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The Fourth International Conference of the E.C.C.I. on Work Among Women.

May 29 — June 9, 1926.

(Full Report).

The following Agenda was adopted at the First Session:

1. Report of the International Women's Secretariat and immediate tasks connected with work among women, reporter Comrade Sturm (I. W. S.).
2. The Party apparatus for work among women, reporter Comrade Fried (Org Department of the E. C. C. I.).
3. Women Delegate Meetings, reporter Comrade Arthiukhina (I. W. S. and Women's Department of the C. P. S. U.).
4. Work in non-Party mass organisations, reporter Comrade Strasser (R. I. L. U.).

5. Non-Party women's organisations, reporter Comrade Sturm (I. W. S.).
6. Work among peasant women, reporter Comrade Dombal (Peasant International).
7. Education and Press, reporter Comrade Alexander (I. W. S.).
8. Full commission report on work among Eastern women, reporter Comrade Kasparova (I. W. S.).

First Session.

Saturday evening May 29, 1926.

Comrade ERCOLI (Secretariat of E. C. C. I.)

I am sure that the whole conference will agree with me that our foremost task is to turn our thoughts towards Comrade Clara Zetkin. Unfortunately, she cannot participate in the conference because of her state of health. But I think that nevertheless she is with us. Was not she quite recently at her post as leader of the Women's Department of the Executive, and is not the entire work of this department imbued with her spirit? Hers is a fighting spirit which is a characteristic of her entire activity.

I propose that three women comrades should be asked to go to Comrade Clara and to transmit to her our greetings and best wishes, giving expression to our feelings which are at the same time the feelings of the mass of working women.

On behalf of the Executive I welcome the conference and declare it open. I will speak here on the importance of work among women: Already Lenin said that no work which is to prepare revolution can be successful unless large sections of women are drawn into it. It almost looks as if we carry on our struggles in two camps: the struggle for the liberation of women, and the struggle for the liberation of the working class; but struggle for women's emancipation is unthinkable unless it be linked up with the liberation struggle of the entire working class.

The present epoch is of particular importance to the entire development. We are witnessing now a strike in Great Britain

and big struggles also in other countries. Recent events show that the policy of the International, as laid down at the last Enlarged Plenum, is perfectly correct in regard to the united front, the peasant question, the question of the peoples of the East, etc. When studied in the light of recent events, the correctness of the decisions is still more apparent.

In the decisions on the united front, work among women plays an important role. It is not a question here of women who are already Party members, but rather of the millions of working and peasant women who are still dissociated from political life. To capture them must be the basis of our work

here. We must adapt the policy of the Communist International to our work among women, and we must put this policy into practice. In this connection particular importance attaches to women delegate meetings. This is a method which the Russian Party applied already prior to the revolution and which has been also partly applied in other countries. This method shall also bear fruit in the West.

After Comrade Ercoli's address the Presidium was elected and the agenda and standing orders were adopted.

Comrade Clara Zetkin welcomed the conference in a letter which was read eliciting stormy applause.

To the International Conference on Communist Work among Large Sections of Working Women.

Dear Comrades!

An International Conference on the ways and means of bringing large sections of working women into the fighting ranks of the class conscious proletariat against death and misery-bearing capitalism and for Communism, the bringer of liberation, an international conference to bring maximum clarity, strength, elan, extension and success to our work in this sphere! — Such a conference is now being held. It is taking place in the days of the heroic struggle of the British miners, the champions of the proletarians of all capitalist countries, whose struggle with the deadly enemy of the working class is one of life or death, a struggle which must make even the dullest elements realise that energetic international solidarity of the exploited and disowned is the most peremptory injunction in the present situation. Such an international conference is held at a time when the history of mankind is again in the melting pot and the luring light issuing from it illuminates our tasks, their importance and their magnitude.

To be unable to be present at such a conference is a deep sorrow to me, which you, my dear comrades, both men and women, will easily understand, just as you will of course know that I am with you in my thoughts and with all my heart in all your deliberations and decisions.

The world bourgeoisie has not yet recovered from the fright which this general revolt of the workers of Great Britain has given it. The influence of the cunning and canting Thomases and MacDonalds over the as yet insufficient class-consciousness and class determination of the workers was certainly strong enough to call off the big struggle and to make the rebelling wage slaves shrink before the repressive measures with which capitalist democracy was threatening them. But the calling off of the general strike is by no means equivalent to the liquidation of the destructive crisis in the coal production and the entire economy of Great Britain.

Moreover, this crisis is of an international character, it is one of the signs of the incurable disintegration at the very root of capitalist world economy. Serious catastrophes of various kinds in the bourgeois States — these of the victors and those of the vanquished in the imperialist struggle for supremacy — preceded it and accompany it today in France, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy and other places. Destructive crises will follow it, emerging with irrepressible volcanic power from the differences within the capitalist profit-making system. These differences could not be removed through the criminal world slaughter, they were on the contrary rendered more acute, only in the form of new groupings and constellations.

More clearly and unambiguously than all the economic conflicts since the world war, the recent historical event in Great Britain has borne out the fact that the problem and contradictions created by capitalist economy cannot be solved under capitalism, under the bourgeois social order. Moreover this event is showing all proletarians, in an atmosphere of treachery, humiliation and shame, without equal in the history of the labour movement, in a conclusive manner that the old means and methods of a purely trade union struggle have become obsolete for big collisions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The cleverest and most accustomed to power of all bourgeoisies

won the battle at the outset by taking it up as a political struggle for power, whilst the rebellious wage-slaves were kept in leash by their treacherous vacillating and cowardly leaders by means of the regulations, statutes and traditions of a movement based on craft unionism.

Whilst the bourgeois world rouged its face to simulate a healthy condition and attempt to represent brutal force as real full-blooded strength, the trend of economic as well as political events leaves signs of impending death on its features. The Locarno Pact, the collapse of the clumsy hypocritical League of Nations swindle at the Geneva Session, the ridiculous and unworthy farce of the Preliminary Disarmament Conference, the coup d'état in Poland, the impudent actions of the monarchists in Germany, the perpetuation of the crimes of French imperialism in Morocco and Syria, the predatory actions of the capitalist states against progressing China, the impudent and malicious incitement campaign directed against the rapidly developing Soviet Union, — all this combined and many other things show clearly to the peoples that the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie does not bring peace, liberty and culture, but leads inevitably to terrible exploitation and slavery, to utmost misery without any salvation, to atrocious wholesale murder, to almost unconcealed barbarism.

Our Women's Conference would not be worthy of sitting in session in Red Moscow if it were not to draw the necessary conclusions from this situation, if it were not to hand over with the utmost energy, and devotion its lesson to the toiling female masses, in order to rally them to the proletarian cause as fully conscious and active elements. The enemies of the proletariat have quite recently once more confirmed in Great Britain the fact that the social struggles of our times are of such magnitude and intensity that they cannot be fought out without women. Already months ago those who profit by capitalist exploitation and are its obedient servants brought into the arena thousands of organised bourgeois ladies against the pending miners' strike. These gentry mobilise against the general strike the Conservative and Liberal ladies of the upper ten thousands, the one-time militant fuffragettes and the inevitable Mrs. Snowden, the incarnation of labour-disrupting reformism and the most common snobism. Let us learn from our enemies, but let us outstrip them in order to overcome them.

Fact after fact calls on us peremptorily to use all our energies to organise a national and international united front of working women for the protection of their interests, for the conquest of power, right and freedom. A united front which must never mean separation, isolation from the general red united front of the proletariat, which, on the contrary must mean firm indissoluble merging into it. A united front whose life and activity must not be a resigned, modest and inadequate revolution-substitute, but rather a clear and energetic preparation, a continuous getting ready for revolution.

Nearer to the masses, right into the masses! Our activity in the factories must be made more effective and must be increased ten-fold. It is not enough to imbue every working woman with sacred hatred for capitalism, with sacred and passionate love for Communism. We must also, using the

factory as our most effective basis, get at the wives of working men whose members are much greater than those of women working in the factories. For after all, he who is master in the capitalist enterprise is also master in the proletarian home. He takes the meat out of the saucepan of even the most experienced housewife and tears the babe from the breast of the most loving mother if this but increase his profits.

Let us improve and increase tenfold our work in every kind of proletarian mass organisation and among those sections of society gradually becoming alienated from capitalism economy and bourgeois class domination. There must be energetic, unceasing and clever work especially in the trade unions. No longer must large numbers of unorganised working women be relentlessly exploited victims of the capitalist greed of gold, no longer must they be humble and willing reserves played off by the employers against the struggling proletarians who dare bring forward their demands. Every working woman must be organised in a trade union, must meet the exploiters well-equipped. But she must also be animated by revolutionary spirit and be ready to fight against the timid petty-reformism of bureaucracy. Do not let us rest content with bringing women into co-operatives as paying members and at the utmost as occasional grumbling members, let us see that they rank among the most energetic elements fully aware of the importance of the idea of co-operation as a world-renewing idea, namely, as an organising and active principle of an all-embracing solidarity.

The International Workers' Relief, the International Red Aid, the War Victims Associations, Tenants' Leagues and other organisations offer a fruitful field for our systematic activity in the direction of mobilising and revolutionising women for the class struggle of the proletariat. Let us also not neglect the professional and other organisations of teachers, civil servants, office workers and intellectuals of every kind. There are thousands of those who starving and discontented, do Pioneer work with their brain for capitalism and its state. It is of the utmost practical importance to cause ferment among the mental servants and defence corps of the bourgeoisie, to recruit among them allies for the proletariat in its revolutionary progress.

There is one more point on which our Conference is sure to lay stress: the necessity of close systematic collaboration with Young Communist organisations, the Red Pioneers, the Communist Children's Groups, not only to give an impetus to these movements but also to get inspiration from them. Yes, certainly, for the Communist mother brings up the child, the budding youth for the revolution. But the fully convinced Young Communist is also well able to win over his parents, brothers and sisters for the revolutionary struggle, not to mention that full use should be made of Youth activity so important to the future and that through our activity the influence of working women in the extensive and important sphere of training and education in the opponent Youth organisations be given its proper place.

The field of our activity is world-wide. Millions of women bear with history as with a merciless body and soul destructive fate. They must help to make history which raises and emancipates them. It must be our business to bring them as revolutionary fighters into the public life. What have we done towards this, and what have we achieved? What about the work and success of the national Sections and their special organs for Communist work among women? The Conference will sit in judgement over efforts and results. It has carefully to examine the ways and means of the work done and also the forms and methods of this work, the energy and ability with which they were applied — relentlessly critical, without bias for the beloved yesterday, the traditional, the usual. The conference must

study carefully the possibility of new ways and means, methods, forms and organs, without prejudice and without fear of opportunist, feminist digressions.

In connection with this, special importance will attach to the discussions about delegate meetings and non-Party sympathising women's organisations, such as the Red Women's and Girls' League in Germany, the Mothers' Unions in Norway, etc. In this respect the conference must urge progress in order that the new and more helpful ideas be put into practice with energy, not with thoughtless, high faluting enthusiasm, but rather on a sound basis of careful investigation and utilisation of existing opportunities.

The Communist International is in truth and practice a world-embracing organisation of the exploited and enslaved. It knows that capitalism in Europe and America cannot be finally crushed unless it is also overcome in Asia and Africa, unless private ownership is also uprooted there. As a step towards this aim the Communist International utilises to the full the national-revolutionary risings of the peoples there.

Our Conference will be fully cognisant of the historical importance of the awakening of the women of the East. It will examine very carefully all the avenues and possibilities to this awakening. There it is not only a matter of recruiting greater number of women pioneers, it is rather a matter of organising them more effectively and preparing them for the struggle. The women of the East who are demanding their emancipation must not only have the same rights, but also the same value as their sisters of the West when they join the revolutionary united front.

Rallying working women for the united front should be tantamount to transforming their social and political passivity into the maximum conscious activity. Each one of the awakened women must become a champion of the working class movement and must be given duties to fulfil accordingly. Our activity among female masses must mean education through work and struggle. Extension of our field of activity also means its intensification. One of our most important immediate tasks is the training and education of a staff of women and men leaders fully able to cope practically and on principle with the demands of every revolutionary emergency. A thorough knowledge of the conditions of life among working women, of their economic position, of the social and political conditions in every individual country, nay, in every separate district is an indispensable premise for an adequate defence of the interests of these female masses. Thorough practical knowledge must be accompanied by profound and clear theoretical education. There must also be inflexible characterisation in our activity and struggle.

My hearty greetings to the Conference and my best wishes for successful work which, I am convinced, will further ideologically and practically the fulfilment of our tasks. My greetings and wishes are accompanied by the conviction that the Conference has but one slogan for our work and struggle, for teachers and learners. Be Up and Doing. I am looking forward to the results of your work and your decisions in the conviction that they are imbued with the lessons of the Russian Revolution and of the constructive work of the Soviet Union, that under the guidance of the Communist International they will revolutionise millions of women and will bring them into the struggle of the world proletariat. Where there is a will there is a way. The will of millions of women guarantees victory in the revolution.

I greet the conference with the full conviction that this victory is not far distant.

Moscow, May 28th, 1926.

Clara Zetkin.

Report of the International Women's Secretariat and Immediate Tasks Connected with Work among Women.

Reporter Comrade STURM:

Comrades, according to the announcements sent to the sections my report was to embrace: work in the West, in the East and in the Soviet Union. But as the final agenda contains full reports on work in the Soviet Union and the East, I will limit myself to our work and our tasks in Western countries.

Precisely the present situation, the strike in Great Britain, events in Poland and the big economic and political crises in a number of the most important countries show us clearly how acute class differences have become and how revolutionary the mood of the masses is. Mobilisation of women masses becomes therefore imperative. In fact, lately these masses have been roused from their apathy. At present, when it is of the utmost importance to concentrate all forces at the fighting front, our opponents are making great efforts with the object of drawing the women masses into the front of the bourgeoisie. An example of this is the growth of the Fascist women's organisations not only in Italy but also in France, Great Britain and Germany, in the latter particularly in peasant districts.

Men and women comrades of the Soviet Union will be able to contribute rich and important material based on experience for the clarification of the tasks and problems in question. Before millions of women could participate here in Socialist construction, hundreds of thousands of them had to struggle against tsarist and capitalist oppression. These hundreds of thousands had to be awakened out of a four centuries long passivity and ignorance. They had to be organised and educated. Such a fact stimulates and serves as a guidance, it lends courage and confidence for action. I say again and again: Let us profit by it! This must be the leitmotif of the conference. Let us profit by the Russian Revolution, let us profit by the present struggles.

The work of the Conference must not be limited to giving its participants a number of decisions, theses, instructions, and suggestions which they carry home on paper. It must be a bubbling source of revolutionary passion and strength, from which life-giving streams must flow. We cannot make the toiling female masses ready for the fray unless we ourselves are ready. Exploitation, consolidation and intensification of our work among the millions of toiling women is part and parcel — and very important and indispensable part — of the revolutionary self-education and self-training of the Sections. This process of growth and development must not be delayed.

What has the Communist International and what have particularly the International Women's Secretariat and the Women's Departments of the Sections hitherto done in this sphere, and what remains still to be done?

If we consider the outward success of the work of our Communist Parties, we are compelled to admit: There is a small minority of working women in the Communist camp. Although from time to time, on the occasion of big struggles and movements we have had masses of women behind us, we did not succeed in bringing these sections of the population under our permanent leadership and influence. If we compare the number of women in our camp with the number of women following our opponents, this comparison is highly unfavourable to us.

At the general elections in Great Britain the majority of the women voted for the Conservatives. We can also prove that at the presidential elections in Germany large sections of women voted for the national and clerical parties, and also that the Social Democrats polled more women's votes than we. In Cologne the poll of the centre Party was: to every 100 men's votes 143 women's votes, and the poll of the Communist Party 46 women's votes to every 100 men's votes. In Spandau, a big industrial centre close to Berlin, there were 122 women's votes to every 100 men's votes in the German Nationalist Party, 144 in the Centre (clerical) Party and only 68 women's votes in the Communist Party.

Let us also compare the number of women in the Communist Parties with their number in the Social Democratic parties. In Great Britain the Women's Sections of the Labour Party have 200,000 individually affiliated women members, the Communist Party only 600. In Austria the Social Democratic Party has 170,000 women members, the Communists only 700. In Germany 154,000 women are organised in Social Democratic ranks, and only 20,000 in Communist ranks. In Belgium the Social Democratic Party has 89,000 women members, and the Communist Party, may be, 100 or 200.

Were our Parties and their apparatuses such as to enable us to rally the women masses to us? The Parties have certainly made considerable progress since the V. World Congress. They have come to the conclusion that one cannot get hold of large sections of women without a special apparatus and special methods. With the exception of Belgium, all the important European Parties have a special Party apparatus for work among women in the form of Women's Departments, Women's committees, etc. In the North and South American Parties, we are making the first steps towards this. Important sections, such as those of Great Britain, France and Italy which two years ago had only a central apparatus, have since then established women's departments in many important districts. Moreover, the quality of the apparatus has improved. Up to the V. World Congress we still suffered from strong Social Democratic traditions in regard to women's dissociation from the political and organisational life of the Party. In many countries we have successfully liquidated these tendencies. Very remarkable is the progress made in this direction by our Czecho-Slovakian brother section which took in hand reorganisation very energetically after the Party Congress held last Autumn.

But throughout the working class and even in our own ranks there are still strong relics of petty-bourgeois ideology in regard to women's role in politics. This ideology is less strong in Germany and Great Britain which have a strong industrial proletariat and a well developed labour movement; it is stronger in France and Italy where industrialisation and hence women's role as wage earners set in much later, where strong religious traditions hold women in their grip. This is particularly felt in the East where women are still completely dissociated from public life.

What then is the effect of this attitude on practical work? On the one hand our parties are passive in regard to the capture of women masses, and in some cases they even practise sabotage. We have, for instance, to fight hard for a simple thing such as a women's page in the organ of our Party. The usual excuse is that the newspaper has not enough space. But in reality it means that the editorial boards have not yet realised that work among women is an important component part of the work carried on for the capture of the proletariat as a whole. It is not often that men Party comrades take a serious interest in work among women. Only from Switzerland and Norway we get information that men comrades are doing active, practical work in the women's departments. As a rule, this work is left entirely to women. Because of this women's work is somewhat dissociated from the work of the Party as a whole, and it happens that feminist tendencies creep in, when important tasks of the Party among women have to be forced through against the wish of the Party Executives.

An opposite and not less dangerous theory has made its appearance in the form of retrogression to the old Social Democratic tendencies of dissociating work among women from general Party work. It was very prominent in Germany, less prominent in Czecho-Slovakia and a little of this tendency is also noticeable in the last Swedish report.

In Germany prior to the Frankfurt Party Congress, the Women's Department was not closely linked up with the life

of the Party as a whole. It therefore took upon itself to issue the slogan that among women work should be more closely connected with the general Party work, that it must be given a stronger political character. This slogan was wrongly interpreted by big circles of the Party: as if all special political or organisational measures for the capture of women masses are superfluous, nay, even harmful, because they encourage feminist and Social Democratic tendencies. The result was that existing women's commissions in the Party were liquidated on a large scale without being replaced by anything else. It was only after the E. C. C. I. letter in connection with the revival of the slogan "To the masses" that a beginning was made to reconstruct systematically the Party apparatus for work among women.

In **Czecho-Slovakia** a number of leading women comrades advocated, after the V. World Congress, in the National Women's Agitation Commission in Prague the dissolution of all women's commissions. In the meantime these tendencies have been practically liquidated.

The **Swedish** report shows progress, in as far as women's clubs, a separate organisation of women Party members, no longer exist.

However, to us the Party apparatus is only a means to an end — to get the mass of women interested in the struggle of the working class and to mobilise them for it. To what extent have the Parties succeeded in this? There is no doubt whatever that also in this respect we have made progress in many countries during the past period.

In the campaign for the confiscation without compensation of the estates of the ex-ruling houses, we were able in **Germany** to rally around the communist slogans not only big sections of the working class but also of the petty-bourgeoisie. For the first time, in some places women took an even more active part in the voting than men. For instance in **Gera**, a centre of the textile industry in **Thüringia**, 14,636 women recorded their vote on the plebiscite lists against 13,606 men.

In **France** Communist influence among women was weak up to quite recently. The main campaign there was that against the Moroccan war. Successful efforts were made to induce a considerable percentage of working women, working men's wives and peasant women to participate in the big Workers' and Peasants' Congresses against the war in Morocco. This is a remarkable success considering the mentality of French women, who, as a rule, take little interest in politics and are badly organised even as far as the Social Democratic Party is concerned. Then there was also the Working Women's Conference in Paris which was attended by 556 delegates including 345 industrial women workers, 301 of them non-Party. At the municipal elections the Communists launched at the right moment the slogan of women's franchise. They put up women as candidates of the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc and at the same time called upon women to exercise their electoral rights.

In **Great Britain** we have had the best organised work in mass organisations. This is noticeable even now in the coal strike. Already a long time ago the Party was at its post. Through their activity in the Women's Sections of the Labour Party, in the Trade Union Minority Movement and in Women's Co-operative Guilds, our women comrades have been able to arouse the interest of large sections of working women for this strike. We know from the as yet scanty information that already prior to the strike Women Delegate Meetings were organised attended by representatives of the various proletarian organisations. These meetings dealt with practical tasks connected with the struggle, such as children's care, looking after the welfare of the strikers etc. We are convinced that through this action our British brother Party has taken a firm footing among the masses.

In **Czecho-Slovakia**, the biggest movement since the V. World Congress was the campaign against high prices in the beginning of 1925. At that time masses of women, filled the streets and markets, they were in despair about the prohibitive prices and were trying to find a way out. The Party carried on a big campaign, but not systematically enough. In **Prague**, **Brünn**, **Reichenberg** and **Slovakia**, etc., a few active women comrades put themselves at the head of the movement and led the women masses in the struggle against high prices. I am sure that we would have derived even more benefit from

this movement, if the Party crisis had not paralysed to a considerable extent the activity of the women's Departments. The National Women's Agitation Commission in Prague was very much under the influence of the **Bubnik** opposition, — its chairman, **Grimmichova**, left the Party soon after — and taken up with the struggle within the Party, it did not pay sufficient attention to the important work of leading the masses in their action.

In **Italy** our women comrades were always among the masses shoulder to shoulder with the men comrades. If this is not very noticeable we must put it down to the difficult illegal conditions of the Party. For instance, in spite of illegality and Fascist terror, the Party held during the Women's Day campaign, working women's meetings at factory gates in a series of towns, and distributed an enormous number of leaflets among working women.

Just a few words about **Poland**, which together with Great Britain, is the centre of interest. Throughout the whole period which preceded Pilsudski's coup d'Etat there was terrible unemployment in Poland. In some districts where women labour predominates, as for instance in the textile centre **Lodz**, the majority of the unemployed women receive no unemployment dole because, according to the recent Polish legislation, only one member of each family is entitled to relief. Women were to the fore in the actions of the unemployed. In textile districts the unemployed working women themselves and in other places the wives of the unemployed organised monster demonstrations, demanding doles, release of political prisoners and protesting against the terrorist measures of the police during strikes and demonstrations. Again and again women came into collision with the police.

I will deal now with the weak points of our work. Our greatest defect was: failure to make full use of favourable political situations. A characteristic example of this is the **Hindenburg election in Germany**. The campaign for the presidential elections coincided with the International Women's Day. The Women's Department of the C. P. G. had elaborated an excellent plan for the conduct of this Women's Day Campaign. But the entire campaign was a failure because the Party held the view that women's campaigns must take a back seat when high politics comes along. The Party lacked the political acumen to realise that these elections, which were an encounter between the nationalist gang on the one side and the working class on the other, were precisely the best opportunity of the German Nationalists over the working women. Thus the German Nationalists decidedly owe their success to women's votes, and the Communist Party suffered a crushing defeat which showed clearly what serious mistakes had been made. Such experiences should be a lesson to the Parties for the future; they must learn to recognise in good time what their tasks are, in order to be able to do justice to them.

In regard to methods by which we can get at the women masses, we have gained considerable practical experience. That our Parties have learned something is shown for instance by the fact that women were drawn into the Workers' and Peasants' Congresses in **France** and into the Unity Committees for the Expropriation of the ex-ruling Houses in **Germany**. Satisfactory methods and good leadership in this work are noticeable in **Great Britain** within the Trade Union Minority Movement. In the centre and also in some district Women's Departments were formed in the Executive Committees as organs for the activation of women within the framework of the movement as a whole. Not only representatives of working women organised in trade unions, but also representatives of the Co-operative Women's Guilds and of other proletarian organisations in which women are organised as for instance the Railwaymen's Women's Guild, are affiliated to these organs. Owing to this amalgamation of different organisations it has been possible to co-ordinate, during many actions, the struggles of various sections of women.

A very interesting method of work in this sphere which must receive our special attention in the near future, was the method of **Women Delegate Meetings**. These meetings were given a trial during the last two years in **Germany**, **Great Britain** and **Finland**. As far as **Germany** is concerned there was only one Women's Delegate Meeting in **Gera (Thüringia)** where the Party had a strong organisation and considerable political influence. In October 1924 women workers

from 23 enterprises were elected to the Delegate Meeting in Gera. This was, to all intents and purpose, a united front of working women who drew up a programme of wage questions, protection of women labour etc. But the movement died down because support in the enterprises and active leadership for the continuation of the campaign were lacking.

In Finland, several women delegates meetings were held in Helsingfors. Not all the delegates had been elected in enterprises. They were given definite practical tasks, such as making women take an interest in Parliamentary elections, but one cannot say that these meetings have led to regular continuous work.

In Great Britain the first Women Delegate Meeting was held last summer shortly before the threatening lockout of the miners. More meetings were held in textile districts at the time of the strike, which shows that they were an outcome of the struggle. These Women Delegate Meetings, of which 14 were held up to last September, have been systematised to a certain extent. On March 25, that is to say shortly before the outbreak of the general strike in Great Britain, took place the first Women Delegate Meeting which really represented the masses. In Mansfield over 300 delegates from 55 organisations were present. They discussed preparations for the expected offensive of the coal magnates against the miners. These Delegate Meetings dealt with every newly arisen situation in the struggle, gave proof of their solidarity with the working class, supported the action for the Soviet Union and did propaganda for it. In some places reporters from the British Women Trade Union Delegation spoke at these meetings and told the wholly backward women the truth about Russia, helping thereby to strengthen the solidarity and sympathy of the British workers with Soviet Union.

But we are compelled to say that various other attempts to establish a practical united front failed signally.

The speaker gave three examples in connection with the International Women's Day in Switzerland and Czecho-Slovakia on the one hand, and Great Britain on the other hand, showing that a united front "from above" can only be successful if it be preceded by thorough preliminary work for the mobilisation of the masses from below.

In Great Britain we had an interesting example of a political united front at the National Women's Conference of the Labour Party in May 1925. This conference, which represented 200,000 women was attended by 862 delegates with only 10 women Communists among them. These delegates were elected in their local groups of the Women's Sections of the Labour Party, although, formally, Communists are expelled from the Labour Party. These 10 women Communists managed to get a number of our proposals placed on the agenda and also to have a very important proposal adopted unanimously, which created enormous enthusiasm. This proposal was: Women's Sections should do their utmost to get Russian women comrades invited to the next International Women's Conference, to have a united front established with the working women of the Soviet Union and the East regardless of the colour of their skin. This example shows that purposeful fraction work and adequate political preparation can lead to great results.

