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## The Retreat of the People's Armies in China and the International Proletariat.

By Tang Shin She.

### What is the Significance of Feng Yu Hsiang's Defeat?

Thanks to the support of Japanese troops which fought on Chang Tso Lin's side in Chinese uniforms, thanks to Japan having prohibited the transport of troops within a certain zone, and finally, thanks to the intrigues of Japanese spies, Chang Tso Lin was able to overcome his powerful opponent Kuo Sung Lin and to have him executed. On the other hand, in spite of being supported with English money, in spite of being supplied with British munitions and arms, Chen Shui Ming, the English lackey, was not able to achieve success in his fight against the Canton Government. In the same way, in spite of the numerous English warships lying at Hongkong, the English Director of Customs was not able to maintain the blockade of Canton which was directed against the strikers.

Thereupon the English, in order not to have similar sad experiences in North China, have joined the more fortunate Japanese; this is clearly expressed in the fact that Wu Pei Fu (the English lackey) and Chang Tso Lin (the Japanese lackey) who had hitherto been violent opponents, are suddenly working together under the slogan of „Fight against the Reds“, to combat the people's armies which are in favour of the national revolution. Although they have plenty of money, arms and munitions, and although thousands of Russian White Guardists and Japanese soldiers were fighting with them as auxiliary troops (Feng Yu Hsiang only recently captured 200 Japanese soldiers), they did not succeed in defeating the people's armies. It was only when the international imperialists took common action and issued an ultimatum to the Chinese Government to clear the Taku forts and

remove the mines, that the people's armies were compelled to withdraw.

Does this retreat mean nothing but a defeat of Feng Yu Hsiang? No! It is a blow aimed by the international imperialists against the whole Chinese movement for freedom, which they are trying to suppress with all the means in their power. Their next aim is to attack from the East the Soviet Union, the headquarters of the world revolution, which naturally sympathises with the Chinese national revolution. Even now they are using every effort to tear asunder the friendly relations between China and Russia and are carrying on extensive propaganda against Russia in China. This was also the reason why the Japanese, through their willing tool Chang Tso Lin, promoted the conflict on the East Chinese railway. Afterwards they intend to proceed against the revolutionary Canton Government.

### Will the Imperialists achieve their aim?

Although the people's armies have lost Tientsin and Peking and will possibly have to evacuate Kalgan, there is no need to be pessimistic. The fate of the Chinese revolution is by no means sealed! The Chinese people is still seething and fermenting. The idea of revolution is already deeply rooted in the masses and all efforts to tear it up will be in vain. Neither is it now possible completely to annihilate the people's armies, the auxiliaries of the revolution. They will certainly be able to hold the Provinces of Shensi and Kansu and the districts of Sacha-ori and Ghu-Yuan. They can make use of the pause in the fighting which will ensue for a short time, in order to undertake the purging and re-

organising of their ranks and to get rid of vacillating elements. Finally, there are still the strong, firm, revolutionary troops of the Canton Government in South China, whose influence already reaches into the **Yangtse district, into Central China.**

On the other side, there can be no permanent accord amongst the opponents. The interests, or rather the predatory plans of the imperialists in China, clash. There is America in particular, which does not join in everything, but wants by a clever policy of its own, to create the impression of being an innocent angel in order to win China's friendship. The lust of power of the military rulers will also lead to conflicts between them and they will fly at one another as soon as the common opponent is out of their reach.

#### What Great Dangers are Impending?

After the retreat of the people's armies from Honana in Central China and from Tientsin and Peking in North China, the White Terror will spread even further than hitherto. Unless effectual means are found to break its force, the movement for freedom may even be paralysed. It is necessary to know how furiously the White Terror is already raging in China and how much worse it threatens to become.

On March 18th Tuan She Sui, the tool of the imperialists, opened sharp fire on unarmed demonstrators who were protesting against the ultimatum of the imperialistic Powers with regard to blockading the Chinese river Peiho; more than 70 persons were killed and hundreds wounded.

The magistrate of the international quarter in Shanghai took unwarrantable liberties; he gave direct orders to the local military ruler Sun Chuan Fang to shoot down, according to martial law, a leader of the peasants and the President of the Shanghai Trades Council.

The murderers have a legal justification for all such foul proceedings! As already reported, there is in China a law against robbers and a law for police protection, which can of course be applied at any time against robbers. Since 1914, thousands of revolutionaries have fallen victims to these laws. If the law for police protection is strictly carried out, any organisation, any association, any meeting can be prohibited and the participants arrested, while according to the law against robbery, any person who is disapproved of can simply be shot.

#### What Attitude should the International Proletariat take towards Events in China?

Needless to say, the proletariat of the whole world and above all of Japan and England must raise the sharpest protest against the intervention and the interference of the international imperialists in Chinese affairs, against the blockade of Canton, against the ultimatum demanding the evacuation of the Taku forts, and against the employment of Japanese and Russian White Guardist soldiers in Chinese uniforms to fight against the Chinese people. It is imperative that they should try, under the slogan of "Hands off China", to rescue their oppressed Chinese brothers from the clutches of the imperialist colonial politicians.

It is well known that the Chinese peasants and workers, who comprise more than 90% of the population of China, are the chief forces of the revolution. They have already proved by heroic fighting how seriously they take the revolution. But how is it possible, unprotected and unarmed, threatened by inhuman laws, to fight against the bayonets, machine-guns, big guns, and tanks of the imperialists? It is then the task and the sacred duty of the international proletariat to come to their aid and, in a united front with the pacifists, to start vigorous action against the White Terror in China. They should also support with all energy the demand of the Chinese for a law for the protection of the peasants and workers.

There is at the present moment a good opportunity for the international proletariat to intervene, now, when the international imperialists are holding a conference on extra-territoriality in Peking. Although the imperialists are guilty of further interference in Chinese affairs, in that they are undertaking investigations into Chinese laws and prisons on the strength of the Washington China agreement of 1922, the international proletariat must make use of this opportunity and above all demand the abolition of the inhuman laws against robbers and for police protection and the creation of a law for the protection of the workers and peasants.

