Code devotes a special section to the guarantees and compensations to be received by the workers in cases of injury, closing down of concerns, dismissal, and in all cases in which the agreements are annulled. While the employer only possesses the right of dismissal in specified cases (breach of contract by the worker, closing down of undertaking, criminal action committed by the worker in connection with his work), the worker has the right to cancel the contract at any desired time, and is only obliged to give a certain period of notice.

The question of working hours is regulated with the utmost strictness, in terms excluding all ambiguity. The eight hour day for ordinary workers, and the six hour day for brain workers, for the specially harmful branches of production, for all underground workers, and for youthful workers between the ages of 16—18; these are set as standards to be strictly observed. Night Work is limited to the utmost degree (completely prohibited for women and youthful workers). The working conditions for the latter are regulated in great detail by the Code, and they receive considerable special protection.

The last section deals with trade union (production) federations. Up till now there have been no special laws in the republic on this point, the federations possessed an "unwritten constitution" securing them far-reaching rights in all questions connected with the Soviet structure. In the new Code only the fundamental rights of the trade unions are fixed, their rôle as representatives of the wage workers and as a party in the arrangement of collective agreements is emphasized, and the state organs are obliged to accord their trade unions every possible assistance. One item of the section on trade unions deals with the primary organ, the Shop Steward Committees, members of which cannot be dismissed without the agreement of the trade union.

The organization of the trade unions is not dealt with in the Code, and is left to the decisions of the trade union congress. In precisely the same manner, the registration of the trade unions is the work of the trade union associations themselves.

These are the distinguishing features of the Labor Code of 1922. It is a code accurately reflecting the essentials of the new conditions obtaining in the Soviet State, and accords the most extensive guarantees to the working class.

Such guarantees are only possible in a Soviet state.

THE COLONIES

Revolutionary Movement in Dutch East India.

By Hammar.

In this country the capitalists have done their utmost to increase their profits and power, without having troubled in the least as to the interests of the working class. The political and economic oppression which exists here, could hardly be as strong in any other country. The native intellectuals suffer the worst from political oppression, and were the first to proceed against it. For this purpose they founded nationalist political parties: for example, the *Sarrekut-Islam Party*, the *National Indian Party*, and the *Boerdi-Oetomo Party*. The membership of these parties is composed of workers, businessmen, intellectuals, and so on. The largest and most important is the *Sarrekut-Islam Party* which counts about a million and a half members and from five to six million sympathizers. At the period when the Nationalist political parties were founded there was also founded a Socialist Party (in 1913), which after the reformists had left it, continued its existence as a Communist Party. This party has about 13,000 members, and a large section of the workers sympathize with it. The native members of the Communist Party (*Persarekatan Kommunist di India*) are also members of the great *Sarrekut-Islam Party*, many of them being among its leaders. Through these tactics and a strong communist propaganda, this great party today shows a more communist than nationalist character. Also the program of the *Sarrekut-Islam Party* is particularly communistic. The Dutch capitalists endeavour to oppose this revolutionary movement by every means, electoral or violent. Popular demonstrations are suppressed by force and bloodshed, as in Djumbi, in 1917.

Freedom of speech was forbidden; the leaders were imprisoned or banished. Two leaders—Malaka and Bergsma—were banished and 50 comrades imprisoned. Among the sailors and soldiers, both native and Dutch, communist propaganda has been most successful, so that the Dutch government, supported by the Dutch reformists, ordered most of the revolutionary soldiers and sailors back to Holland. In 1918, as the revolutionary wave swept Europe, the colonial soldiers and sailors elected Soldiers' and Sailors' Councils; the members of these however were arrested and sentenced to terms of imprisonment of from one to six years. Many of them are still in prison. They are outrageously treated, confined in narrow dungeons; and the authorities endeavour to obtain from them by force the names

of other comrades who have taken active part in the revolutionary movement.

As the revolutionary flood in Europe began to ebb, the reactionaries in Dutch East India also began to assume power, with the aid of the social democrats. Only by the most strenuous efforts could we guard the hard-won achievements of the working class, maintain the organization of our Party, and build up its strength. During this whole struggle the social democrats were on the side of the reactionaries.

Despite this we have been able to organize the trade unions into many strong working-class organizations and to unite them into a federation which includes all trades. This federation is strongly influenced by the communists, and possesses 60,000 members. The high officials of the railways and other industries are for the great part Europeans, and have their own organizations which are strongly opposed to the communist bodies. They are, however, of no great importance and can count but few adherents among the masses.

Political and trade union journals with about 40,000 readers, are published by the communists. This comparatively small number of readers may be explained by the fact that large numbers of the workers come from the peasantry which is illiterate. Together with the *Sarrekut-Islam*, the Communist Party has opened several schools for children, as the government does but little for the education of the young. But the government fears that the children will be trained in communist doctrines in these schools and therefore tries to break them up by every possible means. The attendance at these schools, however, is such that the government does not dare to take radical measures against them.

In general we may say that our tactics and propaganda among the millions of natives who feel themselves to be an opposed class, has much effect and has created great sympathy for the Communist Party among them. This is shown by the fact that they never allow themselves to be used as strikebreakers against the white workers, nor as a means of lowering the wages of the European workers—which cannot be said of the natives in most other colonies. The Communist movement in the Dutch East Indies is therefore quite strong; its progress, however, may be materially hampered by the fact that many of its leaders are exiled and that those who remain behind are often arrested. As the movement in this territory is of great importance for the international working class, the Third International and the Red International of Labor Unions must do their utmost to aid the revolutionary movement, and the imprisoned comrades, in the Dutch East Indies, and to make known their condition to the revolutionary proletariat of all countries.