When we consider the weak points of our work, we can come always to the conclusion that an inadequate ideological attitude is at the bottom of them. Frequently the Parties do not go the right way about in their efforts to draw women into the struggle of the working class, they do not seem to be able to hit on the right questions to arouse women's interest. For instance, the report of the C. P. of Sweden for our Conference contains the following answer to the question "Are special women's questions dealt with at the courses of the Party?":

"No, no special women's questions are dealt with at the courses. On the contrary, solidarity of all comrades with the Party and the class is emphasised."

Similar pseudo-radical tendencies made their appearance also in Czecho-Slovakia at the Parliamentary elections last autumn. In the election address of the Party there was not a single specific slogan for the mobilisation of the women masses. For fear of feminism such a slogan was rejected. Those

who approach these questions in this manner show that they have not understood the meaning of the slogan: "To the masses?".

In contra-distinction to such an abstract attitude it is rather interesting to study the practical methods adopted by our opponents. I will give a Norwegian illustration of this. Preparately to the Parliamentary elections in 1924, the bourgeois Liberal Women's Leagues established, together with the Social Democrats, a women's united front for the defence of their interests. This united front brought forward a programme appealing directly to women's interests and particularly to the interests of housewives whose ideology is notoriously petty-bourgeois: questions of protection for motherhood and childhood and particularly household questions, whereas the demands of industrial women workers and women wage earners in general were ignored. With this election programme the women's united front joined in the fray and captured quite a number of women.

What should our Communist Parties do in such a case? It is as clear as daylight that it would be utterly erroneous to ignore such a united front of bourgeois women. On the whole, our Communist Parties pay far too little attention to what Social Democrats, Clericals, Nationalists, etc., are doing. The answers to questionnaires sent out in connection with our Conference are a convincing proof that there is a gap in our work. Our Women's Departments do not know what organisations exist, what sections of women they embrace and by what methods they work. And yet we must know this, if we are to remove the women who belong to us, from the influence of our opponents. For instance, what was the attitude taken up by the Communist Parties to the Women's Day slogans of the Social Democrats or of the Marseilles International Women's Conference? They hardly took notice of them at all. And yet programmes were elaborated there which contain slogans with which we can to a certain extent solidarise. By identifying ourselves with such demands we could show to the workers to what extent Social Democrats betray in practice their own programmes, etc.

I would like to mention one more thing in connection with so-called specific women's questions. When Communist Parties carry on campaigns for political slogans which women do not understand, it is the duty of our Women's Departments to find the link, by which we can get hold of the whole chain. This can be done by explaining in how far these general questions are connected also with seemingly "specific" women's interests.

There is a consensus of opinion among us that there are no specific women's demands in the sense that an antagonism exist between the men and women of the working class. We know that every struggle carried on by working women for their interests is part and parcel of the class struggle, the aim of which is the liberation of the working class. We must identify the small immediate interests of the women with the big ultimate aim. On the other hand we must also be able to explain the political importance to the working class as a whole of the so-called specific women's demands, in order to arouse the interest of the working class in the struggle for these demands.

Let us take for instance the slogan "equal pay for equal work". As long as working men do not understand that because of the difference of pay between men and women the men are thrown into the street whenever there is an economic crisis, women taking their place, that is to say, that women's low wages are harmful to men, they will be indifferent to the wage struggles of women workers.

Or let us take the demand for protection of childhood in France. The question of the depopulation of France was already discussed prior to the world war. The falling birth-rate is alarming the entire bourgeoisie. Bourgeois newspapers publish twice a week leading articles on this subject and bewail the fact that although France was victorious in the war it will perish because of depopulation. A gigantic propaganda is carried on for an increase of the working population. It was a brilliant idea on the part of the Communist Party to take advantage of this and to introduce in the Chamber a comprehensive mother and child protection Bill, the only effective means to counter-act the disinclination of the working and peasant women to bring children into the world.

The absence of ideological clarity within our Parties implies sometimes great risks. Some comrades interpret the slogan "To

the masses" as if one should limit oneself to every-day questions. The international women's press has one thing in common; it deals very seldom with the fundamental questions and ultimate aims of Communism. They get lost sight of in the effort to link up, as concretely and practically as possible, with women's immediate interests. This cannot be tolerated.

To follow up these general arguments, I would like to deal with a few special points which are the be all and end all and at the same time the most sore point of our work: **capture of women workers in factories and trade unions.** The International Conference of Women Communists held at the time of the V. World Congress issued the slogan that in the present period we must concentrate our attention on capturing the most important sections of the female proletariat that is to say, the women workers in factories and trade unions. Our Parties have begun to reorganise themselves on a factory nucleus basis. But this reorganisation has not yet shown itself sufficiently in our work among women. What is the cause of this? We have to contend with great objective difficulties.

Above all: The majority of the women members of our Parties are housewives. Unfortunately Czecho-Slovakia is the only country where definite statistics about our membership exist. One-third of its 25,000 women members are wage-earners, two-thirds being housewives. This state of affairs makes it all the more necessary for us to endeavour to make factory nuclei interested in the capture of women workers, and to mobilise them for this work. But work in this direction has been very inadequate. There are no women's organisers either in trade union factions or in the factory nuclei to judge by the reports we received from most sections. In Germany we have certainly a considerable number of districts — Saxony, Thuringia and Berlin — which carry on successful work in the enterprises. On the other hand in such an important highly industrialised district as Rheinland-Westphalia where woman labour prevails in the textile and metal industries nothing has as yet been done for the capture of women workers. And what about trade union work? Our question in regard to Trade Union Women's Commissions is answered by the German report quite frankly as follows: "There are Women's Commissions almost in all Trade Unions, but we have no influence anywhere".

The very interesting report of the Swedish Party gives us the following information: "Work in trade unions and factories is the task of the Party as a whole. There are no women organisers". This suggests not only failure to do practical organisational work, but even an altogether wrong attitude to this question. The Party as a whole, what does this mean? Surely women members and women's departments are part and parcel of the Party. They should take the initiative in the matter of appointing women's organisers in factories employing large numbers of women. We cannot indulge in the luxury of sitting still and doing nothing until the reorganisation of the Party on a factory nucleus basis has been accomplished. We cannot tolerate such a passive tendency. We must make a definite beginning with this work, and for this purpose we must first of all concentrate our attention on a few important points wherever premises are favourable.

There are some glaring symptoms of the small success of our work in trade unions and factories. The Women's Day was observed in 16 western countries, and mass meetings were held. But we did not penetrate into the factories and trade unions. If we turn our attention to the Workers' Delegations to Russia we notice, for example, that there was not a single working woman in the German Workers' Delegation. There is also the fact that women, and particularly women employed in industry, constitute only an infinitesimal percentage of the membership of our Communist Parties. If we had done effective work in factories and trade unions, we should have been able to produce better results in the course of the last two years. Hardly any letter was sent out by the International Women's Secretariat, without drawing attention to work in factories and trade unions as our most important task. In spite of this we have achieved so little we must increase our efforts tenfold in order to make up for lost opportunities. We have hardly made any progress in trade unions except in Great Britain where the General Trades Union Council has begun to organise a special recruiting campaign among working women, which was effectively utilised by the C.P. and the Minority Movement.

Generally speaking, we have now fully realised that our work must not be limited to the narrow circle of the Party, but

that our main task is the capture of the masses outside the Party. In this respect we have had a certain amount of success in the big mass organisations particularly in the I.C.W.P.A. and in the I.W.R. The I.C.W.P.A. particularly was a favourable ground for the mobilisation of working women. On the other hand, except in Great Britain, we have not taken a firm footing in the co-operatives. This sphere of work is of particular importance to us in connection with our struggle against high prices, inflation, taxes, protective tariffs, a struggle which is the order of the day in many countries.

We have had a few interesting experiences in regard to new methods for the capture of wider circles outside the Party. The resolution of the Org. Bureau (May 1925) contained the instruction to bring certain circles of sympathisers in contact with the Party in order to carry the slogans of the Party into the masses. Such groups and circles exist in a number of countries: in Italy groups of sympathisers in enterprises, street nuclei and even in some villages; in France the "Amies de l'Ouvriere" and the "Committees of Widows and Mothers for Struggle against the Morocco war"; a broader form of organisation — a new and rather disputed form: the non-Party women sympathisers' organisations. In this connection characteristic examples are the Housewives Leagues in Norway and the Red Women's and Girls' League in Germany. We know that these organisations have helped to strengthen the Party. For instance, in France many members of these groups have joined the Party. The same applies to Norway and Germany.

As a result of our experiences in the period of work which lies behind us, we must now bring forward the most pressing and important tasks of the near future. On the whole, we can say that the policy laid down by the III. International Conference of Women Communists and amplified in the May resolution of the Org. Bureau was correct and commensurate with the requirements of our work. However, it was not applied by the sections with the required energy and purposefulness, and we must make up now for lost time and opportunities. Our foremost task is the inclusion of working women into the united front of the proletariat for struggle against capitalism, and the question confronting us is: by what forms and methods can we do justice to this task. From this viewpoint we want to bring forward three main tasks on which our sections should concentrate in the immediate future and which are to be the policy underlying our future work.

First of all we must make the Party and the working class realise that work among women is not only the business of women comrades but an important component part of the work of the Communist Parties, one of the tasks of the entire working class. As long as we cannot make this idea prevail, we will not be able to solve the tasks which are confronting us.

The second central task consists in concentrating our attention on the capture of women in factories and trade unions. The third task is: Preparation and organisation of Women Delegate Meetings as a specific method for the establishment of contact with the mass of working women for the purpose of drawing them into the class struggle.

The first task implies that work among women be linked up with the work of the Party as a whole. The Parties must be able to find ways and means for approaching women in connection with all their political campaigns. What does this mean? We must of course popularise all the general political demands of the proletariat among large sections of working women. Special so-called women's questions are to help us to arouse women's interest in our other slogans which go much further.

The general slogans, which are binding for all our Sections, are drawn up by the Communist International. Among them the slogan "National and International Trade Union Unity" is of particular importance because it means the united front of the working class in regard to a whole series of everyday demands. But we will not be able to make this slogan popular among working women unless we make them understand how much depends on it in their own struggle against unemployment, for higher wages, protection of women's labour, etc. The other group of slogans has reference to struggle against Fascism, war and white terror, all of them questions of international importance. Then there is the question of solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the East.

Questions which are today of direct interest to large sections of women should be brought forward in connection with these main slogans. It will be the business of every individual Section to draw up a concrete programme of action. In connection with this, I should like to touch upon a few very specific points, as for instance the **housing problem**, and the question of **unemployment** which are of special interest to women. In **Germany** the Government has decided to grade the unemployment dole; the lower the wage, the smaller the unemployment dole. This means that women workers who are already living on the border of starvation because of their low wages, will be exposed to even greater misery because of the reduced unemployed dole. Then there is the question of **double existence** which plays an important role in all countries where reduction of civil servant and teaching staffs is the order of the day, as for instance, in **Germany, Great Britain, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Scandinavia**, etc. In these countries, women are the first to be dismissed.

Our Parties should be able to turn their attention to the burning questions in the individual countries. In all these campaigns we should not limit ourselves to mere agitation, but must endeavour to achieve palpable organisational results.

The influence we gain must be consolidated. One of the most important results of every campaign should consist in capturing for the Party the more advanced of the working women, particularly from the ranks of women factory workers.

In regard to the **capture of women working in factories and belonging to trade unions** I should like to draw attention to something which, on the strength of the experiences of the **French Party**, should be taken into consideration. The **C. G. T. U.** has initiated systematic activity among women workers. Up till now no great results have been achieved. There were cases when it was possible to secure sympathy for the Party and the trade union during the powerful and frequently spontaneous strike movements of working men and women. But if in localities where such success has been achieved, the latter is not followed up by systematic trade union work, if we neglect the work which was initiated and turn our attention to other spheres of activity, we will not be able to achieve permanent results, but will, on the contrary, exhaust our strength by **Sisyphus labour** which always begins anew and is never accomplished.

We should rather organise our work in a manner that wherever a certain amount of success has been achieved, a cadre of adequate forces be trained capable of making these successes secure, and developing them still further. In **Douarnenez** where in January, 1925, we had 1800 women workers organised in trade unions, this number has dwindled to 600. This fact shows that in regard to factory and trade union work one must proceed systematically, that is to say, one must concentrate one's forces in the most important localities and meetings.

In conclusion, I should like to deal with **Women Delegate Meetings**. As this question is one the agenda as a special item, I will confine myself to saying that a foundation has been laid by us in factories on which the Parties can develop a systematic, ideological and organisational campaign for the creation of delegate meetings, utilising for this all, and parti-

cularly Russian, experiences. These first successes and failures in the individual Western countries will help us to **develop and improve our future work in this sphere**.

Just one more remark in regard to the last item on our agenda, a question which hitherto had to take a back seat and has been thoroughly neglected: **Party education**.

Many defects in our work were due to lack of ideological clarity in the Party as a whole and to inadequate theoretical-political education among our men and women comrades, which made it impossible for them to do justice to their tasks.

In view of this state of affairs we must energetically take in hand the business of creating a staff of Party workers for activity among women, well grounded in theoretical and practical work. Then we should also endeavour to make the Party as a whole adopt a clearly defined attitude to work among women by energetic political educational work within the Party. This is the only guarantee that the strength of women comrades will not be exhausted in a useless struggle against deliberate apathy and lack of understanding on the part of the Party as a whole. In practice this means that questions concerning women's role in political life and methods of work among them be included into the programme of general Party-education work, and that these questions should be explained not only from a purely theoretical but also from a practical viewpoint with the help of examples and experiences from our everyday work.

Part of this education is, of course, **utilisation of the experiences in all the Eastern and Western countries, first and foremost, of the experiences of our Russian brother section**. In this respect we, the Women's Department of the **E. C. C. I.**, must confess a sin of omission. We have certainly supported energetically the individual Parties in their work in accordance with the resolution of the **Orgbureau** and the decisions of the **Third International Conference of Communist Women**. But this support was inadequate. We were compelled to limit ourselves to thoroughly discussing with the sections their individual affairs, and to giving them hints re the development of their work. But we have not yet been able to systematically utilise on an international scale the experiences of the individual countries.

One of our most important tasks in the near future will be: to communicate to the Sections systematically and on an international scale through the press and through international informative reports, the results of the work of our Parties, i. e. the political situation, the tasks as well as the practical methods of work, successes and non-successes, errors, new phenomena, existing problems, etc. Still closer collaboration between the Sections and us is possible and essential. But it cannot materialise if the Sections do not keep us regularly and fully informed about their work. We need the collaboration of the Sections in order to get a clear insight into their work, and we will be able to give better support to the Sections through the creation of an international bulletin.

Sections should express themselves on our report in order that we should know that the lines on which have worked and which are laid down in our theses and resolutions are commensurate with the requirements of work among women and in order that this expression of opinion might serve us as **guidance** in our further work (Applause).

Special Session.

Sunday morning, May 30th 1926.

The Work of the C. P. S. U. among the Working Women of the Soviet Union.

Reporter Comrade AKTIUKHINA:

I have been instructed to report on our Work among the Working Women of the Soviet Union.

We, together with the whole Party, take into consideration the conditions in which we live and the difficulties confronting us when we judge the achievements and defects of our work.

The first and foremost question is that of women labour in industry. During the last two years there has been a definite tendency to keep women workers in the factories, whereas a few years ago there was a movement against woman labour in industry. We brought up this question for discussion in our Party and in trade unions, with the result that woman labour is now firmly established in a number of branches of industry, thanks to our joint efforts. We also brought to the notice of the Party the necessity of extending Party influence to scattered groups of working women. Hitherto our work was mainly limited to working and peasant women. Lately our attention was drawn to the necessity of capturing for the Party also other sections of the female population — workmen's wives, domestic servants, teachers, office workers, etc.

I would now to say something about our successes in regard to women's position in industry. In 1922-23 the number of women employed in industry decreased in comparison with the pre-war period. In 1912 30.4% of labour employed in industry was woman labour, in 1916, i. e. during the war, woman labour constituted 38.7%. The percentage of woman labour in industry on January 1st 1926 was 28.4%. Thus in comparison with 1912, the difference is not very great and shows a downward tendency. If we turn our attention to the various branches of industry, we notice even an increase of woman labour in comparison with the pre-war period. In 1912 woman labour in the metal industry constituted 4.8%, whereas in 1926 it constitutes 9.8%, i. e. double that of the pre-war period. The textile industry is a particularly characteristic example: In 1912 woman labour constituted 54% of the total labour power, today it constitutes 57.8% which means that the pre-war level has been exceeded.

But the more important fact is, that not only the percentage of woman labour has increased in a number of branches of industry, but also the total number of women employed there. Formerly the number of women employed was 606,000 whereas today it is nearly 676,000. However, the total number of men employed in industry has risen in the course of the last few years, from 5,000,000 to 7,000,000, so that the increase of woman labour power is not keeping pace with the general increase of the number of workers. Absolute figures have certainly increased, but we are still 2% short.

Above all it should be pointed out that among many of our economists, the tendency still prevails to look upon woman labour as of smaller value and as less remunerative. If one takes into consideration that protection of woman labour, of motherhood and childhood, is on a very high level with us in the Soviet Union, one cannot help asking oneself if, and in how far, this protection of woman labour is a burden on the industry, is bringing it a loss. This question was not raised until quite recently and there is as yet no definite material available to show to what extent the cost of production is increased through our legislation for the protection of motherhood and childhood. But on the strength of the preliminary results of this investigation, one can assume that in spite of the special legislative protection of woman labour, the

latter is not more expensive than man labour. Thus in this sphere, we have to contend with prejudices which must be overcome.

Another very important point in connection with drawing women into industry is the low qualification of woman labour power. In the present development of our industry, first consideration is given to the unemployed registered in the labour exchanges. But a study of the lists of unemployed women shows us that we have hardly any qualified labour forces among women. Even in Moscow, the main industrial centre, qualified women working can be literally counted on the fingers of one's hands. It goes without saying that the number of qualified men workers is much higher. This is the chief explanation for the inclination to draw men into industry in preference to women.

Even a casual investigation of the ranks of women workers already drawn into production shows that the low qualification of woman labour is a great determining factor. However, a certain improvement in the qualification of woman labour has been noticeable during the last two years. It is certainly very small: According to the statistics of the People's Labour Commissariat the improvement amounts to 2.5% in regard to skilled labour and 1.5% in regard to semi-skilled. Thus there is a definite upward tendency, but the progress is very slow. This is a great impediment in our work against which we will have to struggle a good many years. We must endeavour to raise the qualification of the women already employed in industry, in order to deprive our economists of the argument that women are not skilled enough to be given much consideration in connection with the extension of our industry.

Skilled women workers constitute only 16% of labour power employed in industry, and semi-skilled 36%, which means that there is over 40% of unskilled labour power. Because of this proportion we have set ourselves definite tasks in connection with raising the qualification of woman labour. Our work is manifold. We have first of all factory apprenticeship schools where the number of women pupils increases from year to year: in January 1925 their number was 52,000 or 17.7%; in 1926 the percentage of women pupils increased considerably; in that year twice as many girls were admitted as in the preceding year. In the trade schools too the number of women pupils has increased. They came from young working women's ranks and most of them were quite young girls. Apart from this, definite work is carried on to raise the qualification of adult workers. During the last two years we have begun to give less qualified but better gifted labour forces higher quality work, placing assistant women workers in charge of looms. Isolated attempts have also been made to introduce group training for women workers, etc. These are only our first steps in this direction, and we draw the attention of our men comrades to this work.

Just a few more words on women's unemployment. It is considerable, and this is one of the greatest obstacles to our work among women. Moreover unemployment among women does not show any signs of diminishing, it remains stationary and in some places it tends to increase. Of course unemployment here is of a different character than in West Europe where working women are dismissed wholesale. There are no mass dismissals of women workers here. The explanation for increased unemployment among women is, that we have a great influx of unskilled labour power from the rural districts.

I will deal now with the **general conditions of working and peasant women**. In the course of the last few years it has been possible to create favourable premises for the introduction of women workers into the process of production. In connection with this I draw attention to a considerable increase in the number of factory creches and similar institutions. We have at present 778 factory creches, 521 children's consultation centres, 276 consultation centres for pregnant women and 103 mother and child homes.

The construction of dwellings is one of the most important questions among the general tasks connected with economic development. Co-operative building societies are increasing: in Moscow, Tula, in the Donetz Basin, in Ivanovo Voznesensk and in a number of other towns workers' dwellings, and whole workers' colonies are being constructed. The Women's Department sees to it, that in connection with these building operations, the requirements of working women are considered, i. e. that public laundries, dining halls, central kitchens, creches, etc., are also put up. In regard to this our Women's Department insists on efforts being made to make women's lives easier, to free them from the drudgery of house-work.

I must draw your attention to **toiling women's active participation in the co-operative movement**. 1,085,000 peasant women are organised in co-operatives, whereas the number of women workers co-operators is 1,558,000. Women workers constitute 25% of the co-operative membership, peasant women 16%. Peasant women's and women workers participation in leading co-operative organs is very satisfactory: They participate in managing committees, auditing commissions, etc.; women's membership of co-operatives is not only important in itself, — through their active participation it will be possible to raise the standards of life of working and peasant women and to bring more sections of the population into the co-operation.

I will deal now with **Trade Unions**. In regard to the two main features of our activity — raising women workers qualification and their standard of life (child care, feeding, housing) the best part of the work devolves on the trade unions. In this respect the trade unions give us as much support as they themselves receive from the Party. As far as recruiting of active trade unionists from working women's ranks is concerned, trade union statistics show that there are almost as many women as men in the unions; the number of unorganised women workers constitutes only 4.5%.

An considerable number of women workers take an active part in trade union work in Trade Councils, trade union committees and factory councils. A considerable percentage of women workers take an active part in the work of labour protection, education and production commissions. A very large number of women workers are active as workshop delegates. Women workers constitute 28% of the total number of workers in industry, women delegates 21% of the total number of delegates, so that in regard to participation in minor trade union work women workers keep pace with men workers. Matters are less satisfactory in regard to the higher trade union organs. In the Central Trade Union Council women constitute 13% and in Trade Union Committees 15% of the membership; on the other hand there are fewer women workers in the managing committees of the gubernia sections.

I am coming now to the question: **Party and women workers**: In regard to this we have come to the conclusion that women workers are not a uniform body to whom one and the same methods of work can be applied. As there are distinctly three different sections of women, the Party should have different methods of work for each of them. There is first of all a section of active women workers already at work in trade unions, Soviet co-operatives, even in their executives, auditing commissions, etc. This cadre of active women workers is growing and is helping the Party to permeate the mass of women workers with Communist ideology. This cadre of active women workers collaborates not only with our Party, but also with organisations with which it is connected. The next section is that on which we concentrate our work at present, namely, women delegates attending elementary political education circles, etc.

The third section comprises backward women workers who have still to be captured and organised by us. It is of the utmost importance to approach this section correctly because just at

present many women are drawn into industry who come from the rural districts and do not know anything about factories and factory life. They too must be brought under the influence of the Party.

A few words about **Delegate Meetings**. There are at present 78,500 women delegates, whereas in 1925 there were only 60,000, which means an addition of over 18,000 this year. Election statistics of 1925 showed that through delegate elections a considerable number of working women were captured by us. But in spite of this we think that we captured only about one-half of the total number of the working women, although the election campaign was carried on energetically with the support of the Party and the trade unions. We are endeavouring to raise the political education level of a certain section of women delegates, but our main efforts are in the direction of training them for trade union and other public work. Through the delegates we get in contact with the mass of working women. Delegate meetings work is the centre of our activity.

If we sum up our activity among working and peasant women we can say that our cadre of active workers, the upper stratum of working women belonging to the Party, has greatly developed with the help of the delegate meetings. We can safely say that we should not have made such progress in our work if we had not applied the method of working women's delegate meetings. Therefore our delegate meetings are at present the centre of our activity among the working and peasant women of the Soviet Union and of a whole series of our Eastern regions. This point requires maximum attention on the part of the Party. Delegate meetings are the best school of Communism, the best method for the education of working women for public activity.

I will deal now with delegates' work. With the help of our delegate we keep in contact with ten working women, as one delegate is elected to every ten working women. She conveys to her electors the knowledge which she has acquired at the delegate meeting, particularly in regard to practical work. We have organised a series of sections for practical work with delegates: the trade union section, the co-operative section, the section of institutions for raising the standard of life of working women. In Moscow we have an industrial section where working women acquire the rudiments of factory management. Just at present we are engaged in summing up and propagating the experiences of this work, in order to be able to form cadres of working women also for economic work.

Another achievement is the organisation of a juridical section of the Moscow delegate meetings. A considerable number of working and peasant women are acting as jurors. To be able to do justice to this responsible work, women should have a knowledge of court procedure, the construction of the court, etc. In our juridical section women delegates acquire practical knowledge of court procedure. In connection with this I would like to point out that a great many questions which come up for discussion in the people's courts are closely connected with working and peasant women's interests. That is why we want women versed in law as judges and jurors, and the juridical section is to help us in this. The first trial is made in Moscow, and we will let the other republics have the benefit of the experience gained here.

Education circles claim also special attention. In this respect Leningrad keeps ahead of other towns. These circles have done good work with respect to getting hold of sections of active working women who do not participate in delegate meetings. There are about 1,000 such circles throughout the union. Full statistics will not be compiled till the autumn. 36,000 working women participate in these 1,000 circles. What are the results of this work? The most active elements who have gone through political courses, are drawn into public work, are put up as candidates at Soviet elections. The best elements have joined the Party and work in Soviet organs. This form of work enables us to capture large sections of working women.

The third section is the remaining mass of working women. The educational level of these women is very low: The number of illiterates is considerable, even among delegates, so that our first and foremost task is to teach these women to read and write. The Y. C. L. is helping us with this work, and the more advanced working women too organise reading and writing courses. But in spite of all this we are unable to cope with all the illiterates. With the help of trade union and Party organi-

sations slow but sure progress is made with this work. The main and the most difficult task to which the Party and the trade unions should pay maximum attention is: to draw the mass of backward working women into the reading and writing courses, into our organisations and above all into the delegate meetings, transferring them from there to other organisations after careful training.

A few words about **club work**. Club membership statistics show that the percentage of **women members** corresponds with the general number of working women employed in industry. However, only the younger women workers join clubs. Our clubs are still not paying enough attention to women workers burdened with young children and family cares; they do not do much to meet their requirements, be it even through the organisation of a club nursery, a women's corner, social evening for proletarian women, etc.

I will deal more fully with our **press**, as this constitutes one of our main achievements during last year's work. We have four central periodicals for women: 1. "**The Woman Communist**", leading organ for functionaries working among peasant and working women. This periodical is published by the C. C. of the Party; its edition is 25,000. 2. "**The Woman Worker**" intended for the mass of women workers, for the active cadres of the two first sections, for the more or less educated women workers (edition 78,000). 3. "**The Peasant Woman**" with an edition of 45,000. 4. "**The Woman Agricultural Labourer**", published by the Agricultural and Forest Labourers' Union, edition 26,000. We have also here in **Moscow** a periodical for the mass of working and peasant women in the Moscow gubernia, the "**Woman Delegate**" with an edition of 45,000, as well as several periodicals in a number of national republics published in Russian and also in the vernacular of the national minorities. The circulation of these periodicals is mostly by subscription: working and peasant women subscribe to these periodicals and pass them along after they have read them.