Conditions in China have become immeasurably more acute since the sanguinary events in Peking on March 18th and since the defeat of Feng Yu Hsiang. It is imperative that the international proletariat should, without delay, start a campaign against the White Terror in China and come to the rescue of their revolutionary brothers in China!

## POLITICS

### The Collapse in Geneva.

Leading Articles from the "Pravda" of March 18th and 20th.

#### I.

The "peace instrument" of Locarno failed brilliantly in Geneva. The Conference of the League of Nations ended with a scandalous collapse of the idea of "peaceful understanding" between the capitalist Powers of Europe.

Germany is shamefully humiliated. She had been assiduously enticed into the arms of the League of Nations, she had been promised a place of honour in the "happy family" of the European "peoples". Germany had resignedly consented to all the concessions demanded of her, she had submissively yielded to the flattery and promises offered her, all this to gain the "Sacred Seat" in the Council of the League of Nations. Germany had already planted both feet on the threshold of the edifice of the League of Nations. The bourgeoisie and the Social Democratic Press of Germany had already burned incense to the "wisdom" of Locarno. Now, Germany has been driven from the threshold; it has been suggested to her to "call again" in September at the next Conference of the League of Nations, when the question of her admission will once more be placed on the agenda.

For us Communists, the collapse of the machinations of Geneva is nothing unexpected. We have always been aware of the predatory, pseudo-pacifist nature of the League of Nations. We never had any doubt as to the true character of the "spirit" of Locarno. We have always unmercifully exposed all the contradictions between the capitalistic "substance" and the capitalistic "spirit". We know that the differences between the bourgeois States cannot actually be "reconciled" with one another. We are of the opinion that there may be all kinds of blocs, combinations, machination, chafferings, reciprocal oppression and reciprocal dependence, but we declare that the idea of a permanent peaceful cooperation between the Powers which are "united" under the black flag of exploitation and rapacity, is a Utopian absurdity.

The recent happenings in Geneva have opened our eyes to the yawning abyss of the most burning and acute dissensions by which Europe has been possessed since the war and since Versailles. The axis round which the chief contradictions in Geneva have rotated, is the antagonism between Great Britain and France. A violent struggle has been going on between Great Britain and France for the hegemony over the capitalist parts of the European continent. Chamberlain, the "peacemaker", chivalrously protected Germany. Speculating on the dissensions between Germany and France, he reckoned that Germany's admission to the League of Nations would make him absolute master in the latter. France on the other hand, did everything possible to favour Poland and a number of other States, endeavoured to procure them seats in the council of the League, hoping thereby to weaken Great Britain's position by a cleavage in the League of Nations' Council.

The antagonisms between Great Britain and France are intensified by the quarrels between Poland and Germany regarding the questions of frontiers, of Danzig and of the Polish Corridor. France and Italy also have score accounts to settle. The South European fascist corsair is competing with France for influence in the South Eastern countries of Europe. He has his plans for a "Locarno of their own" for the countries of Southern Europe and the Balkans. At the present moment, Italy has formed a temporary bloc with France against Austria which is striving for union with Germany. The relation of forces is such that it seems more advantageous for Mussolini to oppose Chamberlain's "Locarno".

These and other contradictions in Europe itself are overshadowed by the contradictions between America and Europe. It is not yet clear in all its details, what part the United States played in the collapse at Geneva, but there cannot be the slightest doubt that it did play a part and that the unleashing of European dissensions is to her advantage.

The formal explanation of the failure of the attempt to come to an understanding is an altogether trifling one, i. e. the "unexpected" obstinacy of — Brazil, which had demanded a seat in the Council. This comic opera masquerade, this shameful playing with dummy figures will deceive no one. Everyone will understand that France and Great Britain did not succeed in coming to an understanding "on the basis of Locarno". Everyone will grasp the fact that the failure of the Conference of the League of Nations is a serious diplomatic defeat for Chamberlain. It is not for nothing that he is now suffering from "bitter disappointment", and not for nothing that the British Press has fallen into a pessimistic state of nerves. With beating of drums and fanfare of trumpets, his plan that Britain should grasp all the threads of European policy has — collapsed.

The collapse of Geneva is a crisis in the League of Nations, is an ignominious defeat of the "spirit of Locarno", is a shameful humiliation of German diplomacy. The League of Nations has shown itself to be what it really is, an instrument of capitalist subjugation and a filthy cloak of contradictions. And truly, since Geneva, "dark days" are ahead of it!

## II.

The bourgeois and Social Democratic Press clearly reflects the moods of dissatisfaction and disappointment which have taken possession of all the adherents of Locarno in consequence of the comic finale at Geneva. The sincere and the hypocritical enthusiasts for "Europe's best days", the statesmen and politicians of the bourgeois and socialist type, are summoning up all their courage and are obliged to face the unpleasing spectacle of the impotence of the "spirit" of Locarno, which hung over European "chaos" in a tragicomic manner. The temperature chart of "the pessimism of the European Press" shows a steady rise, in spite of all possible semi-official "asseverations" and "explanations."

Germany, of course, is in the least enviable position. However much the German Government tries to represent things as though really nothing had happened, however much it asseverates that the spirit of Locarno "has actually triumphed", shame, helpless rage and a feeling of humiliation has seized the German Press which was so "full of hope". The cold douche which Germany received in Geneva has forced even some elements among the rich bourgeoisie to consider seriously whether Germany is right in "orientating towards the West". The petty bourgeoisie and the "middle classes" feel that they have been deceived by the illusions of Locarno. No doubt there is a certain connection between the extraordinary success of the people's demand in the question of the confiscation of the property of the "ruling houses" and the failure of German foreign policy. The success of the people's demand exceeded all expectation. As far as can be reckoned at present, more than 12 million votes have been collected. This is evidence of the growth of anti-Government tendencies even in the petty bourgeois and peasant circles of the population. This also bears witness to the success of the Communist Party which is conducting the movement for the people's demand for the expropriation of the former rulers.