A large number of women workers and peasant women correspondents are attached to these periodicals. Their total number is about 1600 and in addition, there are 1493 women contributors to the Moscow periodicals. In comparison with the general workers correspondents movement this number is certainly small, but one should take into consideration that the correspondents movement among women is as yet in its initial stage, and that the number of non-Party women is very big. Our periodicals perform definite work among the working and peasant women correspondents; their letters are utilised and published. Our periodicals are mostly composed of such letters and can be therefore considered as mass periodicals.

I must say something about **activity among workers' wives**. In connection with the general development of the activity of all the sections of the working population one can say that our work among these circles of women has also made considerable progress. We draw workers' wives (differentiating between them and housewives in general) into delegate meetings, taking care that maximum influence is secured for working class element, that workers' wives do not give the meetings the imprint of their ideology, but that they should be brought under the influence of the delegate meetings and should profit by them. Taken all together, 30,000 workers' wives participate in delegate meetings, but in relation to the general number of delegates they constitute only 10—18%.

Workers' wives are also drawn into Soviets. Unfortunately I have no general statistics at my disposal, but we know, for instance, that in **Turkestan** and in the **Ukraine** workers' wives constitute 10% of the membership of Soviets. As workers' wives have comparatively much leisure (more than women employed in factories) we are endeavouring to draw them into practical work in various social institutions, first and foremost in co-operatives and in institutions fighting against child vagrancy.

In regard to our **work among peasant women** the organisation of peasant women delegate meetings occupies first place. Just as in the towns, delegate meetings are the centre of our work also in the rural districts. However, it is only during the last two years that this work has been given definite form. The delegates are elected by the peasant women, they keep in close contact with their electors, carry on practical work in

Soviets, co-operatives, mutual aid committees, etc. Here too, the number of delegates has increased. In 1924—25, there were 121,000 peasant women delegates, in 1925—26, 246,800, and at the end of 1926, their number will probably exceed 300,000. This mighty army of peasant women organised in the delegate meetings, this school of Communism, based on a combination of practical training and political education work, is one of the big achievements of our Party.

We have also achieved considerably success in regard to the **standard of life of peasant women**; for instance the number of creches in rural districts has considerably increased and is continuing to increase. In our work among the women of the rural population we do not limit ourselves to delegates, Soviet members, the active of peasant women who work in co-operatives, mutual aid committees, etc., we also work among the masses. In connection with this, village reading rooms play an important role. Special peasant women days are organised, women's literature, the periodical "**The Peasant Woman**", etc., are always available in these reading rooms.

A special branch of our work is **work among the women of the East**. Here in the Soviet East, i. e. in our border regions, — **Kazakstan, the Caucasus, etc.**, — considerable success has been achieved. This work is under the control of the C. C. of our Party. The method of work which is most successful in the East and has given positive results, is the **Club**. In 1925 there were 61 Red Corners with 4000 members and 51 Clubs with 15,000 members. At present the number of Women's Clubs, Red Corners, and Women's Departments of Village Clubs is steadily increasing. Apart from club work, delegate meetings adapted to the conditions of life of Eastern women are particularly successful. They sprang up at first in towns, but are gradually spreading to the villages (**Kishlaks and Auls**).

In the East too, good results have been achieved through delegate meetings. In spite of the prejudices of which there are so many in the life of Eastern women, in spite of impossibility for them to move about freely in the streets, and in spite of the general seclusion of women and of the difficulty to get in contact with them, delegate meetings have proved to be a real and expedient method of work. In 1924—24 there were in the East 25,000 women delegates, in 1924—25 very nearly 18,000 who were drawn into Soviet work. At present our main task in this sphere is the training of functionaries.

In conclusion, I should like to say a few words on **women's admission to the Party**. The number of women members is increasing in the Party, and their social composition is improving. In 1925, there were 76,494 women members = 10.3% of the total membership, in 1926 there were 128,817 women members = 12.8%. The social composition of the women members is as follows: 59% of the total number are women workers, which is an improvement on the working class percentage among men members. All this goes to show that our delegate meetings and our activity among women workers have led to definite results. 15.2% are peasant women and women office workers, other categories 25.8%. The conditions of Party membership are the same for us as for the Party as a whole, i. e. our task is to capture for the Party first of all women workers' and peasant women who have already experience in Soviet and other practical work, who have already participated in delegates meetings, etc. Moreover, this increase of women workers and peasant women will reduce the percentage of women office workers in the Party which is considerable.

Special work is done for the **preparatory and continued training of women functionaries** for work among women. Special courses were organised for this purpose. This work is carried on by us jointly with the **Agitprop**.

In conclusion, just a few words about the **apparatus and executive of the Party**. Our apparatus for work among women is gradually improving qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Women workers and peasant women take more and part part in our work. Our task is: to draw more women workers and peasant women into active work, as they know best the conditions of life of working women.

A great change has taken place in our apparatus from the C. C. down to the nucleus. Our entire work is under the control of the Party,, we are an integral part of the Party apparatus.

All our decisions are made in agreement with the Party. Everything is done through the competent Party executive. The Party is better informed than before about the needs and requirements of the masses and exercises more control over our work than ever before. What we have to do now is: to establish this control consistently down to our lowest nuclei —

workshop nuclei of big enterprises and villages nuclei. Control by the Party must be fully established also in regard to our minor work. Our foremost task is the training of new cadres of women Communists for our activity among women workers and peasant women in general, and working women in the East in particular.

Report of Comrade VOLKOVITSKAYA.

(Women's Organiser in a Stocking Factory in Moscow.)

Our factory employs 1300 women. Hardly any men are employed. A considerable number of our women workers come from the villages, and half of them are illiterate. Our work is under the control of the Nucleus Bureau and the Women's Commission. The Women's Organiser is at the same time member of the Nucleus Bureau, as the nucleus thinks that this is beneficial to the work. Our factory has 115 women delegates. Work with them was not very easy as 30 of them cannot read nor write. Some of the delegates showed interest in this work, and in order to help us to draw them into the work, we were given permission to organise a delegate meeting in the factory with the result that we have now 63 active delegates.

In regard to participation in the press I can make the following statement: at first hardly any of the women workers even knew how to read a newspaper. They always began by reading the local news column. But when we began to draw them into the circle and to explain to them the importance of the press, they began to understand gradually what a newspaper or a periodical can give them. In the course of the last two years the general educational level of the women

of this factory has been considerably raised. They read papers regularly. When I began to work in the factory last autumn, there were only 30 to 40 subscribers to the periodical "The Woman Delegate". At present we have about 300 delegates, and they all subscribe to newspapers and periodicals. Altogether 700 to 800 women read newspapers regularly.

We have now begun to organise women's social evenings and circles, also lectures for the women workers, plays and short dramatic sketches, the performers being drawn from the ranks of the women workers themselves. Women workers are asking for instructive lectures about women's complaints, tuberculosis, child education and child care, etc. All these are questions in which they are interested. When excursions are organised, our factory women workers always say: "Let the young people amuse themselves, we want to learn something, and arrangement should be made that during these excursions, everything is fully explained to us." Our club work is gradually developed and extended, and there are already definite achievements to our account.

Report of Comrade ALEXEYVA.

(Chief of the Women's Department in Ivanovo-Voznesensk.)

Ivanovo-Voznesensk is one of the biggest textile centres.

We have 80,000 women textile workers and about 100,000 women workers employed in other branches of industry. Fifty percent of all these workers are peasant women from the adjoining villages who have to walk every day 8 to 10 versts to the factory. After an 8 hours day, they walk back to their villages. Work among them is not very easy.

At present, 220 Delegate Meetings are functioning, composed of 15,000 delegates, including 8000 working women, the remainder being peasant women. The development of this work is greatly due to the support of the trade union organisations and the Party as a whole, which are much more amenable to this question than this was formerly the case.

The least progress has been made with club work, because we do not have the necessary premises. If in a factory employing 12,000 workers the club cannot hold more than 300 people, one can imagine that work is not very easy. At present, summer premises are being put up, platforms and sitting accommodation are erected, in order to be able to accommodate larger numbers, at least in summer. Although work is generally rather slack during the summer months, we have been able to keep the delegate meetings going throughout the summer, thanks to the work done during the winter. There

is a 60—70% attendance at these meetings, and I must say that attendance is better in remote villages than in the chief town of the gubernia, Ivanovo-Voznesensk.

A great obstacle in the way of our work is psychology of the women. Regardless if they be literate or not, women are so backward and so intimidated through the whole mode of peasant life that we have a hard struggle to make them accept the Soviet legislation which gives them protection and equal rights with men.

There is the risk that in a big proletarian district where 80,000 women are employed in the textile industry alone, peasant women might be given a back seat. However, we cannot afford to neglect peasant women, for by bringing villages under our influence and by awakening their sympathy for the proletariat we will be able to strengthen our influence also in the factories which are still closely connected with the villages. Therefore, we have concentrated our attention on the villages, and already 102 delegate meetings are functioning there.

We would like to give as much encouragement as possible to our women comrades in Western Europe in their arduous task by showing them that we are doing our utmost to permeate the masses with Communism.

Second Session.

Monday Morning May 31, 1926.

Discussion on Comrade Sturm's Report.

Comrade HALBE (Germany):

The general attitude of the Party to the working masses has also adversely affected the special work among women in factories and trade unions. In some enterprises our influence has grown, we have held working women's meetings and we have working women's committees. But the **Women Delegate Meetings** system has not yet been introduced, namely, that delegates are elected regularly in the factories and big delegate meetings held regularly in towns and districts.

In some trade unions we exercise influence through the women workers there and through our functionaries. Fraction work is as yet very inadequate. In some trade unions and localities we have considerable influence over working women organised in trade unions, for instance, in the metal, textile and shoemakers unions in Württemberg. But very few working women belong to trade unions because of their dislike of them. There are **women's commissions** in the trade unions who work for the organisation and activation of newly recruited working women members. The reformist and Social Democrats have more influence there than we. With the help of some unions, for instance the shoemakers' union, we have convened district women's conferences at which reports were made by us and we had conversations with women workers concerning the application of new labour conditions and working methods in factories, and we have also recruited new members for the trade unions.

On the whole, we can say that lately the masses of working women are coming out of their apathy. During the Hindenburg election, we witnessed large numbers of women voting for Hindenburg, which means that they have gone over to the reactionary camp. We were able to mobilise women very extensively in connection with the expropriation of the ex-ruling houses. During the campaign for the peoples' demands in regard to this expropriation many women signed the lists. We hope to be able to capture even more women in connection with the plebiscite. We notice that more and more women come to our meetings and show an ever-growing interest in them.

The speaker mentioned also the successful work among women during the campaigns for the expropriation of the ex-ruling houses, for the plebiscite, as well as during the International Women's Week, which success is greatly due to close collaboration with the Party as a whole. It is only now that men comrades have properly understood what women's work really is, what the C. P. G. has to do in the direction of work among women, and what the tasks of men comrades are in connection with this work.

We fully agree with the tasks and fundamental motives laid down in the theses.

Comrade FAUSSECAVE (France):

In France an impetus was given to the women's movement since the V. Congress and the III. International Conference of Women Communists. Before that we had only very few women in the Party and no organisation to give them a lead.

We concentrated our efforts on the press and the organisation of women.

Last year, we had to carry on big campaigns, first of all a senate election campaign and then a municipal election campaign. During the latter, the Party brought forward women candidates in several Paris districts and also in the provinces, in order to prove that it is the only Party which stands up for women's political rights.

Our main task was struggle against the Morocco war. We succeeded in drawing many women into this anti-war campaign, and thereby we secured many sympathisers.

But we were still unable to bring many women into the Party. Why? Because in France, the old tradition still prevails: Here women were never organised. There were men in the Socialist and in the Radical Party willing to discuss franchise questions, but because women had no political rights, they were always kept out of all organisations. This is one of the great difficulties we encounter in our work. We are endeavouring to overcome them.

Women are gaining more and more confidence in the Communist Party, they do no longer dread the word Communist. We had in Paris meetings attended by 5,000 women, and in the provinces, too, we met with considerable success. Formerly, only a few women attended our meetings, whereas at present they come in large numbers and show great sympathy for our slogans whenever the Party organises meetings of special interest to women.

A month ago the "Humanité" had to accede to our demand for a **women's page**. But our men comrades looked upon this women's page not as a means for getting in contact with large sections of women workers, they considered it rather as a means of capturing for the Party the wives of Party comrades. We, on the other hand, are first and foremost interested in the thousands of women employed in industry. Our next Party Conference must clear up this point.

I should like to point out the necessity of a thorough reorganisation of the women's movement in France. In answer to a questionnaire circulated by us, we received a fantastical figure, according to which, women constitute 45 to 50% of the total number of wage earners. Recent statistics of the prefecture of the Seine Department gave the number of women wage earners in this Department as two million. The Communist Party should make efforts to organise these women. Fascists are trying hard to capture the women. For some time past, Fascists have been copying our forms of organisation. Just as they began to organise the youth through their "Patriotic Youth League", they are endeavouring at present to form corresponding organisations among women. In all the Arrondissements, Fascist women's sections are formed where women are set against the working class.

Our main tasks are:

Firstly an ideological campaign in the Party press ("Humanité", "Cahiers du Bolchévisme").

Secondly formation of cadres.

Thirdly, capture of women workers in trade Unions.

Fourthly, organisation of sympathisers. We have a weekly organ for working women and we thought that it would be possible to rally women around this periodical. We succeeded in this, many women who were reluctant to join the Party, but who had been for some time regular readers of the "Woman Worker" enthusiastically joined these groups of "Woman Worker's Friends".

But a new question has arisen: One should turn one's attention to **Conferences of Women Delegates**. In our country we are not yet able to do this. We succeeded in convening a kind of delegate meeting on September 26th in connection with the campaign against the Morocco war. This meeting was attended by 567 women including 200 unorganised women; the remainder were only organised in trade unions. This was certainly an attempt at a delegate conference, convened however for a special purpose. If we are to put more life into these con-

ferences in our country, we must bring forward perfectly clear demands: struggle against high cost of living, protection of motherhood and childhood, struggle against war. In the present situation these demands will enable us to capture the women and to give them a political education.

We think that it will be possible to have resolutions adopted at the forthcoming Party Congress for the fulfilment of which the Party as a whole is to make itself responsible.

Comrade KANCIEWICZ (Poland):

Before giving the comrades here an idea of our work, I want to point out that we have to contend with great difficulties arising out of the illegality of our Party.

This illegality puts obstacles also in the way of our relations with the International Women's Secretariat. The material never reaches us in time, and we are therefore left to our own devices in regards to all our campaigns. This is not due to defective organisation, but to illegal conditions.

Another circumstance which greatly impedes our work is the lack of understanding among men comrades for our work. For instance before March 8, some men comrades were of the opinion that the material can only be used for women and that it need not be discussed when men comrades are present.

There is a considerable percentage of women in the Party. Because of illegal conditions we have no detailed figures at our disposal, but nevertheless we were able to ascertain that women constitute about 10—11% in nuclei, in the Party apparatus and in the various organisations. But only one-tenth of this percentage comes from big enterprises, and this not because we do not pay sufficient attention to the latter, but because small industry is very developed in Poland and is employing considerable numbers of women. Contrary to Germany, we have paid very little attention to housewives.

I will deal now with the tasks which the Women's Secretariat set us.

We considered as the foremost and most important task popularisation of work among women particularly in the ranks of the Party.

The next important question was that of strengthening Communist influence among women workers in factories and trade unions. It is again due to prevailing conditions that we were unable to achieve much in this direction.

As to Delegate Meetings, this question does not concern us directly, because it is impossible to deal with it properly because of our illegal existence.

Of considerable interest is the influence of the other parties among women. The Social Democrats (P.P.S.) who work under legal conditions have achieved very little organisationally. They become active only once a year, on the occasion of the Women's Day which they keep in June. Big celebrations are organised, but without an extensive agitational programme. The P.P.S. publishes a monthly women's periodical which, however, does not offer much interest to working women. Organisationally the Social Democrats are so weak that only 37 women put in an appearance at one of their Warsaw women meetings, prior to May Day. This shows that our task is not an easy one, for if even the legal party of the Social Democrats cannot get hold of the women, we find this task even much more difficult because of illegality. The only party which has influence among women are the Christian Democrats.

Nevertheless women in Poland are becoming imbued with the revolutionary spirit. This is due to the economic crisis, unemployment, particularly in the textile industry, hitting women harder than men. For instance in Lodz a big industrial city usually employing 50—60,000 women, 20,000 women are unemployed. A two or three day's week is a usual thing for workers. This has caused a great deal of bitterness among women. That the revolutionary spirit is growing among women is shown by their active participation in the revolts which took place last winter in various towns because of mass unemployment.

But all these tendencies cannot be properly utilised because of the illegality and organisational weakness of our

Party. We are doing our utmost to get an organisational hold on non-Communist women.

In connection with our other activity, I should like to point out that our work among women is carried on systematically throughout the country. Formerly, we only worked in White Russia where fairly extensive mass work was carried on among women in the rural districts. But after the arrests in the autumn of 1925, this work practically stopped. However, we are resuming at present systematic work in this direction.

Many women are engaged in active work in the I.R.A.

If I may be allowed to approach the International Women's Secretariat with a request, I want to say that what we need most is a propaganda programme. In regard to slogans connected with everyday questions, we can manage ourselves. But there is a whole series of general principal questions concerning religion and family life, for which we have no literature and no material whatever. Our difficult everyday work takes up all our time with the result that we cannot pay the necessary attention to these questions. In this respect the Women's Secretariat could help us a great deal.

Comrade SCOTT (Great Britain):

Since the Fifth Congress, the British Party has paid a good deal of attention to work among working women in England. One of the difficulties which we have had to contend with is the fact that we have very few women in the Party. Of the 6,000 members of the Party, 600 are women. The women are extremely active in general, selling papers, factory papers, etc. We have very few women who are able to devote themselves specially to the work among working women. The Party apparatus itself has taken much more interest than in the past in this question of work among working women, and we have a very active comrade who is in charge of this work and in all local organisations we have a comrade in charge of this work.

The chief work which we have had to do has been in the Labour Party, trade unions, in the delegate meetings and in the Co-operative Societies, and in Women's Co-operative Guilds. The Guilds have an entirely separate organisation from the co-operative societies, and we have been able to organise some work in the Guilds but it is in the co-operative societies that our work has been weakest. It is due to this fact the co-operative societies did not support the General Strike and the miners in the last struggle. The chief work we have done has been in the Labour Party where we have organised our fractions and have been able to get a good circle of sympathisers and some influence.

We have also gone ahead with the formation of educational circles where we have about ten Left Wing women who are sympathetic to us, who come to our comrades for political instruction. Many of the women in the Labour Party feel that they do not know enough to be able to speak or take part in discussion and this gives us the opportunity to train them politically.

We have also now in the Labour Party, since the last Labour conference, when the Communists were expelled from the Labour Party, formed a Left Wing, and we have been active in the Women's Section in getting the Women's Section affiliated to the Left Wing Committees in the same way as the various organisations are affiliated to the Minority Movement and this has helped us to achieve good results.

In the Trade Unions we have not done sufficient work yet. This is due partly to that the women in our Party are chiefly housewives, and those women members of the Party who can join trade unions are members of the unions. But on the whole, our women are mostly in the Labour Party and in Co-operative Guilds. During the past year, the Minority Movement has been much more active in the organisation of women, but particularly in connection with the Women's and Co-operative Guilds. In the Trade Union Congress campaign our women have taken an active part in assisting in the organisation of women into the trade unions.

With regard to the other organisations, such as the Class War Prisoners' Aid, we have been able to get the women interested in this particularly since the arrest of the Communist

leaders. We have been able to produce some street papers for agitation among the housewives and one or two factory papers in connection with the textile industry. We have also now started our women's paper for the women work which comes out monthly. We have issued two numbers, and the circulation at present is very small, but there are great possibilities for us in the publication of this paper.

Delegate Meetings. We have been able to call some delegate meetings, but not in the same way as they have been called in Russia. The delegates are not elected as more or less permanent delegates, but elected particularly to discuss one or another question of importance to the workers. The first delegate meetings were called in connection with the struggle of the miners last July. From these delegate meetings, Councils of Action were formed in order to organise the women in connection with this struggle. The miners' strike was postponed in July, on Red Friday, but these Councils of Action remained in being and assisted us in the organisation of International Women's Day. Other delegate meetings have been called on the question of the campaign for the release of the prisoners and also in March and April in connection with the great struggle in May. In the General Strike of last month the women were solid with the men, and there was no black-legging done by the women workers in the strike. The struggle of the miners still continues, and we shall be able to utilise these delegate meetings in connection with the miners' strike.

We have still much work to do. Of the first importance is the question of getting new recruits into the Party, particularly from the factories. In England, the factory groups are very weak. The Party membership is very small and in most cases our factory groups consist of only one or two comrades. In factories where women are employed, this makes the work very difficult, as these one or two comrades cannot themselves accomplish all the tasks of a factory group and we have to add to the group comrades outside the group who are working in connection with the factory in selling the "Workers Weekly" and in the actual production and selling of the factory paper. If we also add a comrade in charge of work among women, it may lead to the factory group losing its character, as the majority of the members would be Party members not working actually in the factory. At the same time we have been able in the cotton industry in Lancashire and in the wool industry in Bradford to get this work begun, if only in a very small way.

Then there is the extension of delegate meetings. We have to get the delegates on a more permanent basis with regular meetings, and we have also much work to do in getting the delegates from the factories. At first we shall be able only to appoint a delegate from those factories where we have some influence, but from this point we shall be able to work towards getting delegates properly elected by the factory workers.

In connection with the work in the Party itself, we have one point of great advantage for this work. We have in the British Party a system of training by which all members of the Party, whether new members or old, must pass through an elementary system of training and the women members of the Party, as well as the men, have to pass through this course. In the syllabus of this training course there is a section on work among women and its importance. This has the advantage of training our women comrades and also of making clear to the men comrades the importance of this work. As a whole, the Party now realises the necessity for work among women as one of the activities of the Party, but we have still to fight the idea that this work is only for women members.

In general the theses put forward by the International Women's Secretariat are applicable to the conditions in England and will help us to carry on the agitation among women.

Comrade CROLL (United States):

The three main lines for work among women laid down by Comrade Sturm can be said to apply to all Western Europe and America especially. Highly industrialised America has already drawn over 8½ million women into gainful occupations, that is they work for wages. Out of these barely a handful are in the trade unions, even less than 200,000. This makes it clear that our most important task in America is to find ways and means of bringing these women into the Trade Unions.

There are already in existence many housewives', educational and fraternal organisation etc. which have large numbers of working class women in them but which are mostly under the influence and leadership of the Socialists and reactionaries. We must enter these organisations and win the women to our leadership.

To date our achievements have not been very great in comparison with the work of our European brother parties.

It is only since the last Party convention in 1925 that we have really begun to work among women. A central Party apparatus has been established for this work. District committees have been formed, and all shop nuclei instructed to place one or several comrades, in accordance with the size of the factory and nuclei in charge of work among women.

On Women's Day we had a special issue of the "Daily Worker". The whole "Daily Worker", which is the organ of the Communist Party in America, was devoted to questions of interest to working women.

In Chicago our work in the district apparatus and in the trade unions has already shown results. Women in the millinery trade are very badly organised, and their working conditions therefore very bad. One of our women Comrades employed in the trade took a very active part in organising a local of these millinery workers. A local with two hundred members has been organised, and the comrade mentioned is the secretary of it.

In Boston, there is the "New England Mothers League". In a recent demonstration, part of a general "Organise the Unorganised" campaign, this league took part carrying banners with such slogans as "Women, enter the Trade Unions", "Equal Pay for Equal Work", "We want better schools for our Children" and other slogans connected with the every day needs of the workers.

In New York, we have the "Working Women's Council of New York". This was organised about two years ago when the Socialists called a conference of working women. A few of our active women comrades entered the conference and took the leadership of it. Since then the membership has grown immensely. Now there are over onethousand members in the council with only about ten per cent of the membership Communist Women. At present this council is taking an active part in aiding the Textile Strikers in Passaic (New Jersey) with food and clothing for the Strikers' children.

Heretofore the Council has also led campaigns for better housing for working people, lower rents, for more and better schools. They took a leading part in school strikes, mothers protesting against their children being made to travel several miles through congested districts to their schools.

Re the press; We do not have a special Women's page but hardly a day passes without there being one or several stories written by working women in the Workers' Correspondence page of the "Daily Worker" about the conditions in their factories, wages, hours and their lives in general.

Regarding delegate meetings we can only say that we look to the more experienced sections of the Comintern in this connection and to the Russian Party especially for guidance and instruction, for in the short time that we have seriously devoted ourselves to the questions of work among women we have had no experience with them.

Third Session.

Monday Evening, May 31, 1926.

Discussion on Comrade Sturm's Report continued.

Comrade MURATOVA (Soviet Union).

This is the place to say definitely among what sections of working women we have to carry on our work. I think that we should extend our influence among the manual and office women workers in enterprises. We have as yet little hold on them and we should therefore pay special attention to them. This does not, of course, mean that we should relax our work among working class housewives and other working elements of the female population. We must, on the contrary, do our utmost to make Communist influence paramount among working women. **Organisation of Delegate Meetings must be the order of the day** and not only theoretically. The reports of the I. W. S. and of our comrades from the brother Parties show that the work of preparing and organising delegate meetings is restricted to a few countries, and that delegate meetings have actually taken place only in isolated cases, for instance in Germany, Great Britain, etc.

I would like to tell you about experiences we have had in our work among peasant women in the Soviet Union. I come from White Russia, and before describing about our achievements, I would like to tell you something about the conditions under which we work. White Russia is a pre-eminently peasant country. In a population of 4,200,000 there are at the utmost 40,000 workers employed in the State industry and on the railways. The development of the State industry is weak, but home industries flourish. We have but few factories employing large numbers of workers. There are only two factories employing 1000 workers each, the remainder are small enterprises. There is no big industry-proletariat in White Russia, industrial workers are scattered in small towns and places. Therefore we can say that our country is pre-eminently a peasant country.

In spite of existing difficulties, we can claim a certain amount of success in regard to drawing peasant women into Soviet work. All the organisations in the rural districts have men and women members, in some cases as many women as men. We have at present 3000 peasant women members of Soviets, 1500 peasant women members of peasant mutual aid organisations and 1200 peasant women members of other public organisations. There are seven peasant women in the Executive of the White Russian Soviet Republic, and there is also one woman in the Central Executive of the Soviet Union. This big army of peasant women is the vanguard in the building up of a new standard of life in the countryside. Moreover, we have several peasant women acting as chairmen of village Soviets and peasant mutual aid organisations.

Just a few words about delegate meetings. We have altogether 17,000 delegates. Every village which has a Party nucleus has also a delegate meeting, which gives active support to the building up of our agriculture. The delegate meeting is our Communist workshop which produces collaborators in the building up of a new life. The peasant women who at present occupy posts in Soviets and other public organisations have all of them gone through the school of delegate meetings. In the course of the last twelve months, peasant women have shown a great desire to join the Party. This can be said particularly in regard to women delegates. Peasant women constitute 8% of the White Russian Party organisation. We also use conferences, discussions, circles and a number of other auxiliary organisational forms for our work among peasant women.

Just a few more words on raising the standard of life of peasant women. During the five years of Soviet rule which we have had in White Russia, 120 creches, 35 consultation centres, and 180 playgrounds were organised. These figures are of course not very imposing, but if one takes into consideration our limited means and the short period of Soviet rule, one will have to say that our achievement in this direction has been considerable. Peasant women participate very actively in this work. Liquidation of illiteracy is one of our most important slogans, as illiteracy is one of the greatest evils inherited from the tsarits regime.

In conclusion, a few words on the activity of the International Women's Secretariat. I think that the general policy of the Secretariat was correct, that it was adapted to the general tasks of the Comintern. The Secretariat did also definite organisational work. I should like to draw attention to a point on which the International Women's Secretariat should concentrate in the future. I mean systematic popularisation of the work of the I. W. S. in the press, in order that we people in the other countries should be better informed about this work. I think it would be as well for the I. W. S. to publish a periodical bulletin throwing light on the immediate tasks and the work of our Communist Parties. Forms and methods for the establishment of liaison should be discussed with the Women's Secretariat.

Comrade GRÜN (Austria):

Our Austrian Party is but a small Party, and its 700 women members constitute one-fourteenth of the total membership. What has kept our Party so small? I do not think that the numerical strength of the Austrian Social Democratic Party can be considered as one of the reasons for this, for quality rather than quantity counts. In the Austrian Social Democratic Party we have an Otto Bauer, a Friedrich Adler and a Max Adler, and it is much more difficult to fight against an Otto Bauer as for instance in Germany against an Ebert and a Scheidemann.

Another reason which prevented the further development of our Austrian Party was the fraction strife which was disintegrating our Party for whole three years. It was only after the last Party Congress in October 1925 that our Party Committee, nine-tenths of which consists of factory workers, was able to develop an upward movement. It is only now that the Party is making progress and in view of the general improvement in the internal situation of the Party work among women is also making progress.

I will deal now separately with the various points of the theses before us. We can say that our collaboration with the Party apparatus is satisfactory, contrary to the reports of the preceding speakers. Our explanation for this is: that our C. C. consists almost entirely of workers who can see in the factories where they work, how important work among women is, and who have therefore come to the conclusion that this work is one of the most important tasks of the Party. This is shown in various ways. It goes without saying that the responsible head of the Women's Department is a member of the C. C. Moreover the heads of sub-departments of our Central Women's Department are represented in the respective Party departments, for instance the head of the educational work in Agitprop, the head of trade union work in the trade union department. Whenever possible a member of the Party Committee attends the sessions of the Central Women's Department.

The effects of this harmonious collaboration were particularly noticeable at the recent International Women's Day. Hitherto our Women's Days were badly attended, but this year we succeeded in securing the participation of 2500 people in Vienna, and this was entirely due to the fact that the entire Party apparatus was at our disposal for a whole week.

Having kept in constant touch with the International Women's Secretariat, we identify ourselves with the policy of the Secretariat and the theses. It is only necessary to discuss the separate paragraphs. That we attach very great importance to work in the factories is shown by the fact that in our Central Women's Department we have decided that every member of this department who does not yet work in a factory should be immediately appointed for such work. For instance I have been attached to the biggest factory nucleus and carry out all the work there together with the women comrades.

In this point of the agenda we can only pay a passing attention to Delegate Meetings and say: that delegate meetings

are certainly the best method for the capture of large sections of women, but that in Austria we cannot even contemplate the idea of such delegate meetings, because factories are the stronghold of the Social Democratic Party, and that for this reason it is almost impossible for us to penetrate them from outside. Only where we have already a factory nucleus will it be possible to make a beginning with small women's circles.

We have only just begun to work among peasant women and women agricultural labourers, and arrangements are being made for propaganda in the rural districts which is intended to bring urban women workers in contact with the rural women proletarians.

We can only endorse what has been said here in respect to training and education. Being a small Party with only a few women members, the development of our work depends entirely on our capacity to train and educate the necessary forces. Therefore our first and foremost task was education and activation of the women Party members. A Women Functionaries' Course was held, limited to the organisational training and education of women comrades. The same aim is pursued by a women functionaries' organ which we publish once a month. We also organised a women referent course, and at present we are training six women comrades selected by the Central Women's Department for trade union work through the trade union department of the Party.

The edition of our periodical "Die Arbeiterin" ("The Woman Worker") increased lately from 2000 to 4000, which means that the periodical is now reaching circles hitherto not in touch with the Party, considering that we have only 700 women members. Our women comrades do their utmost to increase the circulation of this periodical. We have succeeded in training a staff of about 30 working women correspondents, who contribute to our organ.

In conclusion I should like to point out that in no other country is unemployment as great as in Austria, and that unemployment among women is steadily increasing. Our women are in this respect greater sufferers than men, as the unemployment dole is first of all withdrawn from women because we represent the line of least resistance. That is why our most revolutionary elements are to be found among unemployed women. They organise demonstrations and meetings without any outside help. It has now been decided to carry on intensive agitation among unemployed women in order to direct these spontaneous demonstrations into the right channel.

Comrade MALM (Finland):

First of all I should like to say that during the last two years a considerable step forward has been made in the application of the delegate system on an international scale. But I have gathered from some of the speeches made at this conference that the possibility of the application of delegate conferences in European countries is still contended. Formerly women comrades used to assert that this method is only possible in Russia and is of no use in other countries as this form of work among women is only suitable where a Soviet regime exists. This objection no longer exists. But another objection has taken its place. In private conversation I have heard it said, and even Comrade Sturm spoke in this strain, that the delegate system as a method of work is only possible where Communist factory nuclei exist. I think that such a conception relegates the realisation of the delegate system in European countries until the time when factory nuclei exist everywhere. Such objections are harmful.

Finland is a predominantly agricultural country. Its population is 3,500,000, 65% of which live in the rural districts. 140,000 people are employed in industry including 48,000 women. 10,000 working women are organised in trade unions. The total number of the industrial and agricultural proletariat of Finland is 400,000.

Political conditions in Finland are not particularly favourable to revolutionary work. I remind you of the dissolution of the Left Socialist Youth League, of the Left Socialist Labour Party which was in sympathy with Communism, in 1923. Just now over 30 trade unions are prosecuted because of illegal activity and connection with the Communist Party. This situation is the background also of the development of the women's movement.

In 1925 the first Delegate Conference or working women's conference, as it was called, was held in Helsingfors. At that time Communist factory nuclei did not exist, but working

women were determined to be active. This work was done without factory nuclei, and the conference of factory women workers was convened.

A working and peasant women's conference was held in Uleaborg where a decision was made to address a manifesto to the working and peasant women of the Soviet Union and of other countries concerning the trade union united front. Just at present the bourgeoisie is attacking our trade union organisations, it intends to dissolve the central workers organisation, the Finnish Trade Union Federation. The following questions were on the agenda of the conference: Report on the political situation, delegates report on work among women and in co-operatives as well as their activity in support of political prisoners and Red orphans. 137 delegates attended the Helsingfors conference including 100 from factories. The following questions were on the agenda of this conference: Reports of individual factories and localities, political report, women and co-operatives wall newspapers, etc. The conference also drew up a list of tasks which delegates have to carry out in their respective factories before the next conference.

Prior to the Trade Union Congress a delegate meeting was convened which laid down the policy concerning trade union unity. It is proposed to convene delegate meetings every three months. Limiting the work to organised working women would be detrimental to the delegate system. In Finland no heed is taken if a working woman is organised or not, and this is the foundation of a real women's movement.

In Finland work is not carried on only among working women but also among housewives. Two housewives conferences have been held which were also attended by women factory workers.

The immediate tasks confronting the radical labour movement of Finland are: firstly, overcoming the old prejudices in regard to work among women which still exist. Secondly, delegate conferences should be made a live institution with the help of which women masses can be drawn into the class struggle and trained for the required work.

I think that the International Women's Secretariat has not done its utmost for the introduction of the delegate system. This is probably due to the fact that the Secretariat evidently does not agree with the introduction and development of the delegate system in all countries. The Secretariat seems to hold the view that the delegate system is not the chief means for bringing large numbers of non-Party women into the movement. I consider that in Comrade Hertha Sturm's theses the delegate movement is not considered the main line of our work. And yet recognition of this is the main thing. When new forms and methods of organisation are proposed, this only means that in most countries the delegate movement is not developing as it should, and that it leads to certain diversions of opinion and to differences among minor collaborators and also in the central organ. We must have full faith in the delegate movement and must bear in mind Lenin's words.

Comrade OSTROVSKAYA (Soviet Union):

If one compares the present speeches of the women comrades from the various capitalist countries with the speeches made by the representatives of the same countries at the Third Communist Women's Conference, one gets the impression that a certain amount of progress has been made in our work. That this is so is shown by the fact that the central question at this conference is that of the form of organisation of the women masses. The question of delegate meetings found place on the agenda as a live question of the day. I am going to deal with three important stages of the women's movement, namely the movement in Poland, Great Britain and France. In everyone of these countries the movement has reached a state characteristic of the women's movement in the capitalist countries.

What do we see in Poland? The only material at my disposal is the report of the comrade from Poland. She said here that a big women's strike movement has taken place in the country which was under the leadership of the Party. This shows that the Party has captured large sections of the working class population, and that it only remains to secure these elements for the Party.

In France the masses have as yet to be won. Work connected with this was taken in hand during the campaign against the Morocco war. It has not yet taken the character of a fully developed movement of active women masses. Circles are being formed, and it is essential to arouse more sections of women

and to aim at close contact with the masses. The economic situation of the country is favourable to the development of a working women's movement. But we are not the only Party there. Therefore it is necessary to prepare proletarian women for this work. It is essential to find a proper method for establishing contact between us and the mass of working women.

In Great Britain the masses were roused, the Party Executive did its utmost to bring them in contact with the Party, but the influence gained was not made secure organisationally. Everything should be done to prevent sections of the working class, who were aroused by recent events, becoming again passive. In order to establish organisational connection between the Party and the masses, special means and methods must be found.

But to judge by what women comrades from the capitalist countries say about Delegate Meetings, it is self-evident that they are afraid, nay even convinced, that under the conditions existing in capitalist countries it will be impossible to utilise delegate meetings as a method of work, as a link between the Party and the mass of working women. I really did not intend to speak on this point, the first item on our agenda, but I have done so because I could gather from the speeches of the women comrades that a new form of work is making its appearance: the club.

Can Clubs serve as a form of work among women masses? What is the position of clubs in regard to delegate meetings? I am of the opinion that it is essential to thoroughly deal with this question here. Even if it be "not yet" acute and only in its initial stage, it is bound to become acute "tomorrow". I think that the comrade from Finland was right when she said that delegate meetings are the fundamental and essential form of work among women masses for all countries.

May be that women delegate meetings in capitalist countries must be differently constructed, for instance on the model of women delegate meetings here prior to the revolution. The Russian women comrades spoke already on this subject at the emergency meeting yesterday. With us too the first women delegates were not elected. The Women's Department selected suitable people for active work, and through this body of active workers the Party issued instructions to the masses, gave them support and organised them. Subsequently, the masses recognised these people as their representatives, and in this way came about election of delegates from below. After this body of active workers had been properly instructed, properly elected cadres of working women delegates were created with its help and the help of the groups which rallied around it.

The comrades here are telling me that under illegal conditions it is impossible to convene delegate meetings in the factories. But after all it is not necessary to bring together at least 100 working women. Make these meetings as small as our illegal propagandist circles were once upon a time. They were built up almost in the same manner: The worker who organised the circle brought with him fellow workers from one or several factories whom he knew and selected; then the propagandists worked systematically with them, discussed various questions and instructed them. Never mind the number and never mind the title given to the institution. I am of the opinion that delegate meetings are a method tested by long experience and worthy to be copied.

Under special conditions such as we find for instance in the East, the club can facilitate the selection of a basic cadre with the help of which delegate meetings are to be instituted. It is so to speak a laboratory in which the first delegates are produced required for laying the foundation of the delegate meeting.

I will deal now with the next point. In France the method which is given at present most prominence is the organisation of women around the "Ouvrière", a very interesting form of organisation which is, however, not a broad movement and can on no account take the place of delegate meetings. It is a circle which too can help to select the future delegates among its members.

Clubs will perhaps take root in France which has a tradition of political clubs. Clubs can be certainly successful, but care should be taken to take up a correct attitude, particularly at present. The women's movement is on the lookout for a method of work. In our times this question is not at all so simple, it can develop into a question of tactics.

Comrade Faussecave said that the working women are still afraid of the Party, whereas they are no longer afraid of the trade unions, and that one should therefore work in the latter.

She is quite right. But working women must be adequately prepared for work in the trade unions in order that they should understand what they have to do there and how the work is to be done. This task can be thus accomplished by the delegate meeting.

I think it necessary to touch upon another important point today. Two years ago one could see by Emmy Freundlich's theses at the Co-operative Congress in Ghent that the Second International was seriously considering work among women in town and country. I said at the time that it was not really a question of co-operative theses but rather a question of a political activation of the Second International in regard to work among women as shown by the formation of the International Women's Guild and the discussion of the question of work among peasant women and of a reorganisation of the Women's Department of the Second International in this direction. Two years have gone by since then. The International Women's Secretariat should have given us at this conference a report containing figures concerning the achievements of the Second International in this sphere, telling us what our opponents have accomplished, what forms of work they used, what tasks they set themselves and did not solve.

We must study the activity of our opponents, the methods they use and the movement of which they are the leaders, in order to become master of the situation. An item of the agenda of this conference is the creation of non-Party women's organisations. To do justice to this question we must have figures concerning the forces and successes of our opponents.

At present our forms of work are our tactics, our success depends on correct tactics, and in order to elaborate correct tactics it is essential to examine the activity of our opponents on the strength of facts.

Comrade NADIEZHINA (China):

I agree with Comrade Sturm's report, but would like to deal with the position and tasks of the Chinese Party in regard to work among women.

In the Chinese Party too, we have an apparatus for work among women: the Women's Department. The Central Women's Department was not founded until December 1924. Subsequently we formed women's departments in every Party Committee: in Shanghai, Peking and Canton. Attached to these women's departments there are commissions for work among women masses. These commissions consist mostly of women comrades. The Chinese Party has over 10,000 members, 10% of whom are women. According to their social composition I must say that most of them are women workers, namely about 80%, the remainder being women students and peasant women.

The most important features of our Party's work among women are:

1. Work among women workers and peasant women.
2. Work among women intellectuals and women students.

1. **Work among women workers** is the main task of our Party. There is still political oppression in China, freedom of assembly, freedom of press and of speech does not as yet exist. This makes our work very difficult, particularly among women workers and peasant women. Only since 1925 we have been able to get in contact with the masses. Most of the women comrades joined the Party only last year.

Chinese women workers, particularly in Shanghai, are oppressed and exploited by native and foreign capitalists, with the result that their labour conditions are very bad. They work 12, 14 and even 16 hours per day. Their wage is only between 6 and 30 cents, i. e. about 1½d. to 7½d per day. That is why women workers are become revolutionised.

On the other hand work among peasant women has been neglected because objective conditions are difficult and subjective conditions also inadequate. In fact work among peasant women was only initiated this year in the Kwantung province. Peasant women there are in sympathy with us.

I do not know how many peasant women are organised, but as regards women workers we can say that of the 600,000 to 700,000 workers organised throughout China, 100,000 are women. These 100,000 women workers are under our influence because all organised workers are under our influence.

2. We have two legal forms of organisation for work among women in general. Firstly, the Kuomintang which has women's departments and in which we can work just as we

like. The second form are the **non-Party organisations**. Our plan of work in regard to activity in the women's movement can be fully carried out through these organisations. Our slogans are: Social equality for men and women! Down with traditions which enslave women! Reforms for women's education! Equal educational facilities for men and women! Support for poor women workers and peasant women! Protection for motherhood and childhood! We can work for these slogans also in the Kuomintang and in the non-Party organisations, contributing thereby to women's revolutionisation. But women become revolutionised not only because of our tactics and propaganda, it is rather objective conditions which compel women to become revolutionary.

And now just a few facts: During the Shanghai events of the last few years thousands of women students took part in the demonstrations and collected a considerable amount of money in support of the workers. Formerly women students in Shanghai were under the influence of the clergy. But in

this movement they forgot all about their god. Many women students who attended evangelical schools have left them.

On March 18th last a big demonstration took place in Peking in which many women students participated. Among the 40 killed there were also several women students. These facts show that not only working women, but also women students are becoming more and more revolutionary. In spite of objectively favourable conditions, our success has not been considerable. We have but little literature for the labour and particularly for the women's movement, we have also very few men comrades capable of leading the labour movement and still fewer women comrades capable of working successfully among women masses. Theoretical work is also inadequate. This applies generally but is true particularly of the women's movement.

At the last Enlarged Executive of the Comintern I proposed that the Women's Secretariat should publish a women's periodical. I can take from my own experience that such a periodical is very necessary.

Fourth Session.

Tuesday Morning, June 1, 1926.

Discussion on Comrade Sturm's Report continued!

Comrade SCHWAB (Czecho-Slovakia):

Twenty-five thousand women are organised in the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia, constituting 23% of the total membership. Thus our Party heads the way in the Communist International in regard to its women membership. However in the revolutionary Labour Party quality counts for more than quantity. In order to get a clear picture, we must add that quality lags considerable behind quantity. This is greatly due to the fact that the Party which at the time of the split brought 70% of the membership of the Social Democratic Party into its ranks, showed its inability to include the women's movement, which continued to exist as a section side by side with the Party, publishing its own organs and being relatively independent, into the process of its own development.

The Women's Section, burdened with Social Democratic traditions, continued to work side by side with the Party without reorganising the forms and substance of its work and without keeping pace with the development of the Party. Neither did the social composition of the women's movement undergo a change, as before most of the members were women not engaged in production. As before, the cadre of functionaries consisted entirely of housewives. The entire activity was limited to the women organised in the Party. There was no linking up with and exercising systematic influence over sections of indifferent women, particularly women employed in factories, who constitute the most important section of the female proletariat.

Reorganisation happened to coincide with the Party crisis, during which the women's section supported in the fraction strike the liquidators who fought against reorganisation as a "means for the political elimination of women". Thus organisation progressed very slowly, hampered by fierce strife and accompanied by various deviations. But the Bolshevisation process and the rapid development of the Party had their effect also on this sphere of work. It has been possible to organise in close collaboration with the C. C. of the Party a big network of Women's Departments on a national scale and to direct the activity of the latter more and more towards the sections of indifferent women.

During the construction of the organisational apparatus for work among women which was to be conducted on entirely new lines, it became evident that there were not enough active workers for this branch of our work. Thus parallel with the construction and improvement of the apparatus, we were confronted with the task of training a cadre of Bolshevik workers for this branch of our activity. Thanks to the energy with which the Central Women's Department worked in this direction,

assisted by the self-sacrifice work of rank and file women comrades, it was possible to organise on a national scale Agitation and Propaganda Schools for women. These schools which, being first attempts in this direction, showed many defects and shortcomings, did nevertheless very useful work and aroused great interest among men and women comrades appointed for work among women, and yet lacking the necessary guidance for this new form of work. The success of these courses was so great that, when they came to an end, we had at our disposal a cadre of 600 active workers, 40% of whom were women employed in factories.

The first signs of systematic work in this sphere were already visible in the organisation and conduct of the International Women's Day. The organisation of this campaign which was this time carried on by the Party as a whole and was therefore on a much broader basis than ever before, was much more successful than in the preceding years. Concentration on work among different elements, particularly women employed in factories, had also good results. Meetings at factory gates, big demonstrations and meetings in market places convened under the slogans of the Party and mass attendance at these meetings were a proof that the work was carried on on correct lines.

Another example of the correct policy of women's departments in connection with their new tasks, was the strike of needle women which lasted five weeks and was carried on on a national scale. During this strike, the Women's Departments showed much initiative, they got into contact with the most active elements among this section of working women, they organised meetings, had their representatives in the strike committees, spoke at all strike meetings, and the Central Women's Department participated unofficially in the sessions of the central strike committee. These were the first attempts at trade union work, which was up till then our weakest point and which since then has been, together with nucleus work, the main task of the Central Women's Department.

The economic and political situation in Czecho-Slovakia, the ever growing influence of the Party, the united front slogan which is bringing more and more elements into our ranks, together with the successful Bolshevisation process of the Party, constitute the objective and subjective premises for further purposeful work also in the sphere of agitation and propaganda among women masses. How the connecting link between the masses and the Party is to be established, is the question which interests our cadre of active workers most, and the decision and directions of the International Women's Conference on this subject are anxiously awaited.

Comrade KALIGINA (Soviet Union):

Comrade Sturm did not deal with **work among peasant women** in her report, because our brother Parties have not yet taken this work in hand in their various organisations. Even the delegate from Czecho-Slovakia where Communist nuclei exist in the rural districts, has said nothing about work among peasant women. And yet the time has come for us to tell our Communist brother Parties that this work must be done.

There is certainly a difference between the position of your peasant women and ours. For instance, it is difficult to approach our peasant women, because they cannot read or write, and are mentally backward. In your countries peasant women are not illiterate, but their minds are warped by bourgeois teaching, by the lives of the reactionary and gutter press, moreover they are religious. Conditions of their every day life make it difficult to capture them for the proletarian and peasant movement. But the economic crisis, unbearable taxes and high cost of living are revolutionary peasant women in a number of countries, and they are trying to organise themselves. Nearest to the proletariat are the poor peasants and agricultural labourers. In Russia too, we began our work among these elements, whom we have never left out of account. In Western countries too, it will be necessary to work among these people. Out of the midst of this section of the rural population, will probably come the active workers whom we need for work in the villages.

In view of the higher educational level of the population of Western countries, the best agitational means is to introduce **good books into the villages**, in which, without enlarging on Socialism of which peasant women are very much afraid, the humiliating position of peasant women is exposed. What is the best way for the introduction of books in the villages, and what books do peasant women in your countries want most of all? The bible and novellettes are spiritual poison for peasant women. By supplying the villages with revolutionary literature, this kind of books is to be eliminated. If Communist Parties are to have the masses with them, they must be able to issue slogans capable of rallying peasant women around the Party and of drawing them into the Party campaigns (International Women's Day, campaign against taxes, high prices, and war, etc.). At present when our opponents are wide awake, and make use of Russian experiences, it is essential for the Party to pay more attention to this question.

Comrade SILLEN (Sweden):

During the discussion some comrades said that Sweden's reply to the questionnaire represents a Left deviation. This way of putting it might create the impression that we in Sweden have not taken the trouble to apply special methods for work among women. This is certainly not the case.

We are fully aware that real **mass work** must be carried on. Since the Party split in 1924, our Party saw the necessity of standing up for the interests of working women. Our Party also fully realises the importance of **Women Delegate Meetings**. That they have not yet been introduced is a matter which I should like to discuss later on.

In spite of the difficulties which we encounter in our work in this sphere, we can report progress. Women Party members are taking now a much more active part in Party work than before, and I can say that we have a small, but select group of comrades who know how to carry on Communist work. The effect of this work is: the greater interest and the greater activity of Party comrades in **trade union work**. We have succeeded in having several women members elected to the committee in various places. This has never happened before. Women comrades play an important role in the **circulation of newspapers and literature** and also in individual propaganda. Our women comrades have also taken an active part in fraction work in the **Co-operative Women's Guilds**, temperance societies, etc.

I will sum up our progress as follows:

1. Increased activity in the trade union.
2. Increased circulation of our women's newspaper "Röda Röster" ("Red Voices").
3. The education of women comrades and their class consciousness have reached a higher level.

These are a few factors which show that prospects in Sweden are fairly bright.

During the whole of April the Party carried on a special women's campaign the main slogan being "One thousand women employed in industry into the ranks of the Party!" It is a pity that this campaign coincided with the tenth anniversary of "Politiken" (Central Organ of the C. P. S.). Final reports on this women's campaign are not yet to hand. However, the information which has already reached us shows that we have secured 35 new agents for "Röda Röster", that 600 more copies of it are published and that 151 new members have joined the Party.

The speaker expressed regret at the unsatisfactory connection between the International Women's Secretariat and the Sections and recommended utilisation of all possible connections. The best thing would be for members of the Women's Secretariat be given an opportunity to visit themselves the various Parties and to get knowledge on the spot in regard to work among women.

Comrade LYUBIMOVA (Turkestan).

The question of **work in the East** cannot be ignored in the work of the International Women's Secretariat.

I will tell you of the experiences we had in the course of our **work in the Asiatic Republics of the Soviet East**. There are four autonomous Soviet Republics in Central Asia: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kerghisia and the Tartar Republic. These four republics have a population of at least 15,000,000, one-half of it being women.

In Central Asia, the Soviets and the Party work under a **feudal-patriarchal regime** which although doomed to extinction, has still a strong hold on the country. The economic backwardness there is enormous. Prior to the revolution, Central Asia was a kind of semi-colony of the Russian Empire. Its chief role then was to supply raw material, particularly cotton. No factories were built there, hence the small number of proletarians, among whom are 1000 women. A result of the semi-colonial policy of the czars in Central Asia is the terrible **cultural backwardness of the population**. Only a little while ago, 1% of the population was able to read and write, and this 1% did not include any women. Two years ago there were 25 women in Turkmenistan who could read and write, and we know them all by their names, and yet the female population of Turkmenistan is 400,000. The influence of the clergy is still very great, religious fanaticism, crass superstition and prejudices of all kinds prevail.

The Soviet legislation forbids "**Kalym**", i. e. purchase of brides, which still prevails and which reduces women to the position of chattels and slaves. In spite of our legislation and our indefatigable struggle against this abnormality, women are still bought and sold in the villages of Central Asia. The price paid for women today fluctuates between 300 and 6000 roubles, or 12 to 50 camels. Soviet law punishes marriages of minors, but religious law allows them. Little girls of nine are given in marriage, as the "Shariat" (Mohomedan religious code) has fixed nine as the age of consent. It frequently happens that the relations of the husband inherit after his death not only his camels, "Yurta" (tent) and other household goods, but also his wife.

What are we doing to cope with these terrible conditions which threaten the population with complete degeneration? We organise medical consultation centres, playgrounds for children, in fact we do our utmost to **raise the cultural level** through the women of these countries. We train women teachers and doctors from the midst of these women. Over 500 Uzbek women attend pedagogical institutes. For our conditions this is a considerable cultural force, which will soon be ready for action. Altogether we pay much attention to women's education through the department for work among women and also through the People's Education Commissariat.

Apart from girls' schools for the organisation of which the Women's Department does a great deal, schools for adult women are organised. Two years ago there were only 25 women in Turkmenistan who could read and write, to-day, there are already 7000 literate women, and this is a great step forward.

Moreover, we attach considerable importance to the inclusion of women into the process of production and into the co-operative movement.

In connection with this, another important point must be mentioned: **land reform**. When "**Basmach bands**" (robber

bands) were supported by British money, when the sphere of activity of the Soviets and the Party was limited to the Tashkent District, such a reform could not be thought of. It was only in 1923 that the Party began to turn its attention to peaceful economic cultural work. Land reform was decided upon and carried out only in the current year. The reform applies also to women, for not only is women's right to land and water recognised by decree, over 1000 farms managed by women had land allotted to them. Allotment of land proceeds in Central Asia not as in Russia according to the number of members in the family, but per family. Thus, widows' families who hitherto had no land, have been given land.