The resumé of the situation in Europe which is most cynical and at the same time nearest to the truth, is that made by the ideologists of the American bourgeoisie. The United States openly state that Geneva was a banal bargaining between Great Britain and France for decisive influence. The United States draw the conclusion that the pacifist speech-making was only decorative talk and that the League of Nations has been actually torn in pieces by the forces of nationalism and militarism. The actual aims of the present League of Nations are analogous to the aims of the old, reactionary "Holy Alliance" of Metternich.

Since Geneva, the American bourgeoisie declares that the idea of general disarmament is humbug; it declines to take part

in a disarmament conference. It scornfully declares that it has now lost all feeling of "confidence" in Europe; and it is of course no longer "inclined" to concern itself with European affairs. The more however it speaks of not interfering, the more it does interfere and the firmer is the hold it takes of Europe with its iron paw. The collapse in Geneva coincides with a strengthening of the pressure of the United States on capitalist Europe.

It is interesting to contrast the cynical attitude of the United States with the attitude taken by Social Democracy in Europe. Some of the leaders indeed, such as MacDonald, have been struck dumb since Geneva. MacDonald felt "sick at heart" because one more of the illusions with which the masses could be fooled was shattered. The Berlin "Vorwärts" however determined to excel itself and the American capitalists. Whereas even the American princes of finance loudly and insistently compare the League of Nations to the sanguinary "Holy Alliance" of Metternich, the "Vorwärts" calls upon the German workers to join in a "united front" — in favour of the League of Nations, in favour of Locarno and in favour of a peaceful alliance between the exploiting States of Europe. What else indeed could be expected from Social Democracy? Has it not given valuable support to the Chamberlains and the Briands? Its agents Boncour, Vandervelde and Uden took an active share in the disgraceful bargaining at Geneva. What is now left for them to do but to try and piece together the broken pitcher of Locarno?!

## Class Differentiation in Iraq.

By J. B. (Jerusalem).

In the time preceding the war, Iraq — the territory between the Euphrates and the Tigris, which is now under an English Mandate — was, under the rule of the Turkish Sultans, culturally one of the most backward provinces. The land (especially the southern part) is distinguished by its great fertility, and although the contrast between the rich landowners and the small tenants was fairly pronounced in the country, the reciprocal relations were nevertheless of a patriarchal, idyllic character. This was still more marked in the towns, where the inhabitants were largely occupied in trade or handicrafts, to the exclusion of all industry.

The war completely altered this state of affairs. Iraq became a theatre of war, first German and then English troops devastated the country. The poorer strata of the population, the small peasants, were those who suffered most; they were completely ruined. The Pashas and large landowners, who had previously sided with the Turks, very soon made peace with the new English Power. The broad masses of the people however were soon driven to revolt by the distress which prevailed amongst them. In 1920 there was a serious insurrection in which, apart from the Bedouin tribes, the urban population chiefly took part, and it was only with great difficulty that Great Britain mastered this revolt. No less than 9000 insurgents were killed.

Great Britain then set up an "Arab" King, King Feisul, to rule in Iraq. The whole clique of Pashas and Begs grouped themselves round Feisul and rendered obedient service to England. This however immediately produced an intensification of class antagonisms in the Arab population itself. The Nationalists, who are supported by the poor population of the towns and by the peasantry, could not fight against England, the arch-enemy, without at the same time attacking Feisul and his Pashas. The idyllic condition quickly came to an end. The uppermost stratum became more and more intimately allied with the ruling English officials and even abandoned Arab customs and observances in order to ape the English. The Pashas sent their sons to English Universities and sold their land to the English Generals and Commissioners at banquets and gymkhanas. Amongst the lowest strata on the other hand, indignation and hatred of the rich classes spread in ever-widening circles. To this must be added that the English are inclined to turn the fruitful country of Mesopotamia into a peasant colony and the small peasants into plantation slaves. In the North, in the Mosul district, the thousands of small peasants who are losing their land are induced to work at the petroleum wells. In this way, a rural and urban proletariat is being created.

The antagonism between the classes in Iraq has found its clearest expression in the last few months when two questions of vital importance to Iraq have been under discussion: the **Mosul question and the question of the Anglo-Iraq Treaty**. The question was whether Iraq should join England against the young Turkish Republic, or should join the latter against English imperialism. The Pashas and Begs did everything possible in order to turn the people against Turkey. In doing so they made use of the demagogic argument of identifying the new Turkey with the old Turkish despotism, and emphasised the necessity of a "national" resistance to the Turks etc. The broad masses of the people nevertheless would not allow themselves to be led astray. When the news was received that Mosul was included in the English Mandate, there were, at the same time as the triumphal parades of the official authorities, **stormy anti-English demonstrations in Kirkuk, Mosul and other towns, which could only be suppressed by the military.** (The English news agencies of course maintained dead silence with regard to these manifestations!)

A few weeks later, the Anglo-Iraq treaty was to be ratified by the so-called "Parliament". The Pashas were in such terror of a popular movement against this treaty, the purport of which was the enslavement of Iraq for twenty years, that they wanted to discuss the treaty in a secret sitting of Parliament. The Opposition protested against this and was supported by the crowds which had collected in front of the parliament. The Government summoned the police, had the recalcitrant members of Parliament removed by force, dispersed the assembled crowds — and Parliament passed the treaty in the course of a single night in a secret sitting.

This however is by no means the end of the fight. On the contrary, as the distress among the people increases in consequence of the predatory rule of English imperialism (in Iraq, villages which pay no taxes are bombarded by English aircraft...), in the same measure is the class-consciousness of the lower strata intensified and even larger masses are joining the national revolutionary movement against the English and the clique of King Feisul and his Pashas, which is supporting them.

## Letter from Brazil.

By B. D. (Rio de Janeiro).

The Presidential Election took place recently in Brazil. As was to be expected, **Luiz Washington**, the candidate chosen by the Government, a typical representative of the "**Fazenderos**" (large landowners) and formerly President of the Bazilian Federal State of **Sao Paolo**, was elected. His predecessor and worthy friend **Bernardes** will undoubtedly be satisfied with the result of the election, as he knows that his successor is certain to continue the anti-proletarian policy which he himself pursued with so much ardour during his term of office.