Another important question is that of support for the various home industries and trades. In some branches of agriculture the system of money advance has been introduced. For instance peasants who cultivate cotton, receive an advance on the cotton they have planted and are under the obligation to deliver their harvest from which the advanced money is deducted. The same system has also been introduced in the carpet weaving industry, which employs over 7000 people. The advance system is also applied in the silk industry. Prior to the revolution 200,000 peasant farms were employed in this branch of industry, carried on mostly by women labour.

We have been able to get into close connection with the work of the "Kishlaks" and "Auls" (villages) and have begun to draw the population into industry. It is only under the Soviet government that factories and works are beginning to spring up. Over 1000 Uzbek women are employed in factories. We have begun to organise the women workers of the most important enterprises in our co-operatives.

I should like now to deal with that portion of our work with which the International Women's Secretariat should help us. We have to meet the resistance of the reactionary section of the population. The traders in the towns, the "bais" in the villages, the clergy in the urban and rural districts, — all these groups offer stubborn resistance to us and are piling up obstacles. Our own slogans are turned against us by the "bais" (village elders). Our delegates always run the risk of illtreatment. The Women's Secretariat could help us by informing us what the states of affairs is in respect to this in the countries of the foreign East, in Turkey and Afghanistan. Quite casually, during the translation of the Persian minutes of the Great Assembly, we have learned that the national assembly has issued a marriage law.

I am not going to deal with Women's Clubs and Women's Schools. In this respect we can say: Every form of work done by the Communist Party is good in as far as it leads to an increase of Party influence in the direction of women's emancipation. Although in the East clubs are the main form of work we have side by side with them discovered women's shops and markets which have always been the meeting places of women. There we can always get into conversation with women. We do not depise "chaichans" (tea rooms) either which women employed in the home industries frequent. There we read to them our newspapers. We visit women's baths, teach women there the use of soap, the washing and bathing of children.

I think that in view of the variety of conditions existing in the East it is difficult to talk about stabilised methods. Methods of work should be adapted to existing conditions, provided they can achieve our main aim — women's emancipation and consolidation of the influence of our Party. The fact that in spite of all difficulties we are able to overcome the obstacles in our way shows that one can do useful work under any conditions. Clara Zetkin says that also in her letter when she is advising us to create an elastic apparatus capable of functioning also under difficult illegal conditions. No matter how difficult the situation, work can be done by us.

Comrade MORITZ (Germany):

In regard to Comrade Malm's attacks on the International Women's Secretariat and Comrade Sturm: The comrade said that she suspected the International Women's Secretariat of sabotaging delegate meetings and not considering them essential.

We German comrades must say that this is not the impression we got. On the contrary we must declare on behalf of the German Party that the International Women's Secretariat has continuously pointed out to us the necessity of delegate meetings.

In connection with this I will remember the last National Conference in Germany. When Comrade Sturm explained the idea of delegate meetings, some objections were raised. The German comrades said that they were not against the idea, but that there was the risk that it would not be fully understood in the districts and that confusion might arise. It was precisely Comrade Sturm who opposed these conceptions with the full authority and in the spirit of the International Women's Secretariat.

I think that the Comrade from Finland should have been at least a little more definite in her arguments. She should have told us where exactly the International Women's Secretariat carried on an erroneous policy and when the International Women's Secretariat sabotaged. The comrade proposed that the theses brought forward by the Women's Secretariat should be altered. I however must declare that I agree with the theses. One should not make use of generalities in connection with such a matter, one should rather definitely say where the theses are wrong, and what in them is unacceptable.

I believe that after the exchange of experiences at this conference progress will be made in all countries in regard to delegate meetings. In Germany progress has already been made with the help of the trade unions. The women comrades' influence in the trade unions is increasing slowly but surely. We have succeeded in getting working women belonging to our Party as trade union delegates. They have also participated in discussion at meetings and have stood up for the interests of working women. This can be considered a great success.

On the whole the comrades who have come here from all countries must say that the International Women's Secretariat has endeavoured to do good work and, if it has not always succeeded in this, this was partly due to inadequate information by the various countries. Anyhow we must declare that the Women's Secretariat adopted the right policy for the capture of the mass of working women.

Comrade OLSEN (Norway):

Norway is a small country with only two and a half million inhabitants. This number includes 288,000 working women, which means that women constitute one-third of the total number of workers. However, only two-thirds of these women are wage-earners, and again only one-quarter of the latter, viz. 46,500 are women employed in industry. Of this number only 9,000 are organised in trade unions. On the other hand 565,524 of the adult women in Norway are employed as housewives in domestic work. To these must be added about 100,000 domestic servants. This means that 665,000 women are employed in housework against 46,500 women employed in industry. We must pay due attention to this important fact, if we are to adopt a correct policy for our work. I must say that the work of our Party has been based on a correct appreciation of these conditions.

Our Party has 7,000 members, 1,500 or 21% being women. Of these women members only 1% are women employed in industry, the remainder being housewives. Our Central Committee has a Women's Secretariat, and we also have special Women's Committees in 89 local groups of the Party. We have Women's Committees in 9 of our 11 district organisations, but 5 of them are under the management of women comrades and in 2 districts the secretary of the committee is a man.

The Norwegian Party is only 2½ years old. It came into being in the autumn of 1923 through a split in the Norwegian Labour Party (N. A. P.). At the time of the split about 60 of the women's leagues of the N. A. P. came over to us, the Comintern Section. The N. A. P. was mainly a party not of individual but of collective membership, and the women too were affiliated to it through their special Women's Leagues. Thus our women members were accustomed to work in separate organisations, to regulate their affairs themselves etc. This caused a great many difficulties when our Party was reorganised on a factory and street nucleus basis.

This preliminary history explains partly why we have at present in Norway, the so-called "Husmorlag", which means non-Party housewives leagues. We had to form them at that time. Moreover these housewives leagues have been very useful, they have played a very important role in the economic and political struggles of the workers. I want only to remind you of the work done during the metal workers' strike and the lockout in 1924. We had several big meetings in Oslo, and the

people who attended these meetings went out into the streets and even to the factories in order to drive away the strike-breakers. The housewives leagues were very active during the wage struggles of the workers particularly in Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim. We did very good work in Bergen where a tramway strike took place.

But the housewives leagues are organisations outside the Party, and I fully understand that if we are not careful, there is the risk of them going over to the Social Democrats. But at the time when they were formed there was no help for it, and I think that it will be possible to develop them into delegate meetings. We could have done more progress in this direction if we had been quite clear about the delegate system. But we did not know how to approach this matter.

I agree with the previous speaker in regard to the difficulties of our work among the women employed in factories.

In conclusion I should like to say that we should consider here the question of the establishment of a better connection with the International Women's Secretariat. For instance over two years ago we drew up a plan for the housewives' leagues and sent it to the Secretariat, but received no reply to it. Perhaps it would be better to establish direct connection with the land secretariats and to appoint there a comrade who is to be in charge of women's work. Many matters could be settled better and with less delay if they had not to go via the International Women's Secretariat before reaching the respective land secretariats.

It would be much better if we could send our material direct to the land secretariat, but if this is to be done, all the land Secretariats should appoint comrades whose special business will be to keep in touch with the International Women's Secretariat.

Comrade KASPAROVA (International Women's Secretariat).

I will not keep your attention long as I merely want to point out that work among the women in the East is in a bad way. I am compelled to say that in Women's Departments of imperialist countries, such as for instance, France, Great

Britain, etc., which have colonies and which should certainly turn their attention to work among the women of the East, there are no signs of this work and hardly anything is even done to arouse public interest in this question. Our comrades in the Communist Parties of a number of West European countries must bring up the question of work among women in the colonies at their Party conferences, they must draw the attention of the Party to this question.

I invite comrades in countries with colonies — Great Britain, France, etc. — to include at last work among the Eastern women into their programme and to pay due attention to it.

It has been decided lately in the International Women's Secretariat to transfer the experiences collected during work among the women of the Soviet East to the foreign East in as far as they can be adapted to conditions prevailing there. This will enable comrades working in the apparatus of the I. W. S. to concentrate all their energy in this work.

Why is the exchange of experiences still so inadequate? Because the I. W. S., is still minus an instruction-apparatus and also minus an international periodical. It is impossible to give exhaustive information and publish the necessary articles in the "Communist Woman" or "Woman Worker" and "Peasant Woman" or in the Russian press in general, considering that their space is hardly sufficient to do full justice to questions concerning the life of Russia and to give a certain amount of information about life abroad. There is great need for an international women's periodical to be published in four languages in which work among women of the Soviet Union, of the foreign and Soviet East, of western Europe and America can be brought forward and in which the theory and practice of the women's movement in these countries — problems of women's work, women's life, the economic and juridical position of women, their position in society and in the family, can be discussed. With the help of such a periodical, through an exchange of delegations in local, central and international East-conferences, an adequate exchange of experiences, mutual information and solidarity can be effected.

Fifth Session.

June 1st, 1926, (evening).

End of Discussion on Comrade Sturm's Report.

Comrade BILLETTA (Italy).

The speaker described first of all the special conditions created by Fascism in order to show under what difficult conditions the Italian comrades have to work, for instance, compulsory adherence of all workers to Fascist trade unions, spy system factories, terrorism.

Lately a law has been passed prohibiting trade union agitation and strikes. Women were the first to break this law. In Milan 100 women went on strike, and they are being tried now. The result of the trial is a subject of speculation and excitement.

The economic position of workers is truly appalling. Wages are continually reduced, and prices are soaring. There is an acute housing crisis. Very few lodgings are available and rent is so high that it swallows up one-third of workers' wages. All this creates an anti-Fascist atmosphere, and even women begin to understand that they must organise themselves against Fascism.

I will deal now with the women's movement itself. During the International Women's Day women published and distributed thousands of leaflets. In this work they were especially assisted by the Young Communist League. Moreover, thousands of copies of the Lenin pamphlet "Lenin and the Women" were circulated during Women's Day. Their method of procedure was: to collect small groups of working women and women Party members as they could not have the public meetings.

The women wanted to keep the Anniversary of Lenin's Death together, and our women comrades perambulated Milan

for two hours on the electric railway in order to get the detectives off their track and to prevent them discovering the flat where the memorial meeting was to be held.

As to the Party apparatus, the Party Executive has not only fully understand the importance of work among women, it has also supported and furthered it in every possible way, although there are still many rank and file Party comrades who have no proper understanding for this work.

In factories and workers' tenements sympathisers grouped themselves around the nuclei, particularly in Turin, Milan, Genoa and Triest. These circles of sympathising women turned their attention mostly to factory and special women's questions. The Party is now engaged in forming mixed agitation committees with Social Democratic workers employed in factories, for the purpose of defending the trade unions and to make preparations for wage struggles. Women are also represented in these agitation committees.

Another important work, which has been initiated is that of working women correspondents. It frequently happens that in the "Unità" (formerly a legal organ of the Party) two columns are filled with working and peasant women correspondence. The first meeting for the co-ordination of women correspondents was held in Milan a week ago. The illustrations given by these women's letters are highly interesting.

The comrade then described the appalling exploitation and conditions of the workers. In one factory girls receive, beside their wage, board and lodging, they are under the supervision of "sisters", they must come home at 8 p. m. and if

they are late, they are fined. They live in dark rooms and are given bad food on which they have to spend almost their entire wage. All correspondence is controlled by the "sisters" who also control their going out and coming in.

We hope to be able to develop our circles of sympathisers into Delegate Meetings. However, this work will be very arduous, a great caution will have to be used because of the widely spread detective system.

Women are very active wherever struggle against Fascism takes place. For instance, in Reggio-Emilia a strike was carried out entirely by Communist women.

The Party has a special apparatus for work among women, but the work of the Women's Departments cannot be continuous. It is sporadic, for if men Party comrades are arrested somewhere, women comrades have to carry on the whole Party work and cannot devote themselves entirely to women's work.

But I must say that the women comrades are well able to do justice to the work, they have succeeded to divert into right channels the numerous discontented elements who carry on a disorderly struggle against Fascism. In all struggles

women stood side by side with their men comrades. In Parma women erected barricades and supplied the men with ammunition and food. In Como women set free the imprisoned workers and rang the bells to call out all workers into the struggle. In another town a woman comrade who participated in the preceding Congress, was attacked by Fascists in the factory. The women factory workers left their work immediately, came to her rescue and saved her from the clutches of the Fascists.

Comrade SCOTT (Great Britain):

The British Delegation is not in agreement with Comrade Malm's statement on delegate meetings. After the Fifth Congress there was considerable opposition to the idea of delegate meetings, and it was only through the pressure of the Women's Secretariat and the letters received from them that the Women's Department of the British Party has begun this work. After the report of our first delegate meeting had been sent to the Secretariat, we received very helpful suggestions and criticisms on the work.

The Party Apparatus and Work Among Women. Reporter: Comrade FRIED (Org. Department of the E. C. C. I.)

Comrades,

It seems that our proposals concerning this point will not be opposed, and therefore there will be hardly much discussion.

In regard to the question of establishing an adequate apparatus, the lines on which this is to be done, were decided upon in the course of former conferences and consultations. I shall therefore confine myself to the theses and decisions of the Third International Conference of Women Communists in Moscow.

I want first of all to allude to the decisions of the Second Org. Conference. It was held just before the last Plenum of the E. C. C. I. and adopted fairly important decisions concerning the work of Communist Parties, particularly concerning the construction and structure of the Party. The instruction re structure and establishment of factory nuclei which deals with the methods and results of the general work, contains the following statement on work among women:

"In enterprises employing women, a man or woman comrade should be appointed as organiser of work among women who is to be subordinate to the chairman of the nucleus or the nucleus executive."

The "Instruction on the structure and work of factory and street nuclei" adopted by the Second Org. Conference of the E. C. C. I. and endorsed by the Org. Bureau of the E. C. C. I. on March 26, 1926, contains the following statement on work among women:

"Nuclei in factories employing women should carry on continuous agitation, propaganda and organisational activity adapted to women. Not only the organiser appointed for this task and not only women communists in the enterprises, but the nucleus as a whole should devote itself to this work.

The agitational and propagandist activity among unorganised women is carried on through the circulation of the women's newspapers of the Party, through getting new subscribers for these papers, through the introduction of a women's column in the factory newspaper, through working women's correspondence in the Party press and through women's meetings at which questions of particular interest to women are discussed.

Special attention is to be paid to the organisation of a regular recruiting activity for women's entry into trade unions and co-operatives (the percentage of women not organised in trade unions is much bigger than that of men). Circles of non-Party working women are to be formed in order to induce sympathising working women to join the trade unions.

For work among young working women who in some branches of industry constitute a considerable section of the

total number of workers employed there, (textile industry), close collaboration between the women's organiser and the Y. C. L. nucleus is essential.

Work among women workers employed in adjoining factories (if no nuclei exist there) is to form part and parcel of the work of the nucleus carried on by it outside its own factory. The same applies to work among housewives (workingmen's wives)."

Thus we have already a basis for the construction of the women's apparatus in the Communist Parties. But what is our present task?

I think that on the one hand we should examine once more the decisions on the strength of more recent experiences and that on the other hand we must make these decisions a little more precise adapting them to the tasks confronting us and co-ordinating thereby our apparatus.

We have been able to achieve lately definite organisational successes, particularly in Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany. The greatest success has been achieved in Czecho-Slovakia.

In Czecho-Slovakia the Communist Party was probably fettered with Social Democratic traditions more than in any other country. There was an organisational division of the Party: men on one side and women on the other, women members were organised in special sections. The Women's Commission was elected by women. During the past period it has been possible to alter this. At present new organs for work among women have been established in Czecho-Slovakia. Women's Departments are a component part of the Party apparatus.

But the work of factory nuclei among women is still inadequate although it has been continually pointed out to the Parties — and this referred of course also to Party work as a whole — that factories are the most important centre for our work.

In the Norwegian Party the old women's organisations which existed within it, have been liquidated. But the questionnaires which have been returned to us show that commissions and departments organised for work among women are not appointed by the Party Executive, but are elected by conferences. I think that this is a relic of former conditions. We look upon women's departments as organs of the C. C., the district, the sub-district, the local groups and finally of the nuclei. The nucleus executive is elected by the nucleus, the central executive is elected by the Party Congress. The nucleus executive as a whole is responsible to the nucleus and the central executive to the Party Congress. In the intervening period the competent Party executive carries on and controls the work. For its various tasks it forms departments, and these departments are organs of the corresponding Party executives.

I think that in view of the material received from Norway this point should be emphasised.

I am coming now to Comrade Malm's arguments. She said that **Delegate Meetings** can be created without the reorganisation of the Party, without factory nuclei. Are delegate meetings an aim in itself or a means to an aim? I want to say very emphatically that women's departments are not formed as an aim in itself, but because with their help one wants to bring the mass of women workers under the control of the Party. As already ascertained, delegate meetings are the best means for getting in contact with the mass of non-Party working women. It is the duty of the apparatus for work among women to control delegate meetings and to utilise them into interests of the Party. In enterprises it is the nucleus which has to appoint functionaries, women's organisers for this work. But what is to be done when no nucleus exists? If one cannot be sure that the women will come under the control of the Party, there is the risk of them being mobilised not for the C. P., but for the Social Democratic or some other Party. This danger which the Finnish comrade also emphasised cannot be ignored.

In the discussion which has taken place up till now, — certainly on the first item of the agenda — no differences cropped up in regard to the question of construction. But there are among the material received by the International Women's Secretariat, documents which show that there is still misunderstanding on this point. A proof of this is our Swedish brother Party. Their Central Women's Department has replied to the questionnaire. Some of these replies give us food for thought. They say:

"The aim of work among women is to make women active in all the branches of Party work. There is no other plan of work."

Thus, according to the Swedish Women's Department opinion no plan of work is required for work among women, as the Party has such a plan, although a general one.

The reply to another question concerning the construction of the Women's Department and the apparatus for work among women in the provinces is: that this is a question which can only be answered by the Party Executive.

The Swedish comrades are saying that the question of drawing women into nucleus and fraction work must be considered, but that everything else is feminism. But who is in the nuclei and in the fractions? Communist Party members employed in factories and residing in certain districts are in factory and street nuclei. Fractions on the other hand consist of members of Communist Parties co-ordinated within the framework of definite non-Party mass organisations.

Thus if the International Women's Conference is asked to deal with this question, it means that the Swedish comrades simply do not understand the tasks of Women's Departments; it seems that they still fail to understand that these departments are formed for work among women masses. Therefore we must emphasise once more: women's departments which are organs of the Party for work among women do not have the task of drawing women who are members of the Party into nuclei or fractions. This work is part and parcel of the work of the Party executives themselves. In the best of cases women's departments can assist in this work. The Party has created definite organs for work among women, in order to work among the women outside the Party in order to bring them over to our side by means of delegate meetings, fractions and individual work.

Comrades, when I was formulating the plan for the construction of the women's apparatus, I wanted precisely to emphasise this point, and this is the meaning of my little introduction to this plan. Well, comrades, what are our immediate tasks in the direction of remedying the big and small defects noticeable in the work of our individual sections in the past period?

Ideological difficulties were already mentioned here. There is still a good bit of resistance to women's work within the Party. The French women comrades have pointed out the confusion of ideas which exist on this question in the French Party. They quoted the "Humanité". We notice that the Party does not look upon women's work as work of the Party as a whole, as for instance, Org, Agitprop work and work in the army, etc. We have seen that it is necessary to fight against this ideology not only in the Party, but among the entire proletariat. Such are the ideological difficulties which impede us in the work among women.

Another point is the necessity of still greater concentration of this work in the factories. Without work in the factories work among women workers is impossible, and women factory workers are more important to us than any other sections of working women, and this applies also to the smaller countries, also to Norway. The Norwegian comrade said in her report that only one per cent of the women Party members are women workers, the remainder being housewives. But we are a Party of the proletarian revolution. The proletariat itself plays the most important role in the revolution. We must have behind us not only men, but also women proletarians. The female proletariat is small in Norway. The Comrade mentioned 46,000 industrial women workers. In Russia the percentage of the female proletariat and of the proletariat as a whole compared with the total population is perhaps even lower than in Norway, and yet the first and foremost task of the Bolshevik Party was the capture of the proletariat including proletarian women.

The centre of our work must be in the factories and in connection with this creation of **Delegate Meetings** should be looked upon as the most important task. But this certainly does not mean that we should limit ourselves to delegate meetings. Through delegate meetings we want to get to other work (trade unions, co-operatives), and also vice versa, through work in other spheres we want to develop the delegate meetings system. Generally speaking I think that there must be continued contact between the various forms of work.

Comrades, I have for instance noticed that in some countries parallel work does not only exist in the various departments but even in the women's departments themselves. There are countries where Women's Departments and Women's Commissions exist side by side, for instance in France. They frequently do the same work. I think that a parallel existence of such organisations is inexpedient. It goes without saying that, as all other departments, women departments are subordinate to the respective Party executives.

Another point is the necessity to register Party forces. It goes without saying that the training of new forces is also very important.

Comrade Faussecave has told us that in a number of French factories where nuclei have no women members, the nuclei were of the opinion that they need not organise work among women. This fact shows the necessity of appointing women's organisers in all nuclei.

By the by women comrades in Norway have written to say that in a whole series of nuclei comrades have been appointed for work among women. This point was of particular importance, and that is why we laid before you the question of nucleus women's organisers in the form of theses.

The theses on women's organisers in nuclei mention eventual creation of women's commissions. This does not mean that women's commissions are to be created now in all the nuclei. First of all, women's organisers are to be appointed. But where this has already been done and where work is growing and extending, it is expedient to appoint for it not only one woman comrade, but several women or men comrades who should constitute a commission which is to discuss and prepare questions referring to the development of work among women. Women's departments and organisations should not limit themselves to receiving instructions and directions from above, they should themselves lay questions and problems before the Party executives insisting that they should put up a fight for them. They should also induce Party executives to receive reports on definite questions, compelling them in this manner to issue further directions for the work. This is a very important point which must be emphasised here.

Some of the material received also shows that the question of connection between the various women departments is not quite clear. It is frequently thought by comrades, for instance in France, that direct connection between the women's departments of the various authorities is essential. I must point out that this would lead to the elimination of Party executives. The Women's Department is merely a definite part of the respective Party authority. The higher women's department instruct and control the work, but general control is in the hands of the appointed Party executives.

Comrades, I think that there must be a number of questions which have not been expressed with sufficient clearness in these theses and resolutions. This is due to the fact that we did not receive enough material, particularly on the activity and con-

struction of women's departments. The questionnaires sent out by the Women's Department of the Comintern to the various sections have only been returned lately, and also not all of them.

But the fact that we have here among us not only representatives of Parties, but also districts and even factory nuclei, gives reason to hope that important experiences which were perhaps omitted in the material can be still utilised.

The result of the Second Org. Conference at which reports were received from a Russian factory nucleus and a Russian district organisation, have shown that the material which they

have given us is also of considerable importance for work in the West. The Russian Party has such a big reservoir of experiences, that any Communist Party can derive profit from them. We noticed with what interest comrades from the Western Parties listened to these reports. They visited various district executives in Moscow, studied their work and got an insight into this work. They found there a collection of material which cannot be studied in a hurry. Therefore, I should like the women comrades not to rest content with the reports received here, but to visit Russian factories and Party organisations.

Sixth Session.

June 2nd, 1926 (Morning).

Work Among Women in a Moscow District.

Report by Comrade MURSINA (Chief of the Women's Department of the Moscow District Krassnaya Presnya):

There are 320 enterprises employing 86,570 workers in the Krassnaya Presnya district. Two hundred of these enterprises employ women (total number 27,183). These women are organised in 16 trade unions. Most of them belong to the Textile Workers' Union and to the Chemical, Food Workers', Tailors and Printers' Unions. There are also about 70,000 housewives in this district.

Ten people work in this Women's Department of this district — the chief of the department and nine instructors (all of them women). Every instructor is allotted work in a special factory group. The women functionaries in the nuclei are under the control of the nucleus organiser who belongs to the nucleus committee. There are also women's commissions in the nuclei in which the nucleus organiser acts as chairman. We have in our district altogether 95 nucleus organisers, ten of whom are freed from all other work, whereas the others perform several functions. The women's commissions in the district have 690 members.

This year 2,888 Delegates were elected in the district. Two kinds of delegate meetings work in the district: some worked in the factory nuclei and the other in the district executive. An instructor is attached to every delegate meeting who is responsible for its work. Delegate meetings have to keep to the programme issued by the Women Workers' Department of the C. C. or of the Moscow Party Executive. Fourty nine circles were formed for the elaboration of delegate meetings questions. There is on an average a 73% attendance at delegate meetings and a 50% attendance at circles which elaborate the questions.

All delegates are trained to do practical work and are for this purpose attached either to the sections in the delegate meetings or to trade union organisations in factories and other enterprises. Two hundred and fifteen delegates had learned reading and writing in the course of one year.

Conferences of non-Party women are the best means for the establishment and consolidation of the connection between the Party and the mass of working women. But the Women's Department of the Krassnaya Presnya district has refused to have anything to do with general women workers' factory meetings. At general meetings working women are free to act as they like, and it is therefore not necessary to have recourse to that form of work. Mass work among working women is also carried on through the trade unions. The women workers of the district are almost all of them organised in trade unions. A considerable percentage of them do active trade union work, and this percentage is growing from year to year. For instance, in 1924, 125 women workers worked in factory councils, whereas their number was 425 in 1925; in 1924 there were 350 women workers in the commissions of the factory councils, and in 1925, 844; there were 328 women workshop delegates in 1924, and 1,335 in 1925.

There are 62 clubs in the district all of which have working women's corners. There are altogether 50 such corners in the district, and 12 separate rooms are set aside for them. The clubs have also dressmaking courses (26 altogether attended by

1,600 working women) and elementary political education circles (altogether 40 attended by 816 working women).

Women workers are also recruited for voluntary public societies: for the I. R. A., the Patronage Society "Children's Friends", the Society of Friends of the Air-Fleet, etc. The best work is done in the I. R. A. and in the Children's Friends. There are ten thousand women members in the latter, 230 of whom do active work. The Children's Friends Society established last year in the villages 57 creches, 23 dressmaking and embroidery schools; it also sent seven sewing machines to various villages, and organised eight peasant women's corners in various reading rooms.

Women are also becoming more active in the co-operative movement. For instance, there were 30 women delegates in this movement in 1923, 214 in 1924, and 542 in 1925. In 1925, there were 205 women members of land commissions and 693 in 1926.

There is also increasing activity of working women in the general work of the Krassnaya Presnya district and the Moscow Soviet. This year, 80% of the women workers participated in the elections; in 1924, 25 women workers were elected to the Moscow Soviet, and 155 in 1925; in the Soviet of the Krassnaya Presnya district there were 70 women workers in 1924, and 190 in 1925.

Efforts are also made to draw women into the Women Workers' and Peasant Women Correspondents' Movement. In the district there are altogether 1,881, working and peasant women correspondents, including 235 women members of editorial boards. Sixty per cent of all the working women in the district read newspapers. The periodical "The Woman Delegate" is particularly popular among working women; this year its edition reached 20,000 copies.

In order to raise the qualification of women workers, courses are held in this district for the training of tramway drivers and medical assistance. Last year 276 women workers were provided with a higher qualification. 260 women workers were promoted to responsible work (Party and economic work) in the district.

The entire work among housewives is carried on in close contact with the district soviet. This work is two-fold. Maximum attention is paid to working men's wives, the work among them being carried on through the factory nuclei. Another part of the work is carried on through housing co-operatives. Workingmen's wives are drawn into the work of delegate meetings.

Statistics re work connected with the social emancipation of women show that there are in the district 28 creches accommodating 1,700 children, ten medical consultation centres for pregnant women, and babies at the breast, and 48 kindergartens.

Throughout the district 15,048 women workers = 45% of the total number, are drawn into public activity. The number of women members in the Party is also growing. There are at present 4,821 women members = 20.6% of the total membership of the Krassnaya Presnya district.

Work Among Women in a Factory.

Report of Comrade GUSSEVA (Nucleus Organiser of the Glukhov Textile Factory).

Prior to the revolution, our factory belonged to the capitalists **Morozov Bros.** At that time the factory employed 15,000 workers permanently and an additional 1,000 for seasonal work. The exploitation of such a number of workers made the Brothers Morozov rich and enabled them to extend the business which absorbed more and more workers and increased the profit of the capitalists.

The conditions under which workers, and particularly women workers had to live, were very hard. The average wage of the workers was 20 roubles a month. This was considered a high wage compared with what the workers of other factories were earning. But nothing remained in the pockets of the workers from this wage, because employers managed affairs in a manner that the workers were entirely at their mercy. The Morozovs had also their own shops and the workers had to do all their purchases in them.

The housing conditions were appalling: In a room 8 to 9 square sazhen (1 sazhen = about 2.13 metres) three families, i. e. 12 to 15 people had to live.

Moreover, all sorts of deductions were made from wages: for lighting, housing, baths, hospitals, etc. Money fines were also very hard on workers.

It was very difficult to get employment, one had to have protection. There was a ten hour working day. Exploitation of children began at the age of ten, and the textile factories headed the way in this respect.

Particularly hard was the position of women workers, their wage was only one half of the men's wage, and then there were fines if something went wrong with the work.

There was of course no legislation for the protection of woman labour nor for the protection of motherhood and childhood. Only two days rest was allowed women after confinements, and if they stayed away three or four days, they were dismissed. It frequently happened that women workers give birth to children at the loom.

These appalling conditions drove workers into the struggle. The Glukhov textile factory witnessed many strike movements. After a big strike in 1905, some of the workers' demands were acceded to. For instance, water was laid on in the dwellings, washing accommodation was provided and rent as well as payment for lighting and hospital treatment was abolished. Working women were given four weeks holiday after confinement, receiving half pay during this time, but they certainly lost their places.

Workers had to pay a heavy price for these achievements, many were dismissed and arrested, and it even happened that workers were expelled from the Moscow Gubernia. At that time there was no organisation of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in the factories; strike movements were under the leadership of non-Party comrades or comrades who had been sent by the Moscow Party Executive. It was only in 1910 that an illegal nucleus of the R. S. D. L. P. consisting of 20 members was formed.

After the victory of the reactionaries, there was more pressure on the workers, and during the world war, when nearly all the factory workers were women (the men being at the front) exploitation reached its height.

This led to a big strike in 1915 which lasted a whole month. Workers were demanding that the war should be stopped, that foremen known as speeders up and tormentors of working men and women should be dismissed, that fines be abolished, that boiling water for tea be provided free of charge, and that holidays and leave of absence in connection with confinements be given with full pay.

Many workers were thrown into the street with their families and could not find employment in other factories because of their reputation as "fomentors of discontent".

The long duration of the war made itself felt also in the factory of Morozov brothers. There was lack of raw material, of foodstuffs, and also of fuel. One department after the other had to be closed down.

Matters did not improve even when the Provisional Government came into power. Although the Mensheviks promised a great deal with regard to improvement of conditions they did nothing.

After the October Revolution the workers felt themselves masters of the factory. Great efforts were needed to keep the factory going at all. Our country was surrounded on all sides by white guard gangs. Our industry was ruined. When the workers took over the factory, the machinery was partly destroyed, spoiled by frost, there were no means nor raw material. But these difficulties were no deterrent to the workers. Women workers brought fuel from a distance of 15 versts (one verst = 1.1 kilometre), namely peat from the marshy districts (there were hardly any horses) and dragged also raw material from the store houses to the workshops.

Moreover, support had to be given to the front. Workers who were themselves hungry gave everything they had to the Red Army. As a result of starvation a typhus epidemic broke out to which dozens of our workers fell victim. Here too, working women proved themselves self-sacrificing.

In spite of the terribly difficult situation, the Soviet Government managed to come to the help of women workers. Four hundred creches were established, and a feeding centre for the children of all workers where four thousand children were fed free of charge.

Owing to correct leadership on the part of the Communist Party and also owing to the workers' class consciousness, the factory was saved and re-built.

It employs at present 14,619 workers including 7,916 women workers (54.1%). The average wage is 42 roubles, about 104% of the pre-war wage.

A great deal has already been done for the improvement of women workers' conditions: there are three creches for 130 children, and one home for 80 children. The establishment of new creches to accommodate 180 children is contemplated. It is also proposed to have summer playgrounds for 400 children. The factory has a medical consultation room for pregnant women and babies which can look after 1,000 people. The maternity home is very well equipped. There is also a hospital. All hostels have a laundry. Two years ago, a dining hall was put up which can accommodate 4,000 people. Up till now 250 new buildings have been erected.

The nucleus woman organiser carries on the work among women workers. There are altogether four nucleus women organisers in the factory. In order to develop the work and to assist nucleus organisers, commissions for the work among women have been appointed. Every member of the women's commission is given certain work to do in some branch of our work (trade union, club, or mass work, circulation of the press, recruiting members for the working women's correspondence movement, for voluntary organisations, etc.) for which this member is responsible and on which she has to report at the session of the women's commission. Workshop women organisers have also been appointed. They receive assistance from the heads of the workshops. There are altogether 57 such workshop heads in the factory.

Four Delegate Meetings with altogether 740 delegates work in the factory. One hundred and thirty eight delegates are exempt from other work. There is an average of 65 to 70% attendance of delegate meetings. All delegates, except those who are taught to read and write, must do some practical work, and are attached to various public organisations.

Mass work among working women is carried on through working women's conferences and also with the help of trade unions. The following statistics are available in regard to women's adherence to trade union organisations. There are ten women among members of factory councils and one of them holds the position of secretary, there are also five women factory council candidates, two women members of auditing commissions, 154 working women active in other commissions, 423 workshop delegates, 216 collectors of membership contributions,

29 members of the trade union committee of the factory department, 8 members of the enlarged committee of textile workers and also of the district trade union committee. Altogether 847 working women are engaged in trade union work.

One of the forms of mass work are social evenings for proletarian women. The local clubs organise such evenings to develop women's self activity. Lectures by medical men and readings from periodicals and newspapers, are held in women's homes and in red corners.

Working women are also recruited for voluntary public societies: 600 belong to the I.R.A., 1,185 to the "Children's Friends" and 450 to the patronage society.

Two dressmaking schools for 200 people have been opened for the purpose of drawing working women gradually into political education work. Two elementary political circles are attached to these schools. The circulation of our periodicals among the women workers is as follows: "The Woman Delegate" 1,266 copies, "The Woman Communist" 70 copies. Eighty per cent of the women workers subscribe to newspapers and periodicals. There is a circle of 20 working women correspondents.

Discussion on Comrade Fried's Report.

Comrade MALM (Finland):

Penetration of the Communist Party into the factories and the masses is, generally speaking, one of the most difficult tasks. The last Enlarged Executive of the C.I. has shown how weak the influence of the Communist Party is as yet in many countries. It was very difficult for the Communist Parties of the European countries to get a footing among the masses because old traditions and Social Democratic relics are still very strong there.

In Finland too, we had to overcome certain difficulties. The work can be divided according to two periods:

1. After the defeat of the revolution the Finnish Socialist Labour Party was organised which sympathised with the Comintern. Among the members of this Party were many left revolutionary workers who, however, were not quite free of the old traditions and habits inherited from the Social Democratic Party. This legal party did not take its origin in the factories and lost therefore touch with the masses when it was dissolved by the bourgeoisie, and the same thing happened with the Young Socialist League.

2. But matters were quite different when the Young Communist League was dissolved the second time. We had then already the class organisations of the workers in the factories and through them contact with the masses was established. But another thing happened immediately after the dissolution, a new organisation was formed. Militant class organisations were also formed in the factories after the dissolution of the Socialist Labour Party, and through them contact with the masses was established. These factory organisations are a great help to the activation and development of the working women's movement.

In regard to Comrade Fried's report I would like to say: He did not make it clear if the delegate movement should be organised also in factories where no nuclei exist. There are some countries where it was possible to initiate the application of the delegate system without nuclei. Practice has shown that the delegate movement has contributed to the organisation of nuclei. Lenin gives the advice to utilise "everything and everyone" for the consolidation of the organisational basis in the factories. In my opinion Fried did not recommend to follow Lenin's advice and to utilise everything and everyone for the capture of the masses. He has, on the contrary, indirectly supported the opponents of the delegate system. Such an attitude is tantamount to opposition to the delegate movement. It is possible to organise the mass of non-Party working women with the help of the delegate system and also to educate them for active participation in our movement.

Comrade Fried's assertions can be made light of by comrades who are endeavouring to impede the application of the delegate system. I think that in some places the resolution needs correcting to the effect that the delegate movement is to be introduced and spread even in places where no Communist nuclei exist. Thereby opposition to the delegate system will be neutralised. We must follow Lenin's advice and must make a uniform decision that the principle of delegate meetings must be carried out everywhere.

90% of the women employed in the factory belong to consumers' co-operatives and take an active part in the work of co-operative organisations: 32 women workers are co-operative delegates, 14 members of land commissions, one is a member of the auditing commission, 11 work as practitioners and two are delegates of the Moscow consumers' co-operative society.

Eighty three women workers are members of town soviets; there is one woman in the presidium of the District Executive, 48 women are jurors in peoples' courts and one woman from this factory is member of the All-Russian Central Executive. Moreover, 100 women workers work as practitioners in the sections of the town Soviets.

Women workers are encouraged to take up responsible work. Thirty women workers are engaged in economic work and twelve in Party and trade union work.

In this factory there are altogether 310 women Party members, and the organisation of the Young Communist League is also growing rapidly. It has 300 girl members (49%). There are 720 girls in the Pioneer corps.

Comrade SCOTT (Great Britain):

Our work, which began just before the V. Congress of the Communist International, was very difficult in the first year, and the Party did not show a clear understanding for this work. At first, we had a women's organiser and a committee which worked with her, but on the whole the Party left this work to the women alone. Since the last Party Conference, the Party has become more and more aware of the importance of this work and is taking a greater interest in it, as it did for instance at the last International Women's Day.

At present, a Central Women's Committee is at work, and Comrade Turner, a member of the C.C. of the Party, is the organiser. Another member of the C.C. is in our Committee, and she establishes the connection with the C.C. Our Committee has representatives in the Agitprop and Trade Union Departments, and Comrade Turner herself is a member of the Organisation Bureau.

In each district, a member of the District Committee is entrusted with the work. In London it is a male comrade, and the work is progressing very well. There is a small committee under the leadership of the comrade who is responsible. We have been able to arrange a number of meetings of the women's organisations in order to discuss the possibilities and problems of the work which has to be done. In all other places, women comrades have been entrusted with this work.

From the Central Women's Committee we regularly send circulars and reports with information and instructions to all the women's committees. All these reports are previously controlled by the Political Bureau.

Special work, such as the trade union work, is done in connection with the comrade who are entrusted with this work. Thus, the general Party fractions in the trade unions have done active work in connection with the campaign of the British Trade Union Congress for the purpose of persuading women workers to join the trade unions, so that the resolution passed at the Congress at Scarborough did not remain a dead letter.

In the Labour Party again, the organisation of the Left wing is done by the women's sections in connection with the fractions of the Labour Party and with the comrades in the local groups and districts who are entrusted with that work.

In the same way, in the Co-operatives we work in close touch with the Co-operative Department.

Our factory nuclei are as a rule small. They consist of two or three comrades. Wherever possible however, we add a woman comrade so that she may do the work among the women. In the factory nuclei in the textile industry, the majority of the Party functionaries are women. The women's Department is represented in most districts where the Party management has departments for work in the factory nuclei. In this way, the work of the women's departments progresses more steadily because we are supported by the whole Party. To a certain extent moreover we have to fight in order to get this work recognised as a piece of Party work and not to have it left entirely to the women. We have however made good progress in this direction and have benefited greatly by the support of the Party.

Seventh Session.

June 2, 1926, evening.

Proposal for Support of the British Miner's Strike.

Comrade FAUSSECAVE (France):

On behalf of the presidium I submit to the International Women's Conference the proposal to take the initiative for active support of the British miners' strike. We must immediately decide how we can extend support to the British miners and their families.

The first task is a large-scale public campaign. We must draw the broad masses of toiling women into action committees in support of the strikers through the Party, trade unions and co-operatives. Especially important in this respect is the organising of relief for the children of the miners in connection with the Red Aid and the International Workers' Aid. In France the Party has already taken the initiative and has already brought British miners' children over to France to be cared for there.

In this campaign our Parties, the whole Comintern and also the Profintern, must put greatest value upon devoting broadest attention in the press to the mobilising of the women — and this not only by depicting the hard sacrifices of the miners' families, but also the heroic struggle of the British miners'

wives so as to awaken internationally the interest of the toiling women and appeal to their solidarity.

In order to give the United front the broadest possible form we should address ourselves to the Women's Commission of the Second International and to the Amsterdam Trade Union International and demand from them that they call upon the masses of women affiliated with them to organise the relief jointly with us. We will probably have no success in this. Thereby, however, we will show the broad masses of women who really represents the interests of the toiling masses.

Finally, the International Women's Secretariat should be instructed to publish a pamphlet which, on the basis of experiences presents the significance of the strike and throws special light upon the role of the working women.

We propose the election of a small commission to work out these proposals practically. The Commission should consist of the following comrades: Ercoli (Secretariat), Halbe (Germany), Faussecave (France), Scott (Great Britain), Edda Tennenbaum. Responsible: Scott.

The proposal of the Presidium was adopted unanimously.

Eight Session.

Morning, June 3, 1926.

On the proposal of the Presidium the Conference adopts a Resolution for Support of the British Miners' Strike. (For text of Resolution see Inprecorr, Vol. 6, No. 46, p. 749, 10th June 1926.)

The Women's Delegate Meetings.

Reporter: Comrade ARTIUKHINA:

Since the III. International Conference of Women Communists the International Women's Secretariat has devoted great attention to the question of organising women's delegate meetings. It must be stated that the International Women's Secretariat, as well as our functionaries in the Sections develop quite considerable activity towards establishing proper recognition for this question. At present the Communist Parties of the West no longer raise the question of whether or not women's delegate meetings are necessary. This stage of the work has already been overcome. What is now involved is the manner in which the organising of women delegate meetings is to be undertaken: where, with what means, and by what methods? The preparatory, most difficult and extensive work, has already been done.

Of course it is not easy to adapt our forms, which have proven serviceable under proletarian dictatorship, to the traditions of the West. In the organising of women delegate meetings the conditions under which our brother parties live and fight, must be considered. We must at the same time realise how slowly, and under what difficulties, the decisions of the Communist International concerning the reorganisation of our Party on a factory nucleus basis are taking root and being carried out. The question of the reorganisation of our Parties on a factory nucleus basis, and the question of a serious deep-going work among the masses of proletarian women — these questions hardly differ from one another with respect to the difficulties encountered in their practical execution.

The III. International Conference of Women Communists decided that in all parties it is necessary to study the possibilities of establishing women's delegate meetings. Accordingly, it was decided in the May Resolution of the Org. Bureau, subsequent to the V. Plenum, that the Parties should proceed with the organising of women delegate meetings. To some extent, the methods of work are already indicated there. It is

the task of our conference to discuss practically the manner in which in each separate country the organising women delegate meetings can now be undertaken.

At the III. Conference as well as at the Enlarged Executive last year, we talked about the tasks of the women delegate meetings. Now it is necessary to recall the fundamental tasks.

The basic and primary task is that through the Delegate Meetings we must bring our Party into contact with the masses of women workers. To the extent that the Party draws the active women workers closer to it and makes closer contact with the mass of women workers, to that extent it will be easier to solve the tasks confronting it.

The second task is, by means of the delegate meetings, to train the active women workers in the spirit of the principal tasks of the Parties, to win them for practical revolutionary work and in this manner create cadres of women workers who will support our Parties in their practical work.

The third task is to develop a body of activists, by means of the delegate meetings, from among the women workers, which will collaborate with the Party and later strengthen its ranks.

We must constantly think of these basic tasks in organising the delegate meetings. It is my task to make clear the manner in, and the conditions under which a women's delegate meetings can be organised. But before I go over to the practical part, I have to touch upon two fundamental questions. The first question — in respect to which objections are most frequently raised — is whether the delegate meetings can be elected immediately upon our beginning to organise them. The second question concerns the leading role of the Party.

With respect to the first question, we are of the opinion that in the first stage of the organising of delegate meetings, there can be no talk of an election: In order to elect delegates, a general meeting of women workers has to be arranged, which working conditions do not always permit. Let us just disregard the last eight years and take a look on how the delegate meetings were organised in Russia before the completed form existed (we are constantly perfecting this, making changes, supplements, adaptations, etc.). Eight years ago there was no thought of any election. You must not therefore have any advanced fears of the women delegate meetings, because an organisation by means of elections is difficult or impossible.

The organising of women delegate meetings is to be taken up in this form, that individual women Communists are selected by the nuclei and trade union fractions. In this selection it will be shown that one woman worker will be close to us, another will be discontented, and these are now to be brought over to our side. But a gradual selection we will then be able to organise a delegate meeting, at first for a whole group of factories, only later, after the development of our activity, will we be in a position to organise a delegate meeting in each factory.

The second question concerns the leadership by the Party. **Without the leadership of the Party, there cannot be any delegate meeting of women workers.** If there is a nucleus, if the district Party organisation is working well, and if we have access to the factories, then and only under such conditions can we organise a delegate meeting. A delegate meeting as an autonomous unit, which makes decisions and solves questions, is impossible. A delegate meeting without a Party organisation is likewise impossible.

Something else, however, is possible. If, in a factory where there is no Communist nucleus, there are one or two women Communists, a **delegate group** with 2, 3, 10 members — depending on the sympathy we enjoy there — can exist. An independent **Delegate Meeting** without a nucleus is inconceivable. The delegate meetings themselves will work on a district or sub-district scale according to local conditions.

Now as to the **practical side of the question.** These instructions are presented on this. In the instructions it is stated exactly where, how, and what is necessary for the organising of a delegate meeting. I should like to touch on only a few basic points. Before we proceed with the organising of delegate meetings, it is necessary that in the Party itself an **extensive preparatory activity** be developed. The question of the significance and work of the delegate meetings must be adequately illuminated in the Party itself, and a definite decision must be made instructing all Party members to take most active part in this activity. Furthermore this question is to be dealt with in the Party press so that the public opinion of the Party and its sympathisers will be prepared for this questions. The further activity is so complicated that we will not be able to cope with it without the authority of Party opinion.

Furthermore, a **plan** must we worked out. The question of where women's delegate meetings are to be organised is to be settled by the district, town or section organisation in which the delegate meeting is to be organised. The Party knows best the sentiment and possibilities for the activity of a delegate meeting. It is the task of our women functionaries to raise the question of organising delegate meetings before the Party. In this respect first of all the representatives of the largest enterprises come into consideration, where the nuclei are stronger and able to hold a delegate group under their influence.

The second pre-condition is the following: on the basis of inner Party work **certain enterprises** are to be designated from which delegates are to be sent, the nuclei of the respective factory to be instructed to carry out this work. The nucleus must then work out this question in detail at a Party meeting. The indispensable pre-condition for this is that the Party organisation be properly prepared, that the nucleus is acquainted with the tasks of the delegate meeting and from the very beginning is in a position to bring under its influence the delegate group formed in the factory. Furthermore the nucleus will help along also in the selection of the delegates. This is the absolutely indispensable minimum of preparatory work to be done by the Party in organising the women delegate meeting.

The immediate task bound up with this is a **registration of the biggest factories.** We must know definitely whether one

or another enterprise is most suitable, that the selection of the women delegates with whom we will work together, makes possible a beginning in building a women's delegate meeting. We establish contact with the enterprise in question and register all women Communists employed there. In the selection of delegates, we expect the greatest support from the Communist women.

The nucleus of the factories in which the election of women delegates is concentrated are confronted with certain conditions; first, that they must appoint a **woman's organiser**, and second, that they themselves **discuss the question** as to the manner in which the selection of delegates shall be undertaken and which women workers are best inclined for this work. The nucleus must formulate a clear **plan** for this work. Only after the Party is prepared ideologically, after a sort of small apparatus stands ready in the person of a woman organiser, can practical steps be taken towards the organising of delegate meetings. In our opinion, first of all the nucleus must take steps towards organising the delegate meeting, by selecting delegates for circles. These circles must not be confused with our circles for political education. What is involved are circles of sympathetic women workers, from whose midst the delegates can be elected. A general meeting of women workers we can very seldom call, and were we to elect one sympathetic woman worker from each factory we should have to get together for this purpose 30—40 factories. It is therefore absolutely necessary that we first have a small group of sympathetic women workers, which we call a circle.

Of course no one demands that what I say and what I write must be obeyed literally, it is necessary rather to adapt the instructions to prevailing conditions.

After we have circles of 2, 3, 5, 10 women workers in factories, we can speak of organising a delegate meeting in the districts. Here two kinds of organisation can be recommended. On the one hand it is possible to amalgamate the circles and to say this is our delegate meeting. But there is also another way. It would be difficult the first time to gather all members of the circles, so we can elect one woman worker from each circle and in this way likewise organise a delegate meeting. **These methods must be applied according to local conditions.** These preparatory activities will not demand too much time, provided that the entire Party organisation gives it considerable attention. Before organising a delegate meeting, however, we shall again have to turn to the Party. It is necessary to call a **Party Conference** at which the question of the delegate meeting is to be discussed. All details of the work of delegate meetings themselves are to be discussed with full thoroughness, and this through the Party organisation.

The organising of the first delegate meeting should take place under an especially favourable occasion. In order to awaken the interest of the women delegates and to assure their appearance at the next meeting, it is necessary to judge correctly the moment at which questions arise that are particularly urgent and practical for the women workers of the respective factory or factory group, e. g. the question of supporting the British miners, the question of high prices, work day, wages, the daily needs of the women workers, etc. It may happen that we are all prepared but that the proper moment has not yet come. In this case, it is better to wait for the sharpest moment for struggle. It is the business of the Party organisation to decide this question.

With respect to the **election of women delegates** we are of the opinion that the majority of the delegate meetings should consist of women workers and employees from big factories. The chief attention is to be devoted to the task of getting **women workers** into the circles and women delegate meetings. We must devote 90% of our attention to the women workers. Furthermore our attention must be given to the employees and wives of workers especially in the big centres of the metal industry an coal district. We must see to it that the women delegates who attended the first meeting also come to the second. The questions raised in the meeting must touch them very closely so that when they return to the factory they will be able to speak, to report, about what they heard at the delegate meeting.

We must take measures to make possible the calling of the meetings also for the second time. For this purpose a committee is to be elected to prepare and organise the following meeting. The committee of action must carry out the decisions of the

delegate meeting and render a report on the work entrusted to it. After we already have a women's delegate meeting the question arises of its extension. Every delegate should try to recruit one or two women workers so that the circle of delegates gradually broadens out. When we shall have a large circle in a factory, or a whole number of delegates, we shall be able, e. g. to call a meeting to permit the election of the woman delegate. This matter does not belong to the first stage of our work however.

Now as to the working plan of the delegate meetings. The plan must be fixed in advance. It has often happened that the women were called together and only then, on the spot, it was decided what was to be discussed. This must not be.

Now as to the practical collaboration of the delegate meetings in a whole series of tasks. This involves participation in mass strikes, conferences, active participation in the tasks of the non-Party mass organisations, such as the I. R. A., etc. It is necessary to give the women delegates a definite social work. This will not only make possible the further ideological growth of the delegates, but also attach them to the Party.

As to the content of the delegate meetings' activity, we might cite a whole series of examples. These questions also must be fitted to the conditions of the current delegate meetings. It is necessary to draw the women delegates into active work in the existing organisations. First of all they must be made into members of the trade unions and co-operatives. Through the Communist fraction the delegate must be drawn into activity in the organisation in which she was heretofore often only a passive member. The discussion on this report will give an opportunity to make a whole series of practical proposals.

We know that it is impossible to transfer to the West the working forms of the Soviet Union, but we are of the opinion that this form of our activity among the women workers gives the Party the maximum of opportunity for the winning of the masses of women toilers. We do not want to solve

the question mechanically. We must take into reckoning every detail and consider the existing conditions. But we can recommend this form because it has given the greatest results, and this not only in the Soviet Union as it is today but also before the revolution and the period between the February and the October Revolutions. Do not forget, Comrades, that only in the ninth year of the revolution have we for the first time struck a balance on the activity of the women's delegate meetings in the factory (the conference of district women's functionaries on this work among women workers and women peasants has just concluded).

The fact that the women's delegate meeting is organised by the nucleus creates a higher degree of opportunity to broaden out the Party's influence on the masses, to know what is doing in the mass of workers and to call the attention of the Party to questions whose treatment is demanded by the masses of women. We, also, did not immediately get to the point of electing the delegates. First we put together simple circles, we gathered groups, we said you, Mary, and you, Darya, are to come. Thus it was especially between the February and October Revolutions, when it was necessary to carry our revolutionary slogans to the masses. At that time we could not arrange any kind of meetings in the factories for the simple reason that we were not even permitted to enter there. Before we got to the election of delegates to meetings we had already carried on an extensive pains-taking preparatory work.

In conclusion I again repeat that the central point of our attention in organising delegate meetings must be given to the women workers; then the results of our work will also be greater. And after a few years, when we shall again gather, we will be in a position to say more than we can now about our practical experiences in this question. The thing is started. A whole series of countries is beginning to apply our form of work, the women's delegate meetings. We look forward to the results. (Applause.)

Discussion on the Report of Comrade Artiukhina.

Comrade HALBE (Germany):

We are quite in agreement with the practical directions presented to the conference.

There are no differences of opinion on the basic question as to whether or not we should organise delegate meetings. We are of the opinion that they are an excellent means of gathering together the women workers in the factories, to activate them and connect them with the Party. In the whole German Party there is no one who is opposed to the holding of delegate meetings. We must first work on the women workers ideologically, we must first make contact with the working women and explain to them what a delegate meeting is.

Such connection we must establish first of all in the big enterprises where we have nuclei or connections, so that we can make it comprehensible to the women workers. And if we organise a delegate meeting from the five or six factories in which we have connections, then to the second or third delegate meetings we can allow women workers to be delegated from a factory where we have no nucleus. But this can happen only after they have seen and know what a delegate meeting is, who calls it, what is to be done with it. We have had experiences in this work in the two years since the last conferences.

On the first point of the agenda I already said that in Germany we have not yet held any women delegate meetings. I consider it a crime to say that what we have had, were delegate meetings. But we have undertaken the preparations spoken of by Comrade Artiukhina, we have established permanent contact with the women workers in the factories by many and primarily varied means. In one factory we got in through the nucleus of the factory itself. In another we used Women Trade Unionists. The Party established Trade Union Recruiting Committees in the factories. We try to get women Recruiting Committees in the factories. We try to get women elected in the trade union recruiting committees, not only women Communists, but also Social Democratic and non-Party women who are trade union members.