According to the constitutional regulations which hold good in the country, the President should have been elected through the general franchise, but at no time has this ever been applied, as the President in office can always make his own choice of the candidate for the future presidency, and then have him elected through systems which in themselves guarantee a complete victory for the Government authorities.

This circumstance as well as the **extremely wretched conditions of the working class** prove to what an extent the rulers abuse the patience of the workers who are exploited beyond measure. It is no exaggeration to say that the conditions of living of the proletariat of Brazil may be compared with those of any of the colonial peoples.

It is only necessary to observe the labour to which the unfortunate native and immigrated workers are forced on the coffee plantations, to be convinced of the truth of what has just been said.

From dawn to nightfall these poor slaves have to till the soil with bent backs and, when their hard day's work is done, they return to their thatched mud huts to cook and eat the few mouthfuls of rice and black beans with which the owner supplies them through the provision shop which he himself runs.

It not infrequently happens that at the end of the month, the owner, instead of paying his workers anything, demands that they should pay the debts they have incurred through the system described. Should one of these victims of exploitation,

tired of such an existence, in a moment of indignation, show any resistance, there is the "**Capanga**", a kind of black police, in the pay of the owners who either bring him to reason or help him into a better world.

The conditions under which the industrial workers live are no whit better. Even if we leave out of consideration those who work in small centres, in which the treatment is still worse, and take as a basis the large industrial towns of **Sao Paolo and Rio de Janeiro**, we can immediately see that the level of wages is far below the cost of living, quite apart from other conditions, which practically represent a regime of slavery.

A weaver or a mechanic for instance, cannot earn more than an average of 10 milreis a day (a milreis is equal to about sevenpence). In addition to this, the working day consists of ten and sometimes twelve hours, and coffee, the chief product of the country, costs no less than five milreis per kilo; in the same way, the price of other foodstuffs and rents also are very high. An objective investigation of the situation moreover shows that it is steadily getting worse.

Various attempts to improve things, often accompanied by heroic strikes, have been undertaken in the past by isolated groups at the instigation of Spanish or Portuguese anarchist elements, but they naturally failed because of the lack of method which is characteristic of those people. No serious action has ever been undertaken to establish real trade unions with a solid basis, which would make it possible for the working class to defend itself effectually against the combined attacks of capitalism and the Government. Such heroic attempts have been made, in spite of the Government having shown that it resists them with brutal ferocity, by imprisonment and compulsory settlement and by burning down the few existing workers' clubs.

It may however be taken for granted that, though it has hitherto been easy for the bourgeoisie to deal with movements of a sporadic character, this will not be the case in the future, as the young but intrepid **Communist Party of Brazil** will, in spite of everything, be able to establish itself in firm positions. The working masses of Brazil are already beginning to welcome the Party with enthusiasm.

## THE BALKANS

### The Crisis of Pan-Serbian Foreign Policy.

By Josef Kovatch (Zagreb).

In Yugoslavia the actual governmental power lies in the hands of the Serbian bourgeoisie, of the militarists and of the Court; the home and foreign policy of Yugoslavia is pan-Serbian. A few Croats or Slovenes in the government constitute a mere screen without power and influence. Dr. Trumbic, a Croat, who was foreign Minister at the time of the "National union", declared in the Belgrade parliament on the 26th of March last in the debate on foreign policy, that he had never really conducted the foreign policy of this State. The day before yesterday Dr. Trumbic was a mere screen, yesterday it was Dr. Sturmin, today it is Raditch.

The crisis in which the foreign policy of the kingdom of Yugoslavia is at present involved means, therefore, in the first place, a crisis of pan-Serbian foreign policy.

The crisis found expression in the weakening of the alliance of the Little Entente, as well as in the vacillating attitude of Nincic, who wavered between Rome, Paris and London.

The Anglo-French antagonism which revealed itself soon after Versailles, caused anxiety among the newly established imperialist States: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Roumania, and they formed the alliance in the shape of the Little Entente for the following purposes: 1. to preserve the imperialist frontiers against Hungary, Bulgaria and Austria and 2. to set up, under the leadership of France, a block against Germany, if necessary also against Russia.

Italy which after the collapse of Austria-Hungary came forward as the heir to its imperialist positions in the Balkans and in the Danube basin, looked askance at the formation of the little Entente. Owing to its inner weakness and the strength of France it was for a long time prevented from undertaking any decisive steps towards breaking up the Little Entente.

Italian imperialism is immediately threatening Yugoslavia. Its aim is, after having obtained Istria, also to obtain possession of the Croatian coast district, Dalmatia and Montenegro, and finally, in addition to seizing Albania, to replace the Serbian hegemony in the Balkans by Italian hegemony.

The imperialist conflicts between the Little Balkan States, for which Pan-Serbian imperialism bears the greater share of responsibility, affords Italy a welcome opportunity for strengthening its positions. Apart from Rome Belgrade is today the greatest enemy of the freedom of the Balkan peoples. What wonder then if these two imperialist rivals conclude a temporary friendship in order to secure and divide their booty! The Belgrade government betrays the interests of the Croatian and Slovenian peoples on the Adriatic Sea to Rome, and in return Mussolini is prepared to leave to the pan-Serbian hegemony the Slovenian and Croatian hinterland, as well as Montenegro and Macedonia. These two imperialist robbers have not yet arrived at an agreement for seizing and dividing up Salonica.

Yugoslavia recently sustained a fresh defeat in the sphere of foreign policy. The Little Entente almost completely lost its political importance, and Belgrade's main support, France, became considerably weakened both economically and politically. After the overthrow of Czarist Russia the second support of pan-Serbian imperialism is now showing signs of weakness. Serbian imperialism is thereby losing the orientation which it had for many years and is being visited by a severe crisis. Mussolini attempted in a skilful manner to take advantage of this crisis in order to enforce the setting up of an Italo-Yugoslavian alliance, which in actuality will render Italy the master in the Balkans. This was what was intended should be the result of Nincic's visit to Rome which he undertook at the end of February, shortly before the meeting of the League of Nations. This visit, however, aroused protests not only in the Zagreb, but also in the Belgrade press which clearly showed that this way would not lead to Salonica. France and England also expressed their displeasure, as they were not prepared to look on while Italy and Yugoslavia carried out independent action in the Balkans. As a result the alliance in Rome was not concluded. On the contrary, Nincic left Rome and betook himself to Paris, where he negotiated with Briand on the possibility of a Franco-Yugoslavian alliance.