Through these recruiting committees contact must be established with other working women in the factory. These must be urged to join the trade union and after they have become trade union members they must be brought to attend the trade union meetings, to affiliate with the opposition there and jointly advocate the demands of the women workers in the trade unions.

In Germany, the trade unions have special Women's Commissions, who carry on propaganda among women workers. These women's commissions must and should be captured by us. A very few of them, perhaps only one or two, we now have in our hands. In the others we have no, or perhaps one or two, comrades who are able to mobilise the working women through the women's commission of this union. These are absolutely practical things that we can carry through in Germany in the immediate future, and in this way we will really create the preparatory stage for the delegate meetings. Only after we have the guarantee that we will have not only the first but also the following delegate meetings of women workers should we convoke the delegate meetings. They must become a great reservoir of non-Party working women through which slogans and manifestoes to the women workers can be issued. We must therefore prepare for them thoroughly.

Comrade BRIERE (France):

We have a peculiar situation in France. We already have organisations that gather together non-Party elements. In our opinion it is therefore futile to create new ones. It was already our experience with the Committees of Mothers and Widows, which lapsed because we were not in a position to breathe life into them.

We have Proletarian Unity Committees under the control of the revolutionary trade unions which could serve as a very favourable field of work for our penetration among the masses of non-Party women.

We might mention examples of Proletarian Unity Committees which have already attained important results, for

example in Lariboisière hospital, where of a personnel of 800 the nucleus has 50 and the Proletarian Unity Committee 100 members. When meetings were arranged under the direction of the nucleus, we have no success because the non-Party women paid no attention to the call. Since we have been calling meetings in the name of the Proletarian Unity Committee, we have succeeded in getting up to 400 to attend. When the comrades arranged such meetings they did so with a quite limited theme. At the meeting there was a speaker from the Unitarian (Red) Trade Union, and a woman worker, member of the C. P. of France. At the present time through the Proletarian Unity Committee we disposed of 80 copies of "L'Ouvrière". In comparison to the numerical strength of the nucleus this is a good result. Wherever the trade unions had no influence we have succeeded, through the Proletarian Unity Committees, in getting together non-Party women workers.

It is therefore not possible to ignore the Unity Committees, or to establish other organisations side by side with them.

We have furthermore the "Groupes des Amies de L'Ouvrière," (groups of friends of the "Woman Worker") which gather together all women who support the propaganda developed by our paper "L'Ouvrière". Here also it is possible to bring the women workers very gradually to the Party and to the trade unions. We are opposed neither to the Delegate Meetings, nor to the "Sympathisers' Circles". But in France however, the designation "delegate" has a different sense than in other countries. This word signifies with us a mission to be fulfilled: the women delegates must report to the women workers what they said and what they have undertaken. Since repressive measures are very serious in France, it is very difficult to find delegates even if extremely pressing demands are involved. We are therefore of the opinion that this slogan, instead of drawing the non-Party women workers towards us, will only alienate them from us.

Comrade SCOTT (Great Britain):

We have begun to introduce the Delegate Meetings in Great Britain. They were not carried out however strictly on

the basis of the line laid down by the Comintern. Our Delegate Meetings were composed mainly of housewives, since our influence extends mainly to the organisations of the working women in Great Britain, to the Women's Section of the Labour Party and the Co-operative Guilds. We have 600 women Party members, of whom most are housewives or employees, while very few are factory workers. It is therefore one of our chief tasks to win more women factory workers.

The delegate meetings have proven useful since the delegates listen to Party speakers at meetings organised by the Party and adopt resolutions on which they then report to their organisations and in this manner reach a large number of working women.

The meetings were called by the Local Executive of the Communist Party which sent invitations to the respective Women's Sections of the Labour Party and I.L.P., to the Women's Co-operative Guilds, to the Trade Union Council, the Women's Trade Union Guilds of Railwaymen, and also to the locals of such trade unions as include women members. Wherever the Party has connection with a factory which employs women a selected comrade was invited to the meeting.

The meetings were called to take a stand on questions of immediate interest to the working class. The first meetings were called last July on the occasion of the attack against the miners in order to mobilise the women in support of the miners. Later we called such meetings in connection with the campaign for the liberation of the political prisoners, while recently we arranged a big Delegate Meeting in Mansfield where we agitated among the delegates of the various organisations for the support of the coming miner's struggle.

In some cases we were able to create Committees of Action out of these delegate meetings consisting of several members of the various organisations and a member of the Party. These committees work under the leadership of the Party. Some of them have done very useful work and have supported us in organising for International Women's Day. Up to November 1925 we had held 14 delegate meetings in Great Britain.

Ninth Session.

Evening, June 3rd, 1926.

Continuation of the Discussion on the Report of Comrade Artiukhina.

Comrade MALM (Finland):

I will speak about our experiences with Women Delegate Meetings in Finland.

The women workers formulated a concrete plan of work for launching the activity. In this they designated the towns and factories which came into question for the beginning of the work. But instructions were also prepared on working methods.

First a women worker sympathetic to the revolutionary movement was picked out in the factory. Constant contact was maintained with her and she in turn kept touch with other sympathetic working women so that the latter came more and more under the influence of the revolutionary labour movement. In those factories in which there was already a revolutionary organisation, the work of course went forward much more rapidly and easily. Where there were no organisations however, the carrying out of the delegate meetings helped to establish them in the factory.

Secondly, in the various sections of the city, contact was established with women in sympathy with the revolutionary movement. At the same time, as far as possible, a campaign was conducted in the press for the idea of the delegate meetings.

It has been maintained here in the discussion, by Comrade Halbe, that it is impossible to elect women workers in the meetings in places where there are as yet no factory nuclei. Experiences in Finland have shown the contrary. In my opinion the attitude of Comrade Halbe is not correct. We have exploited all possibilities (of course not yet to a sufficient degree) in

order to popularise the idea of the delegate meetings; thus e. g. the Committees of Working Women's organised for the elections, combined the women into a working group which was utilised for work among the women.

The first Delegate Meeting was not called until May 4, 1925. This was not possible sooner. In order to overcome prevailing difficulties and in order to be able to elect the representatives, we needed a period of almost two years. There participated in this meeting more than 50 women workers who were elected chiefly in the capital; some women workers being invited from certain other towns and from the countryside. The women were partly from factories, and they were partly housewives. The first meeting of course still had great shortcomings. The deficiencies consisted first in that the chief weight had not been laid upon non-Party and non-trade union women, and secondly in that not enough factories were represented.

Thus far five district delegate meetings have taken place.

What are the immediate tasks of this movement?

1. To enter ourselves in the factories and to work among the unorganised women workers there;
2. to draw the housewives into the movement;
3. to popularise the delegate system on the countryside among the women farm workers and small peasants, and to apply it on the basis of the "fighting alliance of workers and peasants".

What are the dangers and difficulties of this movement?

1. A section of the revolutionary movement has not comprehended correctly the system of delegate meetings. There was a tendency in the movement that looked upon these meetings as an obstacle to revolutionary work; another tendency underestimated the importance of the meeting. The revolutionary workers conducted a sharp struggle against both these tendencies.

2. An additional difficulty is the white terror which prevents the participation of the revolutionary women in the delegate meetings.

3. A further difficulty consists in the Social Democratic denunciation policy, and in the struggle that they waged against the delegate system both in the meetings themselves and in the factories.

The workers directed by the factory organisations which have the task not only of carrying on the activity in their own factory but also where thus far there are no factory organisations. It is characteristic that the Left women workers are able to exert a great influence even in the meetings in which they constitute only a small percentage. A committee is also elected in the delegate meetings to conduct the work, distribute the tasks, and make preparations for the calling of new meetings.

Practical experience in Finland in the field of delegate meetings shows something altogether different from what is contained in the instructions presented to the Women's Conference. In my opinion the instruction is not sufficiently clear with respect to methods and forms of work among the rural women workers and women peasants. I believe that the experience in Finland has shown quite definitely that it is possible and necessary of carrying out the delegate meeting system irrespective of whether or not other organisations already exist in the factories. The Conference must express this clearly and unequivocally.

Comrade HALBE (Germany):

I should like to make a declaration so that the following discussion speakers will not again enter upon matters that clearly have been misunderstood. Neither Comrade Walter nor I put the question in this way: as to whether delegate meetings were to be arranged with nuclei or without nuclei. We said instead, in order to be able to get any delegate meetings at all, in order to make preparations for them we must have nuclei in the factories. To these delegate meetings delegates can be elected also from factories in which there is no nucleus. I explain this at this time so as to make impossible any further misunderstanding by the following speakers.

Comrade SILLEN (Sweden):

Is it possible to call women's delegate meetings in factories where there are no nuclei? I agree completely with the statements of Comrades Malm and Olsen. Our chief task is to put the question concretely concerning our practical work and the means by which we can interest the working women in our programme.

A special difficulty with which we must reckon in Sweden in organising the delegate meetings is the resistance waged by the Social Democracy. In Sweden there are 134,000 industrial women workers of whom however, only about 43,000 are organised. This means something less than 30%. We must expect that the Social Democracy will exploit this circumstance very heavily, that we are attempting to elect unorganised working women as delegates. Therefore, in drawing the unorganised and organised working women, in the factories into the delegate meetings we must have the support of our fractions in the trade unions. Thus far nobody has said anything on this question, yet it is very important.

In Sweden the Communists enjoy considerable sympathy among the textile workers. Of the 25,000 textile workers about 3,000 are organised in trade unions. But a large number of the sympathetic women textile workers cannot join the Party because they are so poor paid that they cannot fulfil the financial obligations of the Party. The Swedish Party is so weak

financially that it must appeal to the Party members almost every week and carry on also almost weekly collections for the press. For this very reason it is necessary to reach the women workers through the delegate organisation.

In the instructions submitted not a word is said about our work among the peasant women. Does this mean that we are not to give any attention to the peasant women and women agricultural workers? In Sweden there is a large number of women peasants and women agricultural workers, especially in the Norbotten district, which we must reach by our work.

This is a mistake in the instruction, even though, as a matter of course, the principal weight is to be laid upon the industrial women workers.

Comrade MALM (Finland):

In respect to my speech at this morning's session I want to declare the following, in order to avoid misunderstandings:

1. The delegate movement is broadened out only on condition that the Party has a certain influence in the factory.

2. Comrade Heimo was not able to study my report in sufficient detail before he translated it. In the translation the following passage was overlooked: "When we began with the delegate system in an enterprise where there was no Party nucleus, the Party endeavoured to create a nucleus in this enterprise for the systematic conduct of the work. Party statistics prove that precisely in these factories during the period 1923—25, the number of Party nuclei and women Party members (regular members and candidates) grew more rapidly than the number of male Party members. The Party investigated this phenomenon and it turned out that the increase in nuclei and membership is to be credited to the delegate system."

Comrade NADEZHINA (China):

In China we have until now organised not a single delegate conference, because the Chinese Party and the labour movement also are still young, but we are convinced that the results will be quite considerable just as soon as we once begin with the work.

In Kwantung province the Communist Party is legal, and to a certain extent also in the Kwangsi province. These provinces are under the influence of the Revolutionary Canton Government. Here we can certainly organise conferences of women's delegations without encountering any great difficulties such as are very often met with in Europe. In addition we can not only organise conferences of women workers and peasant women, but also conferences of intellectual women. In this way we will bring the intellectual women together with the women workers and peasants. Furthermore, we can also work in the provinces where at present the reaction reigns, even though only illegally.

I can cite an example from China, last year at the beginning of the Shanghai events. Among the street car workers we had only one single woman Communist. We trained this comrade, and in a short time all the street-car workers in Shanghai were organised.

If we organise delegate conferences, this does not mean that we thereby want to suppress the other non-Party organisations. Therefore we cannot say that where we have organisations of non-Party people we need no women delegate conferences. The delegate conference is the most important instrument with which to capture the broadest masses of women workers. We must all exploit precisely the experiences of Russia.

Comrade GRÜN (Austria):

The instructions as well as the report of Comrade Artiukhina are precisely what we comrades of the West have expected. The report proves absolutely that the Russian comrades have a complete understanding of the difficulties which we have to combat. We, in the countries of the West, must adapt the forms of struggle to the definite conditions under which we work. The very final aim of delegate meetings in Russia and in West Europe is different. The final goal of women's delegate

meetings in Russia is the introduction of the working woman into the building of the Soviet State. The final aim of our delegate meetings in the West can only be the introduction of the working woman into the organisations which fight the present-day State apparatus.

We constantly ask ourselves, how we can reach the indifferent women, the broad masses of women workers? I should like to give an example here of how erroneously we did things in the beginning and how we learned later on how it should be done right.

We undertook, e. g. to penetrate a factory with which we had hitherto had no connections. We wanted to hold a meeting there, we prepared leaflets and gathered in front of the factory a day or two to sell our newspapers and pamphlets. We imagined that we had done enough to organise a meeting there. It turned out that in this factory in which perhaps 400 women were employed, only 10 or at most 12 to 15 would come to the meeting.

Of these women workers 70—80% are trade union members and consequently are under the direct influence of the Social Democrats who tell them daily that the Communists are people with whom they must nothing to do. And then we imagined that these women would forget all this on the strength of a few leaflets.

A second effort with which for the time being we have attained very good results, is the so-called **Women's Consultation Station**. In a large enterprise in Vienna we instituted a so-called women's consultation station in the factory council, in which we have a majority. Twice a week a woman comrade is on duty there, viz. she gives information there on all kinds of questions that interest the women particularly, with respect to motherhood, child-training, sick-benefit affairs, housing difficulties, etc. This comrade is a professional social insurance worker and consequently knows all connections with the authorities so that she was able to furnish the women with all information and to save them many steps. This women's consultation station enjoys a very active attendance. We have now seen to it that not only the women of this factory but also those of neighbouring factories come to this consultation station so that in this way we have obtained contact with additional factories.

(Interjection: Is this Comrade paid)?

The entire work of our Women's Department is unpaid. In our entire Party apparatus we have only two paid employees: the secretary and a stenographer.

(Interjection: And in the editorial staff?)

Not in the editorial staff either. I carry on the administrative as well as the editorial work. Likewise the work in the Women's Consultation Station is unpaid.

Of course we do not only employ the Women's Consultation Station for the purpose of giving the women advice and information. This opportunity is also used to give pamphlets and newspapers to the women. The result has been that in this factory we have been able to increase the circulation of our paper from 86 to 200 copies. More Social Democratic and indifferent women than Communist women attend this consultation station.

A third form of the work is the organising of the **Working Women Correspondents**. We did this in the form of a club which meets once a month just before the appearance of the "Arbeiterin". Hitherto we had only Communists attending. Of course we wanted the sympathisers also to take part and last week succeeded in getting two non-Party women.

Comrade Artiukhina was quite right in emphasizing that we must not under-estimate the tasks to be put to the housewives.

She was correct in this connection in referring to the wives of the miners. We had a strike in Donawitz, for example, in which it developed that the wives understood the battle, much better than their husbands. Where, e. g. the men did not want to station pickets, the women went on duty and prevented the entrance of the men who wanted to begin work.

Comrade BILLETTA (Italy):

I agree with the theses proposed by the International Women's Secretariat concerning the delegate conferences. I am astonished that some comrades have found that these theses are not clear enough.

As to the criticism of the French comrade against the draft theses and the idea developed by the Russian comrade — I am not in agreement with this opposition. First of all the French comrade expressed the view that it is not necessary to make the calling of conferences of delegated women from the factory one of the chief tasks of work among women — because they have already formed **Proletarian Unity Committees** and because they are already developing extensive work in the trade unions. We cannot say that this is already enough. We absolutely must realise what the calling of delegate conference means. We, in Italy, have also formed such **Proletarian Unity Committees**, but upon what basis? For a general political purpose. By means of the delegate conferences however we carry on a special work among the women.

When we work in the trade unions we thereby reach only a minority of the workers because the trade unions only contain part of the working class. We must therefore endeavour to capture a broader mass.

The French comrades fear that these delegate conferences would result in fizzle for them as was already the case with the Committees of Mothers and Widows. But there is a big difference between these two organisations. The organisation of mothers and widows had no avowed proletarian character. The delegate conferences on the other hand have an emphatic proletarian character.

The third point: **the practical problem**. Many comrades from various countries, especially where the Party is illegal, are sceptical of the practical possibilities of organising such delegate conferences in the Western countries where the working class have not yet captured power. I think that these fears are not in order. It is possible to organise delegate conferences provided that the Party understands how to do good work under conditions of illegality. Thus e. g. in Italy, despite the illegality of the Party we have organised circles of sympathetic working women in many factories. We have held 60 illegal workers' conferences. Around the nucleus and around its sympathetic workers there is grouped the largest possible number of workers in the factories who elect from their midst one comrade as a delegate. These comrades got together on a town or district scale and thus brought into existence a workers' conference representing all the factories of this town or district. Women also participated, furthermore, in our workers' conferences.

The fourth point concerns **the relations which must prevail between the Women's Delegate Conferences and our nucleus network**, and thereby the problem of whether it is indispensable to have a nucleus in the factory in order to organise a delegate conference. First of all I underline that the delegate conferences would lose their value if they were not put completely under the direction of the Party. The Party nuclei must play the chief role. But there are many factories in which we have no nuclei, nor even a group of sympathisers. In these factories we can nevertheless get to work on the preparation of delegate conferences provided that the delegates work under the direction of the nucleus of a nearby factory.

Tenth Session.

Morning, June 4, 1926.

Continuation of Discussion on Report of Comrade Artiukhina.

Comrade NIURINA (Soviet Union):

I have received the impression that although the comrades are in agreement with the fundamentals of the report, they are nevertheless not quite clear on certain questions.

The first point: In the speech of some comrades there was evident a certain astonishment that we should insist upon retaining the designation "Women's Delegate Meeting". The comrades think that since their methods and forms of work differ, the name could also differ. I believe however that the retention of the designation of "Women's Delegate Meeting" is of great importance. We in the Soviet Union have all power in the hands of the working class. We have a proletarian dictatorship, and I do not doubt that everywhere that the proletariat is victorious it will also establish a Soviet State. The dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet State will unquestionably be the international form in which the victorious proletariat realises its power. Here also it will not be a simple wish to retain these designations but in their whole content it will be of tremendous importance. The same also applies with respect to "Women's Delegate Meetings".

We in the Soviet Union can state that it was primarily the woman delegate that realised the citizenship rights of the women, who cleared the road for the woman proletarian and peasant, and who fought successfully for the recognition of the right of the working woman to participate in the political life of the country. Also in our country, even among the proletariat and in the proletarian parties, the view has not yet been entirely overcome that the women workers are not equals and that therefore they should require fewer rights. Thus the woman delegate must point out to the working woman her road in public social life, and raise her social importance.

The second question upon which I should like to enter is this: Is there any contradiction between the designation "Delegate Meeting" and our proposal that during the first period the delegates should not be elected but that we ourselves should appoint them, that we ourselves select them? In order to establish clarity I will give an example: The C. P. S. U., was not elected by the working class to direct the revolution but it came into being by the selection of the best elements of the working class. Nevertheless, our Party led the proletariat to victory and received a vote of confidence. When we deal with "Delegate Meetings" we must shake off the magic which bourgeois democracy and bourgeois conception exercise for us on certain words. A delegate, even though she is not elected is not simply a woman who in some sort of circle studies merely for the broadening of her knowledge. From the beginning we must so train the woman delegate that she realises that she is a representative of the interests of the working women, she must be so trained by us that she will develop gradually and finally also be elected. The title of delegate pledges the bearer, a number of duties towards the women workers is devolved upon her.

The last point is with regard to time. All comrades have said here that they will organise delegate meetings but most did not designate the time that they intend to begin the work. We are not impatient, we do not demand that this organisation shall be launched at once. Nevertheless we want to know whether it involves months or years. In this sense the declaration of Comrade Overlach is welcome. She declared that they intend to organise delegate meetings already in this year. This is very nice. She also spoke about organising circles, discussions, proletarian evenings, etc. as preparatory work. Here we must be on guard lest this method which may contribute to the selection of fit women delegates, does not become an end in itself. We know that among the Social Democratic this kind of work is the most important working method. In Austria, e. g. the women workers gather together at a coffee and cake party and entertain one another with all kinds of nonsense.

We must constantly remember that every form must be filled at all times with a content corresponding to the tasks of our Party.

Comrade STURM (I. W. S.):

At the start I should like to establish an important difference in the significance of Women Delegate Meetings in capitalist countries as compared with Soviet Russia, which has not yet been expressed here. In Russia the Communist Party has a monopoly in the leadership of the workers. All measures are in essence the awakening and training of the women, struggle against ignorance, passivity and lack of culture. In the countries of West and East the Women's Delegate Meetings will in first rank be a method of united front tactic with which we penetrate circles and strata which are not only passive, but which are under hostile direction. By the delegate meetings we carry the ideas of the Communist Party also into the camp of the enemy, draw valuable worker elements closer to us and contribute to the winning of the majority of the working class.

In the discussion two representatives, from France and from Finland, have shown an erroneous viewpoint.

The French comrades, it appears, had not yet grasped the meaning of the Women Delegate Meetings. They say that the delegate meetings are important and good, but that they cannot be carried out in France. Such a platonic declaration of love does us no good — the comrades must take a positive stand on the question. Let us carefully look into their arguments that are intended to prove that the introduction of delegate meetings in France is impossible.

I picked out some different points. First it is said that in France we already have a series of organisations by which the masses of women can be reached, especially the trade union Unity Committees. By the creation of new organisation forms the forces will be split up and nothing achieved. We believe that we cannot take such a narrow view. If the previous forms have not led us to the goal we have set, then this is an indication that these forms were not yet adequate and that we must seek for additional methods.

Furthermore, the poor experience with the Committees of Mothers and Widows against the Moroccan War, was cited. This observation is correct. But why did we have these poor experiences? In general it was due to the weakness of the organisation work. These experiences should by no means frighten us away from new efforts.

I now come to the remarks of the Finnish comrade. The basic thesis advocated by Comrade Malm states that we can have women delegate meetings also when we have no factory nuclei.

And this, we believe, is a question of principle on which we must be absolutely clear if practical work is to be done. What is the status of things? Nobody has ever thought of maintaining that women's delegate meetings could be organised only after we had functioning nuclei in all factories. We have said expressly that it is not absolutely necessary to have a nucleus, that it will also suffice if there is a circle of sympathetic working women or even only an individual sympathiser in the factory in order to find a starting point for a women's delegate meeting. In our instructions these possibilities are presented clearly. (The speaker cites the respective paragraphs.)

But this deals only with individual cases which can be considered only in connection with the foundation of the delegate meetings, and this foundation is and remains the Party organisation in the factory. And if Comrade Malm thinks that in Finland they are now engaged in Bolshevising the women's delegate meetings, then we shall have to tell her that she should first systematically and thoroughly study Bolshevisation. The standpoint of the Russian comrades, from whose example we

learn, is absolutely unequivocal and clear in this question. The erroneous standpoint of Comrade Malm, which was defended at the 1924 International Conference by Comrade Kuusinen, was at that time rejected by almost all who spoke in the discussion.

In this question we must get absolute clarity. If we consider the delegate meetings in Finland, we must say that it appears that their greatest shortcomings are bound up with this fundamentally false conception. We have unfortunately but very little material on the women's delegate meetings in Finland. In two years we received only a single report which deals with two delegate conferences in May and September 1925. Comrade Malm reports here that five delegate meetings were held, but we have heard nothing of the others.

From the present report of Comrade Malm it appears that the essence and form of these delegate meetings is a very confused one, the oral description and the written report contradicting one another on various points.

Comrade Artiukhina however states in her report that we cannot get at the broad masses with discussions about drawing women into the united front, but we must raise a political or economic question in which the women feel that this involves the advocacy of their immediate interests.

The next point: Comrade Malm has said that the delegate meetings come together every three months. The first time there was an interval from May until September. This contradicts one of the most elementary principles that we have laid down, viz. that by systematic, periodical drawing in of the delegates we shall conduct a quite planful educational activity in order thereby to create a cadre that will pave the road for us to the broad masses of women outside. As long as this periodicity is not applied, so long these so-called delegate conferences do not differ from the quite ordinary meetings that are called once in a while and after which everything remains as it was.

Finally, I must also take up the criticism of Comrade Malm against the activity of the I. W. S. Comrade Malm said in her first speech that the Women's Secretariat has not done everything possible to push forward the women delegate meetings in the various countries. In a second speech she went further and said that the Women's Secretariat sabotaged the delegate meetings (this passage was not translated) and she expressed the intention of taking the floor a third time for the purpose of saying that the entire policy of the Women's Secretariat has been wrong.

I believe that here, in this Conference, before the women comrades who have worked with us, we need not lose many words over what the Women's Secretariat has really done to push forward the women's delegate meetings. We have directed our entire attention to getting at the women workers in the factories, by creating the basis for this in the structure and extension of the factory nuclei. Our entire correspondence with the Sections revolved around these points. All our experiences, yes every vestige of them, we transmitted to the Sections. When the first delegate meeting was held in Germany, we wrote about it in the press and in the information reports. All material was utilised by us.

But no one can give more than he has. And we would have wished that the Finnish comrades had given us something out of their experiences.

Where were the Finnish delegates when we conferred about the women delegate meetings at the V. and VI. Enlarged Executive? Comrades Malm and Kuusinen, who were invited and who in part were present, did not have a word to say. We asked the Finnish comrades to give us material and we invited them to make a report in the Women's Secretariat. Comrade Malm did give an oral report, which however was insufficient. We instructed her to complete the report by including more concrete material. We have not received this report to this day. An article for this conference, for which we urgently and repeatedly asked in writing, orally and by telephone, we did not receive, so that finally we found ourselves forced again to make use of the old obsolete report for an article.

I believe that where conditions are so clear we do not need to speak about them any further. If there is any sabotage here, then it is certainly not on the side of the International Women's Secretariat.

I will now proceed to the statements of the Swedish and Norwegian comrades. They also think that women's delegate meetings can be organised without factory nuclei. If the creation of women delegate meetings is making such slow progress, we find the explanation in that our factory nucleus structure has not progressed sufficiently. If you are of the contrary opinion that factory nuclei are not needed for the organising of women delegate meetings, then why have you not brought any into existence before this?

At the V. Enlarged Executive Comrade Hansen was fire and flame for the women delegate meetings. This enthusiasm ended in Norway with the Party's forming housewives' organisations. The comrades explained to us that they had to utilise this means to get any sort of contact with the masses. Furthermore they began to organise Comrade Clubs in the factories. We believe that these are quite good tulcroms for women's delegate meetings. But without factory nuclei the delegate meetings will not get going, but the Party will drown in its housewives' organisation and neglect its most important tasks among the women workers.

To the Swedish comrades we must say: If they really want to get somewhere on the field of women's delegate meetings they will have to take an entirely different attitude towards the organising of systematic work through special women's organisers in the factory. What they answered in their questionnaire: "Whether the factory nuclei have designated a comrade for work among the women, has not been reported", or "Probably not a single factory nucleus has founded circle of women sympathisers", is a declaration of bankruptcy of their work in the factory.