After his return from Rome, Paris and Geneva, Nincic delivered in parliament a very verbose speech on foreign policy, in which however he said nothing. What is perhaps most characteristic of this long speech is the fact that no mention was made in it of the Soviet Union.

The collapse and the weakening of the patrons of the Pan-Serbian regime, the strengthening of the imperialist rivalry with Italy, the increasing resistance of the suppressed peoples of Yugoslavia and the Balkans, the revolutionary movement of the workers and the peasants — all this has brought the Pan-Serbian imperialist policy into a crisis from which, in spite of all shifts and manoeuvres, there is no escape.

## THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

### The Engineering Crisis.

By R. Palme Dutt.

The National Engineering Lock-Out was called off at the last hour. But all the issues between the engineers and the employers remain. The engineers' wages demands have been completely rejected by the employers; the employers on their side are advocating longer hours and a reduced wage rate. The threat of a National Lock Out was only one episode in a prolonged crisis in the engineering industry; just as the engineering crisis is only one phase of the general industrial crisis and social conflict which is gathering.

No industry has shown the decline of British Capitalism more sharply than the engineering industry. In January, 1926, 78,000 workers in the engineering trades were unemployed, or 12.5%, and 89,000 in shipbuilding, or 37.1%. Exports of

machinery in 1925 were 26% below the pre-war level. Profits have been maintained at a high rate, but only by extremely high price levels (practically double pre-war) combined with extreme under-payment of the workers. The skilled engineer, who used to be known as "the aristocrat of labour", is to-day at the bottom of the ladder and receiving under £ 3 a week or less than many unskilled workers. The real wages of the engineer are 30% below pre-war. The employers have been able to carry out this ruthless policy by the weapon of the heavy unemployment and owing to the division of the workers. The last great struggle, the Lock Out of 1922, ended in a disastrous defeat, followed by heavy cuts in wages.

The workers' organisations in the engineering industry are heavily split up. The old craft spirit is still strong, the separation of skilled and unskilled workers, constitutions overweighted with heavy "friendly" machinery and obligations, and elaborate tying-up agreements and negotiation procedure with the employers. There are nearly fifty Unions concerned, although only about eight are important. The smaller Unions are combined in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Federation, which pursues a policy of conciliation. But all the larger Unions are outside this, including the Amalgamated Engineering Union (250,000 members), the Boilermakers (90,000), the Shipwrights, the Woodworkers, the Plumbers, the Painters and the Electrical Trades Union. This disastrous division can only be countered at present by developing strong workshop organisation; and this the revolutionaries in the engineering industry have especially endeavoured to do, though under great difficulties in the period of unemployment.

After the great defeat of 1922, the Communists conducted agitation to make a united fight throughout the industry for an all-round wage increase of £ 1 a week, and to combine this fight with that of the miners and railwaymen as the only way to counter the weakness of the position within each industry separately. This agitation received widespread support; and the wage demand became officially taken up (as also the programme for the railwaymen); but the essential accompaniment, the Workers' Alliance for united action was not taken up, until the miners brought it to the front at a much later stage. The Union officials, under pressure from the rank and file, put in the wage demand in the beginning of 1924, but in a completely pessimistic spirit, without any belief in the possibility of fighting, and without, therefore, any preparations for it. It is not surprising that the negotiations dragged on uneventfully for two years (during which the workers continued in their desperate conditions) before the employers even declared their complete rejection of the demands in January of this year. The employers on their side put in counter-demands for a 50 hour week and a reduced rate of wages on the additional hours.

At this point a new factor entered in — and this was the workshop. In a printing press factory in London, the factory of R. Hoe and Co., the workers, 900 in all, took up the fight as a single united force against non-unionism and for the £ 1 a week wage increase. They began with a "stay-in" strike; the employers retorted with a lock out. These 900 workers, split up among seven different Unions, were able to act as a single force under their Lock-Out committee. It was a demonstration of the fighting power of workshop organisation. But the sequel is even more instructive.

The employers were sufficiently alarmed at this isolated manifestation of fighting unity and leadership, and the possibility of its extending, that they brought into play at once the whole strength of their organisation. They threatened a National Lock Out throughout the engineering industry if Hoe's men should not return.

In reply to this the Trade Union Executives made not the slightest shadow of resistance, nor did they attempt to rouse the workers in the rest of the country to a united struggle. On the contrary, they at once obediently devoted the whole of their efforts, and the whole of the Union machinery, to securing the return of Hoe's men.

In consequence an extraordinary situation resulted. On the one side were the men in the factory, supported by the District Councils. On the other side were the Trade Union Executives and the employers working in union. This was most clearly

seen at a Conference of the Executives with the local and district representatives on March 5 (the lock out notices were posted for March 13). Two opposite resolutions were passed by the two halves of the Conference: a resolution of the National Executives in favour of an immediate return to work (one leftward Trade Union, the Electrical Trade Union, dissenting); and a resolution of all the district and local representatives against any return.

The role of the Trade Union Executives as agents of the employers was never more shamefully exposed. On March 10 the Executives met a mass meeting of the men at Hoe's and stated the case for a return. The mass meeting passed in reply, with only three dissentients, a resolution "that we do not return to work until such time as the non-unionists are removed and a substantial increase in wages is assured". Thereupon the Executives came back to the employers with the unhappy report that "the workpeople refuse to conform to the instructions given". The employers were adamant, and explained that it then remained with the Executives to expel the men. This the Executives made clear that they were ready to do: but the Engineering Union requested first a few days grace to call a meeting of the National Committee. The employers graciously consented, and postponed the lock out to March 18.

Thus the men in the factory, fighting for elementary trade union principles, were faced with not only their immediate employers, but with the whole national organisation of the employers, the whole capitalist press and a good part of the "labour" press, and the whole of the national trade union machinery, even to the threat of expulsion against them.

It is worth noting that the factory of R. Hoe and Co is an American firm. Not a single capitalist paper mentioned this fact. That 900 British workers were fighting a group of American employers, and that the whole of the British employers sided with the Americans, escaped the attention of the usually violent jingo and anti-foreign British press. Had the reverse been the case, had it been a British firm and foreign leaders among the workers, the outcry from the "patriotic" press can be imagined. This silence (which is an illustration of the discipline of the English press, that needs no outside censorship to perform its task) is not one of the least educational aspects of the whole affair.

With these heavy odds against them, the men held on grimly to the last, against cajolery and threats. But at the National Committee of the Engineering Union, a body of district representatives from men actually at work, the Executive succeeded in carrying their policy by a majority of 44 to 7. No educational work had been carried on, and in consequence the London District was alone.

Faced with this, after a last effort, the men finally at the last hour, on March 18, the date fixed for the expiry of the lock out notices, finally gave in "under protest". The Lock Out Committee declared:

"It is impossible to fight the enemy and also a large section of our own army.

"We do not return to work as a satisfied body, but as a body full of dermination to press our just claims at every available opportunity."

For the moment, therefore, the lock out is averted. But the wage issue is still in front. The London District Council of the Engineers has put in an independant demand for the £ 1 increase; and this initiation of local negotiations has been sanctioned by the Executive. But the Employers' Association has clearly laid down, in its ultimatum of February 25: that "in the event of any action being taken by the unions or a union to enforce an advance in wages either nationally, locally or sectionally, it will be resisted to the fullest extent" i. e. by a lock out.

There is therefore no escape from the certainty of struggle in front; and the problem for the engineers is to prepare that struggle in conjunction with the other workers.

## Latest Development of the Trade Union Movement in Japan.

By Sen Katayama.

The real development of the Japanese trade union movement dates back to the great uprising of August 1918 which took the form of a rice riot. Before this date there only existed a few trade unions in the country. With that great mass uprising the workers awakened to more or less class consciousness. Strikes became frequent and more and more trade unions were organised in different industries. May Day soon became the workers' demonstration day; every year it was celebrated more widely and by greater numbers of workers.

In the year 1920 there were over 400 trade unions with a total of 4—500,000 members. But in March of that year there came the great financial crisis, which was followed by industrial crises and general depression. This was accompanied by increasing unemployment and wage cuts. A general capitalist offensive was systematically carried out, aided by the reactionary government, while the fascists were organised with the tacit consent of the authorities to break up labour strikes and labour meetings. Thus the one-time prosperous labour movement met with a number of set backs, as a result of which there was a falling off in the number of trade unions and of their members.

It was under such difficult conditions that the question arose of a national organisation of trade unions and federations in order to meet the capitalist offensive.

The first attempt to set up a national federation of labour was made at the end of September of 1922 in Osaka. At the Constituent Congress two opposing tendencies were revealed, one represented by Sodomei (The Japanese Federation of Labour), advocating a centralised federation and which was designated as bolshevik, and the other tendency represented by anarcho-syndicalist unions insisting on a de-centralised federation retaining full local autonomy. Both parties maintained their respective standpoints, with the result that the Congress finally broke up without achieving anything.

The anarcho-syndicalist unions lost their influence in the labour unions and their membership declined to 5000; thus the strength of the syndicalist unions, compared with the total number of trade union organised workers (excluding the peasants' union) which is reported to be 270,000, amounts to less than 2%.

On the other hand, according to latest reports, the strength of the Sodomei and other unions of a similar tendency has greatly increased. Since the time of the manifesto on the change of orientation towards the practical policy in the National Congress of Sodomei in February 1924, differences of opinion arose among the leaders of the Sodomei. At last, at the end of the same year, Kanto Domei Kai (the Tokio organisation of the Sodomei) expelled the metal workers' and four other unions. The expelled five unions thereupon formed the Kanto Hyogikai (Hyogikai meaning trades council) and affiliated directly to the Sodomei. But the matter assumed a very acute form at the Congress of the Sodomei in May 1925 and there was talk of splitting into two unions. Soon after the May Congress the Executive of the Sodomei expelled those unions belonging to the Hyogikai, whereupon, to the surprise of the leaders, 23 of such trade unions, comprising about 9000 members, formed a national Hyogikai (Trade union Federation). The result of the split was that the trade union movement of Japan, nay more, the general proletarian movement, divided into two main tendencies — Sodomei and Hyogikai.

Generally speaking the Sodomei represents the right wing and the Hyogikai the left, although this distinction cannot be sharply applied to every organisation affiliated to these two bodies.

The Japanese Rodo Kumiai Hyogikai (generally called Hyogikai) has its head-quarters in Osaka and eight local Hyogikai — Kanto (Tokyo and its surroundings), Chubu (Nagoya and its surroundings), Kyoto, Kobe, Osaka, Seishu, Chugoku and Hokkaido. In October 1925 its affiliated unions numbered 46 with a membership of 18,000, but recently four unions in Hokkaido comprising 2500 members have affiliated and with the increase in other locals the total membership is now over 31,000. The Hyogikai has specially great influence in Kyoto and Kobe and also in the North Eastern provinces and in Hokkaido. In

other localities, particularly in Tokyo, Yokohama and Osaka, there is a fierce rivalry in the trade union movement on the part of both wings.

After the split the membership of the Sodomei trade unions remained stationary. In October 1925 the Sodomei was reported to have 51 unions with a membership of 22,000. It has its headquarters in Tokyo and its strength consists of district federations — Kanto and Kansai. The Sodomei, like the Hyogikai, has been endeavouring to increase its membership by forming new unions among the unorganised workers. At the end of January of the present year it claimed to have 32,000 members. The Sodomei is not much stronger numerically than the Hyogikai.

A process of differentiation has been going in the Labour movement not only in the trade unions, but also in the proletarian political movement, as shown in the formation of a Peasant Labour Party last December.

Apart from the Sodomei and Hyogikai there exist a number of other trade union federations. The most important of them are:

1. Nippon Rodo Kumiai Rengo (Japanese trade union alliance recently organised by Kikai Rengo, Osaka metal workers' union). It claims to occupy a third Party position as against the two rival parties — Sodomei and Hyogikai. The alliance has only 4 — 5000 members.

2. Kangyo Rodo Domei (government factory workers' federation). This federation is approaching more and more closely to the Sodomei, especially after the split. Its headquarters are in Osaka and it has seven unions affiliated to it with a total membership of 13,000.

3. There are a few other unions which closely approach the union policy and ideology of the Sodomei, among them being the Tokyo tramway workers' union and the transport workers, who are about to form a national transport workers' federation which would comprise more than 15,000 members.

4. The Navy Yard Workers' Federation, comprising five unions of five naval establishments and numbering 48,800 members who were only organised a year or two ago. This Federation is conservative in its policy and ideology, but it has an experience of labour struggles and strikes, as for example in the Kure Navy Yard.

5. There are four seamen's unions with a total membership of 47,500. Some of them represent the upper section of the seamen and are very little connected with the labour movement. All of them are conservative and possess little class consciousness.

6. There are further two trade union federations of a very moderate tendency, namely the army arsenal workers' federation with 1000 members and the federation of clerical workers with 6500 members. These two federations do not constitute a decisive factor in the Labour movement of the country.

7. Finally, there are 23 separate unions with more than 1000 members, but none of them has any great influence. In these unions however there is going on a process of ideological differentiation, and in the near future they, too, will be affiliated to one or the other of the two wings of the labour movement.

Capitalism in Japan will make use of the Amsterdam International in order to corrupt the workers and peasants with the aid and support of the government. For this purpose the Geneva Labour Office has established an Eastern Labour Bureau in Tokyo, co-operating with the reformist labour unions under the guidance of the government. The leader of the Sodomei, Bunji Suzuki, is the chief supporter of the Labour office.

The Amsterdam International wishes to extend its petty bourgeois corrupting influence in China by means of the Japanese reformist labour movement. It is our task to combat this.

The Japanese labour movement is confronted by the most important task of fighting the reactionary power of the government in Tokyo and the reactionary influence of the Amsterdam International. The Japanese government has been endeavouring with all its means to suppress the growth of the Communist movement by intimidating the proletariat, by introducing the peace preservation laws, arbitration laws etc. But all these attempts will not check the growth and the development of the revolutionary movement in Japan.

## THE WHITE TERROR

### Save the Lives of Seven Syrian Revolutionaries!

The French imperialists are proceeding as savagely as ever in Syria. Hundreds of revolutionary workers and peasants are being shot or hung, villages are being burnt, towns plundered, peaceable inhabitants are driven from their homes, while thousands are arrested and condemned. In spite of this the Syrian revolt still continues, in fact it is spreading more and more. The insurgent Syrians do not content themselves with the fight against the French, which up to now has been victorious, but they are maintaining exemplary order in every portion of the country which they have wrested from the hands of the foreign ruler. The extermination of banditry — which the French have never been able to achieve in their eight years of rule — has become an accomplished fact in the insurgent districts; and with the successes of the insurgents sympathy for them increases throughout the whole of Syria and in all the neighbouring countries. But for the French this constitutes the reason for endeavouring to annihilate the revolt in the most ruthless manner. 40,000 French troops stand ready, under the leadership of General Gamelin, to undertake the decisive attack against the Syrian revolutionaries, even if the suppression of the revolt should mean the complete annihilation of the Syrians. "We shall proceed to demolish the whole country, if the inhabitants do not submit" declared Jouvenel, the French Commissar at a banquet in Beyrut, and the generals are standing ready to carry out this threat.

In their blind fury the French see enemies and conspiracies everywhere. Under the charge of being engaged in a conspiracy seven young Syrians have now been in prison for three months. The victims belong to the best and most prominent champions of the young Syrian labour movement. Fosef Yazbek, a well-known Arabian writer and editor of the communist newspaper (now prohibited) "Insaniyeh" (Humanity), Aly Nassred Din, Druse origin, editor of the nationalist newspaper "Ahd-ed-Deschedid" (The New Era), Fuad Schmal, leader of the Lebanon trade unions, and with them four others have been selected by the French in order to quench the thirst for revenge of the French generals, whose arms are too short in order to seize the insurgent nationalists. The seven accused are charged with communist activity and of conspiracy against the government power. The Public Prosecutor is demanding the death penalty for all seven.

It is true the charge is absolutely unfounded. It is true that the Public Prosecutor, apart from the statements of a spy, can only rely on "documents" which were concocted a month after the arrest of the accused, it is also true, that the accused have been the whole time in Beyrut, where the population up to now has remained quite peaceable — a complete refutation of the accusation of the Public Prosecutor. But the fact that the accused are being handed over to an extraordinary tribunal, that the French general are seeking for a scape-goat for their failures, that the reaction in France is making use for its own purposes of the catch phrase of "communist activities", gives cause to fear, that the accused are in the greatest danger, that their lives are at stake.

In order to save the lives of these innocent victims of French imperialism, the intervention of the entire public, and an immediate energetic campaign in favour of the accused is necessary! It must not be permitted that these seven revolutionaries fall as victims to the vengeance of the French generals!

**Workers, proletarians of France and other countries! Prevent this murder while there is yet time! It rests with you to save them! Put an end to the robber campaign of the French generals in Syria!**

**Freedom for the seven revolutionaries in Beyrut!**

**Down with French imperialism!**

**Long live the emancipation of the peasants and workers in Syria!**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Palestine.

(Section of the Communist International.)

## THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

### The Red Women's and Girls' League in Germany.

By Lene Overlach.

The Red Front Fighters' League is on the march! It personifies the growing activity of the German proletariat as an answer to the intensified economic crisis and the increasing encroachment of the employers. It personifies the self-consciousness and the fighting power and joyousness of the awakening German proletariat. It is the response to the formation of a vague "republican organisation", the "Reichsbanner", "Red Black and Gold", which is at present undergoing a process of rapid disintegration.

The disciplined class-conscious behaviour of the Red Front Fighters League (Roter Frontkämpferbund, R.F.B.), its Red demonstrations and fetes attracted the attention of broad masses of the proletariat and, of course, also of proletarian women. — A large number of women who had up to that time been indifferent, took part enthusiastically in the demonstrations and fetes organised by the R.F.B. These women joined the R.F.B. as members and tried to imitate their comrades in every respect; they wore the coats and caps of the Red Front Fighters and joined in their processions, in which however some women, physically weakened by undernourishment and overstrained by excessive work, could not keep up. — A further obstacle to the rapid increase of women members was the circumstance that many women had not yet the courage to appear in the streets in uniform, to march in processions and to undergo physical strain.

In Germany, millions of women still live within the limits of their narrow households, take no interest in politics and even regard it as something venturesome to attend a public meeting. This however does not destroy the fact that imperialism itself, in employing women as cheap labour in the process of production, is helping to create the preliminary conditions which attract women into politics.

Inspired by the desire to overcome the difficulties described, the R. F. B. in May 1925 decided to gather together the women members of the R. F. B. in a Red Women's League, which could more easily than the Red Front Fighters League use its influence to persuade indifferent women to join. In accordance with this resolution, the women members were detached from the R. F. B. and women's groups were formed, which were called the Red Women's League. By the end of November 1925, these groups were so far developed that a National Conference could be called to found the Red Women's League. — In Berlin, this historical conference was followed by the formation of a league which called itself the Red Women and Girls' League (the League of Proletarian Women and Girls of Germany). Comrade Clara Zetkin was elected as its first president, and a National Committee of 7 comrades was formed.

This Conference for the foundation of the Red Women's and Girls' League was based on the fighting enthusiasm of the delegates and their confidence that the League which had sprung out of the prevailing distress, would become a fighting league of the masses of exploited and oppressed women, a firm bulwark in the fight of the proletariat for emancipation. — Its development in the subsequent two months alone shows that the League is successfully advancing towards this aim.

The consequences of the capitalist economic crisis are a burden which weighs very heavily on the broad strata of the proletariat and the middle class. — Thirteen and a half million persons, unemployed with wives and children, and besides these millions of disabled ex-service men, orphans and persons drawing disablement and old age pensions are suffering hunger and want. Every day more factories close their doors, and their workers of both sexes are heartlessly thrown on to the street.

German big capital, in its attempts to save itself from complete ruin at the cost of the working population, is once more most mercilessly exploiting and oppressing the women, as being that part of the proletariat which is politically most untrained.

In the large towns, placards can be seen outside the factories, "Women Workers Wanted", whilst at the same time, thousands

of dismissed male workers are pouring out of the gates. — The employers as a rule offer these women only a quarter of men's wages and, for this miserable pittance, they demand even more work from them than from the men.

Proletarian families with their children are living in the most terrible hovels, in attics where the rain pours in, in musty cellars, even on open spaces and rubbish dumps. — A new tenants' law, which provides for a five-fold increase of rents, the abolition of any form of tenant protection is being discussed in the "Reichstag", and threatens families who are already in distress, with further intensification of their misery.

A reactionary Government is offering a helping hand to large capitalists, Junkers and to declared and secret monarchists, in plundering the working masses. The Kaisers, Kings and ruling princes who fled in 1918, are rapaciously grabbing at the property of the people. They are claiming 2½ milliards of gold marks, thousands of acres of land, mansions and castles. — They must be paid for by taxation extorted from the masses.

The Red Women's and Girls' League, born out of the necessity of the times, is undertaking to-day, what no political party has hitherto succeeded in doing in sufficient measure, that is, shaking the broad masses of women out of the complete passivity which they have hitherto maintained and mobilising them for the fight. — The League is well aware that in doing this, it is only fulfilling a small part of the tasks demanded by the proletariat's fight for freedom.

The Red Women's and Girls' League makes it its task to get hold of the broad masses of indifferent proletarian women, without distinction of party or creed, and to train them in politics, both theoretically by lectures, courses etc. and practically by inducing them to take part in all the activities of the working class. — The League not only carries on the fight in questions specially concerning women, such as the social welfare of mothers and children and the abolition of the shameful paragraphs prohibiting artificial abortion, it also takes an active share in all the questions of the proletarian class war. — One of its chief activities is the organisation of the campaign against imperialist wars and the destruction of all pacifist illusions among the women by explaining the true nature of imperialism through the daily events of world politics.

On January 27th, on the occasion of the demonstrations in favour of the expropriation of the former ruling houses and of increased support for the unemployed, the League summoned the women throughout Germany to join in the demonstration. — Even though in many towns the number of women who demonstrated was still only small, they at least roused great interest even among the women who stood at the street corners or gazed out of the windows, through their banners bearing the special demands of Women: "The Castles of the Ex-Princes as Training Homes for Our Children!" "The lands of the Fugitive Princes for the Small Peasants and Settlers!"

The League also took a leading part in the fight against the recent intensification of usurious claims for rent and against unemployment. This does not mean that the League already embraces large numbers of women, but it does mean that, though still relatively small, the League is developing a maximum of activity. Young women comrades, still almost untrained politically, who have never previously come to the fore in public, are speaking at public meetings of proletarian organisations and, in simple words, proclaim the necessity of the cooperation of the women.

In the evening meetings of the groups, political lectures are given and the fundamental questions of the class war are expounded through the method of questions and answers. — At the same time training in practical organisation is being undertaken. — The group leader distributes the work. — How proud and conscious of her responsibility a member of the League feels who, a few weeks after joining, is given a function — the collection of subscription from five comrades, the duty of regularly inviting them to meetings and entertainments and of enlightening them. — They enthusiastically collect money, they sing in the court-yards and, after a short address, they collect money, for the Red Help for instance, and try to win new members for the League.

Thus, through practical detail work and political education, women functionaries are being trained who are the pillars of our women's organisation and important auxiliary troops in the fight of the whole of the proletariat for its emancipation.