A word on the question of women peasants. Comrade Sillén (Sweden) misses the point of organising delegate meetings amongst the rural women workers and women peasants. We have not overlooked the great importance of work among the women peasants. The directions concerning women's delegate meetings also take a positive stand on delegate meetings in the village. But since we thus far have little support on the countryside, we must concentrate upon the women workers in industry as the immediate task. The Sections that can do so should of course organise delegate meetings of women peasants. And precisely Norway, as a farming country, can perhaps be a trail blazer here, since according to the Norwegian reply to our questionnaire there are already village nuclei. As soon as efforts and experiences are available, we can issue a special instruction on work on the countryside, for the present instruction is adapted entirely to the town.

In the remarks of Comrade Kanciewicz (Poland) one thing struck me: her position on the question of the name of women delegate meetings. She does not consider it correct to apply the designation "Delegate Meeting" also to those primitive forms of gatherings to which the participants are not directly elected by the masses. I believe that there is a certain general lack of clarity on this question. When, two years ago, the Sections first approached the task of creating women's delegate meetings, we were also somewhat timid because we believed that this involves such meetings as in Russia where the working women were duly elected in the factories. Today's instruction explains that the concept of delegate meetings is to be taken far more broadly and elastically.

Now as to Great Britain. Comrade Turner has pointed out that their delegate meetings do not yet correspond to their ideals. We agree with this. But a positive point we must nevertheless underline. In the women's delegate meetings in Great Britain the application of the united front tactic is expressed very clearly. The Labour Party there holds the workers ideologically almost entirely in its wake. Its Women's Sections have about 200,000 women members, the Communist Party only about 600; in the Trade Unions 300,000 and in the Co-operative Guilds 80,000 women are organised. It is an absolute political commandment to penetrate these masses, to get delegates from them and attach them to us. By the delegates from these organisations we can establish contact with the factories in which we have thus far been unable to get any foothold.

Finally I come to Germany. We have probably followed up the work of the German Party with particular intensity because we had good reporting service there. Comrade Halbe expressed the opinion of the Party here that the delegate meeting is a

good method that must be utilised. We especially welcome this acknowledgement.

But a slight critical note. Two years ago, there was even a rush towards delegate meetings in Germany. These beginnings have collapsed. Of course, we must take into consideration the difficult situation of the Party. Under the ultra-Left policy the Party lost connection with the masses, the factory nucleus reorganisation went forward very badly, so that the weakness of the work among the women was a phenomenon of the general Party crisis. But we cannot ignore the fact that there was also a certain passivity in the German Women's Department. A year ago, when the Reichs Conference of C. P. D. women took place, we were forced to take a stand on the views of the Women's Department.

The C. P. G. which up to the Frankfurt Party Congress was the model Party with respect to work among the women, will once more have to take the lead in the movement, and it must direct its pride to being the first to proceed practically with the work. We hope that our German brother Party will be the first to hold women's delegate meetings even this autumn.

I am coming to the conclusion. During the last two years we have not achieved enough in preparation and execution of the women's delegate meetings. Now we have passed the most difficult period. No more long discussions! The task is set, and it must be solved!

Comrade ERCOLI (Secretariat E. C. C. I.):

The question of delegate meetings has achieved great importance in the discussions at this conference. Before we took up this special point on the agenda almost all speakers had already spoken on this matter in the general discussion concerning work among the women. This point which concerns the meetings of delegates from factories has become the central point of our conference.

I will now deal with six matters:

The first point which I want to present to you as a question which must be decided before the others, is this: to investigate whether this question which we are discussing here, is only an organisational question. I am afraid that among some of the comrades of the Western Sections such an impression has arisen. Obviously this is also a question of organisation. But is it organisational only in a technical sense? No, this is not true. The question of delegate meetings touches a political problem, viz. the orientation of our whole work among the women. This point must be completely cleared up for all comrades otherwise there will always be misunderstandings.

Second point. It is necessary to tie up the question of the delegate meetings with our policy. It will always remain a somewhat abstract, dry question, as long as the comrades are not able to completely grasp its deep meaning.

What has this system of delegate meetings to do with our united front? We have a fundamental line, a principle, that every work we do to bring a united front into existence and to gather the forces of the working class behind our vanguard, must always be accompanied by work among the toiling women. This is inseparable from our political work. The political work carried on by our parties for the winning of the toiling masses cannot meet with success if the women are not drawn into the united front of the working class. That is the starting point. Today we cannot wait any longer. The masses are driving us forward. They are even getting ahead of us. We must develop a form of activity by means of which we shall succeed in establishing connection with these masses which we must lead.

Third point. This also is of general importance. I believe that there is an error in the work of all our West European Parties. Our Parties are not yet able to organise their influence upon the masses in a lasting manner. Our Parties do not yet know how to establish firm, permanent connections between the vanguard of the masses — the Party — and the broad masses themselves. Our Parties will not be Bolshevik Parties until they have overcome this shortcoming. A major characteristic of a Bolshevik Party is that it succeeds in establishing a firm connection with the working class in a lasting manner.

In Germany the Party has not been able, in the campaign for the expropriation of the ex-Ruling Houses, to utilise this campaign in the manner in which it could have utilised it, it has not been able to establish a lasting connection with the masses which had been set into motion by the slogans of the Party. The same applies to our French Party. It conducted a very good campaign against the Morocco war and at present it is conducting a very good campaign against wage-cuts, but our Party does not succeed in organising the influence which it gains among the masses it sets into motion by its campaign.

The system of delegate meetings is the key, the means that will enable us to establish this connection with the working women, firmly and lastingly. I underline this point which is of fundamental importance.

Fourth point. What is the chief point upon which we must base ourselves in the work among the women, what is the fundamental basis for our work among women? This is the woman working in the factory. Here matters stand just as with activity among the working class in general. First of all the centre of our activity is the work to mobilise the toiling masses around the Party, the work of tying up the proletarian vanguard with the workers in the factory. On this there must be no lack of clarity. I do not mean that the other strata of the masses of women should be neglected, the housewives, the wives of workers and even certain strata of the petty bourgeoisie, which in certain situations can be drawn into the struggle against capitalism as allies of the proletarian united front, for instance, in the present-day political situation. But even though we should not forget these strata we must even less ever forget the chief point, the work among the women workers. That is why at this conference the point on the agenda which involves meetings of factory delegates must be the chief point.

The fifth point was already emphasised by Comrade Sturm. Work among the women positively must be conducted under the direction of the Party. We must connect the women we win with the vanguard of the working class, and organise them into the C. P. I believe that unless we succeed in carrying out this Party principle for the work among the women, the delegate meetings will never take on a firm lasting character, and we shall never succeed in really establishing this firm and lasting contact that we want to establish between the Party and the great mass of working women.

The whole discussion is bound up with this point. I believe that our directions are absolutely precise on this point. A small group of sympathisers can serve as a basis on which to call a delegate meeting. If there is a stronger impetus, a powerful ascending wave, it will suffice to have only a very small group of sympathisers in order to organise women's delegate meetings successfully. The women comrades in the trade unions who will find themselves at the head of the masses of women when big strikes break out, constitute another point of support in creating and calling delegate conferences, but in its entirety the system of delegate conferences can be striven for only if the Party nuclei can take over the leadership. This point must be emphasised especially for the comrades from Finland. The Finnish comrades have worked at the practical introduction of the system of delegate meetings, but their attention must be directed to this fundamental point, viz. to the direction of the work through the Party nuclei.

The sixth point. The work for the creation of the delegate meeting is a political task of our Party bound up with the actual situation. This is the conception that we have of the manner in which our activity must be developed among the women.

Comrades, you must leave here with the conviction that in this point is not involved an organisational question that concerns only the Women's Departments of our Parties. I emphasise here that precisely the leading Committees and the Central Committees of our Parties must direct their whole attention to the introduction of this system of delegate meetings. The Secretariat of the Comintern reminds all Parties that it is their absolute duty to introduce this system of delegate meetings which is the fundamental form of the work of our Parties among the women.

Report on the Participation of the Women Masses in the British Strike.

Reporter Comrade TURNER (Great Britain):

Comrades, after experiencing great difficulty in coming here, my comrades and I are very pleased to arrive at last.

We have been told, and we have gathered also from the circular we have received, that all the participants in this conference are very anxious to hear something about the strike in Great Britain, the part that the Communist Party took in this strike and also the part that was played — the spirit that was shown by the women of the Party. I will be as brief as possible in telling you as much as I can about the situation.

First of all, prior to the strike, it was realised quite clearly by the employing class that if they could win the support of the women, if they could win the support of the miners' wives, they could deal a heavy blow at the resistance of the miners themselves. So they spared no time and no money in their endeavours to get hold of the wives and the women folk of the miners. They spent pounds sending organisers through different parts of the country. One organiser, in particular, Florence Drummond, was very active and energetic in touring the whole of the country. She travelled all over England, South Wales and Scotland, holding meetings of the miners' wives and explaining to them that it would be absolutely vital and bad for themselves and their children if there was an open conflict between the miners and the mine owners. This propaganda culminated in a big demonstration which took place on London on April 17th. This demonstration was supposed to be composed of miners' wives and all other workers' wives. In reality, it did contain a few working women, but the main part of the procession was composed of women Fascists, middle class women, wives of small shopkeepers, and society women who headed the procession on horseback.

While Florence Drummond stated in all of the leaflets and all her propaganda that it was not advocating the employers' point of view, that all she desired was peace in industry, the significant part was that all the slogans that were carried by the women were slogans that carried on the demands that had been made by the mine owners. At the head of the procession there was a banner saying, "How many hours do women work?" which implied that the miners might easily be employed another hour. The women work all hours and are never through, why can't the miners work another hour. And so they agitated for the miners to accept longer hours. That propaganda was the sort of propaganda that this organisation carried out during the whole of the months preceding the strike. We thought this might have some effect on the resistance of the workers but we are pleased to be able to say that in spite of the money that was used by the capitalist class in order to weaken the sympathy and support of the British women for the workers, we are proud and happy to state that when the strike took place the sympathy of the working women was on the side of the miners.

We experienced in Manchester, and I know this in particular as that was the district in which I was compelled to spend most of my time, we experienced the spirit of the women towards the General Strike. These were not miners' wives but wives of railwaymen and transport workers, and at the meetings which we held, we found everywhere that the spirit of the women was unbroken and they were confident that they could stick it out until they had won the struggle.

After the betrayal of the workers by the reactionary leaders we had one meeting, which was really very fine, the day after the General Strike had been called off. First of all, I think I had better tell you how we called this meeting. As you know, we have been having Delegate Meetings in England and out of these Delegate Meetings we have formed Women's Councils of Action. These Councils are composed of women who belong to the different organisations in the towns or in the districts, and these women endeavour to unify the efforts of the whole of the working women in that particular town.

When the strike came, we decided to first of all offer the assistance of the Councils of Action to the Central Strike Committee. When we did that, we found that the Central Strike

Committee did not need any assistance from the Women's Councils of Action because the tendency the whole of the time amongst the trade unionists was to alienate and to isolate any political bodies whatever. The whole of the time the statement made by the trade unionists was that this was a purely industrial struggle and that politics must not be allowed to intervene and they were taken in by the propaganda of such men as Thomas who said that this was not a challenge to the constitution, this was not a fight of any political importance but was just an industrial strike.

So, although this offer of ours was turned down, we had to find other means to help. We therefore held meetings of as many officials as we could get together, of the various women's organisations. We had the presidents and secretaries of the Railway Women's Guild, (which is an organisation composed of the wives of the railwaymen), Women's Guilds of the Labour Party, etc. We held these meetings after the strike had been declared off, and at these meetings we found that although many of the men had expressed their willingness to return, many, many more had been dissatisfied with the outcome of the strike. We found many workers not only willing, but anxious to carry on the fight. We also found the women willing and anxious to carry on the fight. At that meeting we elected a deputation which was to go to the Guardians in order to see that the strike should not be hindered by the fact that the women and children were suffering privation.

There is in England, as you know, a Poor Law out of which it is always possible for people to go and obtain some kind of relief. So we organised this relief because we found that if women and children were going to be without food that the resistance of the workers was going to be undermined. The thing we went to protest against, was that the local authorities of Manchester had openly arranged themselves on the side of the mine owners and the employers in general, because they had allowed 600 beds to be taken from the Manchester hospital to the docks in order that the blacklegs, who had been working at the docks, should not have to return to their homes to sleep. We also demanded relief for the miners' wives and children — needless to say, we were not very successful. We were successful in getting the women to fight but the attitude of the Guardians was only that of trying to anger us. They just wanted to knife any organisational effort on the part of the workers and, while we could not interview the Board of Guardians personally, we were successful in many other bodies and in interviewing many of the labour guardians and inducing them to take up these particular questions of hardship that we had brought along with us and endeavoured to obtain some relief for.

That is the kind of work we began but owing to the short duration of the strike and owing to the fact that there really was not a great deal of hardship due to the General Strike, we did not go into the strike with as much vigour as we might have done and as we should have done if the strike had continued at least another week because the workers were then just beginning to feel the pinch.

In regard to the mining areas, we cannot say what was the attitude there but judging from their attitude prior to the strike I would say that it was similar to the attitude of the women of Manchester.

We had a very fine demonstration, a demonstration of railway women. In England it is not the custom for women to take part in these demonstrations as a rule, but when we had arranged the meeting and organised the demonstration we invited the women to march with their husbands. Many turned out, pushing their perambulators and marching with their men many miles through rain and mud to a meeting place in Manchester which was run by the strike committee. There we found we got a very good response to all our propaganda. Afterwards when the strike was declared off we realised that the miners were still in great need and that the miners had been left to fight on their

own. Therefore we have been active in obtaining material support for the miners in the shape of money and goods and trying to get the co-operatives to come to the assistance of the miners.

While I cannot tell you just what has been the result of that, as the reports were very slow in coming through, I can say that already large sums of money have been raised in order to help the miners in their struggle.

I am pleased to see that you have decided to institute organised assistance throughout the whole of the International for the support of the British miners and their wives. I think that I can safely say that if this can be done effectively, if we can come to the

assistance of the miners and the families, that would be the finest act of solidarity that we have ever put forward anywhere.

The action of the Communist Party has already met with good response, because we have already had instances where the organised workers, of the Labour Party and also of the I. L. P. as well as some of the Women's Labour Sections, have all decided to come into the Communist Party en bloc. In South Wales they had so many applications that they were not quite sure that they should admit them all, but these were the kind of reports that had just begun to come in when I left England. I am sure that if the work is followed up by some action of this kind that we certainly shall be on the way to becoming a mass party in Great Britain.

Conclusion of the Discussion on the Report of Comrade Artiukhina.

Comrade MALM (Finland):

It is to be welcomed that Comrade Sturm spoke as she did yesterday. In her speech she raised the question of whether there are regular periodical delegate meetings in Finland. I have here a mass of citations and I can show that not only in Helsingfors, but also in other Finnish towns since 1925 regular meetings have taken place. The delegate meetings in Finland get together only once in three months. This interval was fixed because it was believed that for these meetings it was the best. This does not mean however that the delegate meetings do not come together regularly.

I regret very much that I have no opportunity to present this conference with fact material on Finland, although there is material enough.

The experiences in Finland have shown however:

1. That delegate meetings were organised there regularly.
2. That it is possible to organise delegate meetings without the previous existence of factory nuclei.

With respect to the proposed directions there is no complete clarity, and therefore I cannot support these directions. Chiefly I am not in agreement with the circles. I believe that these circles will constitute an obstacle in the way of a rapid effectuation of the delegate system in all countries.

Now as to the attitude of Comrade Sturm. She maintains here that I have said that everything necessary was not done on the part of the Women's Secretariat in order to introduce the delegate system. I say that the attitude of comrade Sturm was such that she did not contribute to carry through with sufficient energy the delegate meetings in the Parties.

Comrade SCHWAB (Czecho-Slovakia):

We agree fully that before all we must direct our attention to those factories in which, at the time, we have the best connections, i. e. where there are already factory nuclei and where an active Party work is being developed and where we can already reckon on the support of sympathisers with whom we are already in contact. In our case, textile enterprises are chiefly involved, and among them principally underwear factories where by means of strikes we have attained a firm foothold and have won the sympathies of the indifferent women workers due to our active intervention.

Furthermore we must lay great value upon individual work upon the personnel of each factory, and in each individual factory discover those points of contact which are decisive for this particular enterprise, and which will fully awaken the interest of the women working here. It can probably hardly be disputed that in this the circle will play a predominantly important role as the first step towards the delegate system, to which a quite special attention must be devoted. Especially if we emphasise that in no country except the Soviet Union the Communist Party possesses such close contact with the masses, viz. the masses of women, that it can immediately, without first establishing firm bases of support, proceed to the delegate system.

Parallel with the organising of the circles, viz. parallel with the organisational inclusion and systematic influencing of the indifferent women, the periodical must also be transformed into a mass organ of the working women. It must be made into our best collaborator in the capturing of the working woman. And it will become this only if we are able to give it such form that it reflects all the interests and questions of the strata, without sacrificing a firm policy which we direct.

Beyond these circles which we can organise primarily in the big factories we will gradually, after we have attained firm footing, be able to go over to the delegate meetings.

For the calling of women delegate meetings we select such situations in which the masses of women are in motion, the moment in which the interest of the working woman has been stirred up by the economic and political demands, in which case it requires only an impetus to carry them with us. Thus in Czecho-Slovakia today we have such a situation in which by careful preparatory work we can organise the delegate meetings with best results.

Although this Conference has not decided on the principles on the special organising of the delegate system on the countryside I must nevertheless mention this question since in Slovakia and Carpatho-Russia we have to work with a predominantly rural population, and the influence of our Party on this strata is very considerable and continually growing. We are entirely of the opinion that first of all firm bases of support must be established among the factory workers, but we will try to organise the first beginning also on the field of delegate conferences in the rural districts. The activity of the Russian comrades must become the richest source from which we will draw ceaselessly, in order to receive constantly new vitalisation of our activity.

The Work in the Non-Party Mass Organisations.

Reporter Comrade STRASSER:

Before I come to speak of the organisational forms of our work in the proletarian mass organisations, I should like to point to a fact which in itself is adequate to prove the necessity of this work: the intensified efforts of our foes to approach the proletarian women. Two tendencies can be distinguished here. First, there is that trend which aims at the prevention of the development of the class-consciousness of the women workers, and secondly, the open attempts to exploit the working women and worker housewives for counter-revolutionary purposes. The country in which we find the most complete development of the first of these tendencies, is America. The country in which we can best observe the evolution of the second method: Great Britain.

The most important phenomenon in this method in America is the **Company Union** movement. It embraces about 2,000,000 men and women workers. The organisational forms of the Company Unions vary widely. Altogether there are 417 different kinds. But the aim of these "pseudo trade unions" are the same everywhere: the elimination of the trade unions, the diverting of the workers from the class struggle by all kinds of "social" and mutual arrangements, etc. The Company Unions realise very well that what counts is not only to influence the workers, but also the wives of the workers. Their works' papers, for example, are arranged so as to interest also the women. They likewise deliver — and this is no petty detail but a symptom — the newspapers directly to the homes, so that the housewives also will read them.

One might object that the Company Unions are a special American arrangement which has no significance for us in Western Europe. But we must not forget that "Americanisation" about which there is so much talk nowadays means the effort to transfer to Western Europe, not only the American methods of production, but also the American methods of corruption. For example, we can observe at present intensified efforts in Germany to form and develop the so called Works' Societies, which in a certain sense are also Company Unions. And here also the employers put great value upon the influencing of the working women. Thus, e. g., at the constituent meeting of the German Technical Institute, which serves for the combination and systematisation of the Works' Societies trend, it was emphasised that one of the tasks of the Works' Societies and Works' papers is the influencing of the wives of the workers.

The second method: utilisation of the workers' wives in the struggle against the working class, is shown in **Great Britain** primarily in the founding of the so-called "**Women's Empire Guild**". This guild has set as its task the mobilisation of the women against strikes. Prior to the miners' strike it developed a very intensive activity and in April, organised a large anti-strike demonstration in London, in which not only the "Society ladies" but also working women demonstrated "for industrial peace". In the OMS. (Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies) as well as in the organisation of the British Legion, there are special Women Departments in which the women are being prepared for the civil war. In Germany we have efforts in the same direction: in the Technical Emergency Aid (Technische Nothilfe) we have a Women's Department in which the women are being trained for supplies service.

But not only our bourgeois opponents but also the **Reformists** are developing an intensive activity today in order to approach the proletarian women. On the trade union field we have here the formation of the Women Workers' Secretariat of the International Trades Unions Federation. This Secretariat contemplates an investigation of the wage and living conditions of the women workers, to conduct propaganda for mother and child protection, and "to ascertain the best means to interest the women workers for their own and their children's lives". In Germany we can observe the recreation and extension of the Women's Commissions in the Trade Unions. In Austria the formation of such commissions is being propagated by the trade unions.

It might be objected: How can we designate reformist trade union propaganda among women as the activity of "our oppo-

nents"? Do not we ourselves demand again and again that the trade unions must "concern" themselves more with the women workers? But we must be clear on this, that all Women Secretariats, Women's Commissions, etc. will finally serve to divert the working women from the class struggle precisely like the efforts of our bourgeois foes, as long as the revolutionary elements do not succeed in exerting their influence here.

Now, as to the **organisational questions**. The chief field of our activity must be and remain the **reformist trade unions**. But just as our bourgeois opponents do not hesitate to seek after the proletarian women where they are to be found, i. e. in the factories, so we also must not shrink from seeking the proletarian women there where unfortunately they are still to be found in great masses, in the organisations of our opponents: in the Christian, in the Nationalist trade unions, in the special Women's Trade Unions, in the Company Unions, etc. The German comrades in reply to the questionnaire of the International Women's Secretariat wrote: "We cannot carry on any work in the Christian Trade Unions because our members are organised in the reformist trade unions". Well, Lady Astor was not organised in the Co-operatives either, yet in order to remove the women organised in the Women's Guilds from the influence of "her" enemies, she entered the Plymouth Women's Guild and in a certain sense, formed a nucleus there. I believe that we can also find ways and means in order to make our influence felt by the women organised in our opponents' trade unions, without having great masses of our Party members organised in them.

We should recognise clearly the great influence still exercised by the Christian Trade Unions upon the women workers — especially in France and Belgium — and that in all countries a higher percentage of women (in comparison to the whole working class) are organised in the Christian trade unions than in the organisations based upon class struggle.

How shall we work in these trade unions? In our theses we have formulated **there fundamentals**. First: We must primarily work in those branches of industry where larger masses of women are organised. It really seems superfluous to note this. But in fact in almost all countries the work in the textile industry, in which the largest masses of women are to be found, is not only weak but is also being greatly neglected.

Second: In the Communist trade union fractions special **organisers for work among women** are to be designated. This fundamental is also as little new as the first, and just as little fulfilled. "There are no women's organisers in the Communist trade union fractions", thus the German comrades concisely and clearly reply to the questionnaire. From this we can judge how things stand with respect to fulfilling this self-understood demand in the other countries in which trade union work among the women is even weaker than in Germany.

Third: We must work for the formation of **Women's Commissions in the trade unions** and, wherever such Commissions exist, work in them.

In the C. G. T. U. (Red Trade Unions) in France actual efforts have been made to form such Commissions. In the Red Trade Unions of **Czecho-Slovakia** (I. A. V.) it seems as though to this day no serious attempt in this direction has been made. In Germany our activity in the Women's Commissions founded by the reformists is still extraordinarily weak.

As to the organisational forms of our work in the **co-operatives** another comrade will speak who is more competent than I.

Even after we have carried out everything that we have decided on in organisational connections, we have thereby done absolutely nothing as yet unless our comrades in the fractions, commissions, circles, etc. do not differentiate themselves greatly in their activity from the reformists. But this is by far not always the case. A little example: In a recruiting leaflet of the C. G. T. U. which is otherwise very good, we

find the following characteristic sentence in the introduction: "Without any kind of protection, without any kind of consideration, the employing class tears the woman away from the domestic hearth and sacrifices her to the most shameless exploitation on the labour market." One of the conditions that our comrades, men and women, liberate themselves from such a sentimental-reactionary viewpoint, is the recognition of things as they are, in knowledge of the development and significance of woman labour in the present situation.

It seems that in connection with the so-called rationalisation in very many countries today, there takes place a constantly increased invasion of women in the industries. In Germany this increase can be gleaned from the unemployed statistics. They show that during the first months of this year, not only did the number of women seeking employment increase much more than the number of men hunting work, but that simultaneously there was also a much greater increase in the number of jobs open to women. These are facts which permit the conclusion that due to the impoverishment of the German proletariat, due to unemployment, an increasing number of women are forced to offer capitalism their labour power, and that on the other hand, men are being discharged and their places filled by women. In France also, in factories which are going over to new methods of production, e. g. in the automobile factories of the North, in which the conveyor system has been introduced, much men's work is being replaced by women's. In Austria most recent statistics (1923) show a considerable increase in women's labour in the branches of industry dominated by men workers, machine construction, electro-technique, etc.

This process of increasing woman labour goes on with accompanying phenomena, catastrophic to the working conditions of the workers as a whole. The increasing application of cheap woman labour power makes it easier for the employers to buy up small strata of workers with higher wages. Not only the gap between the wages of skilled and unskilled workers grows, but also the gap between the wages of men and of women. At the same time the increased application of woman labour signifies today not only wage cuts but also the extension of the working day. In Great Britain e. g. the working day is longest in those branches of industry employing a majority of women. In Switzerland the breakdown of the eight hour day is considerably more frequent in the cotton industry, embroidery and other typical women's industries than in the metal, woodworking industries, etc.

What is the attitude of the reformist trade unions to the increasing of woman labour? Two small but typical examples: In the "Deutsche Metallarbeiter-Zeitung" ("German Metal Workers' Journal") of March 13th 1926, the choice of vocation for daughters is discussed, and it is recommended that "wherever a sufficient solidity of temperament gives assurance that the young spirit will not lose altogether too much in gadding about, the girl should come back to the needle or to

women's handicrafts". Or as the Austrian Bookbinders' Union decided: The women who of late have increased considerably in the binderies, can in the future be employed only as helpers. The skilled work is to be reserved for the men.

What is to be the attitude of Communist working men and women when the employer introduces new production methods, the conveyor system for example, and substitutes women's for men's labour? In this case the workers must respond to the introduction of the new method of production of women's labour power not only, as a matter of course, with a demand for equal pay for equal work, but also with the demand for increased protection for women workers (shortening of labour time, extension of motherhood protection, etc.).

How can we make it clear not only to every Communist but to every worker that against the evil of woman labour which hits the entire working class, there can be nothing else than struggle? Certainly not against woman labour itself, but for equal pay for equal work, for augmented safeguards for women workers, for equal unemployed support. The most effective way towards this is to set up programmes, quite systematically on a national, industry and factory scale, in which we clearly and concisely formulate demands effecting the women workers. These programmes give us a chance first to awaken interest in our own ranks in the questions bound up with woman labour, in arousing an exchange of opinions, clarifying views and finally also, the enlightening of broader and broader circles of working men and women, and bringing them into goal-conscious systematic activity.

In France this method has already been followed. The C. G. T. U. has formulated demands for the women workers in various applications, and with their aid has conducted a recruiting campaign for the trade unions. In Great Britain similar programmes were formulated in the campaign to bring women into the trade unions which were organised by the General Council.

A few words in conclusion concerning a task, the necessity of which I already indicated in the beginning. I believe that it is time to find some sort of forms that will make it possible to influence the wives of workers in decisive branches of industry, e. g. miners, metal workers, etc., not only during struggles that have already broken out but systematically. In the United States and in Canada there are already such organisations. They are the so-called Trade Union Auxiliaries which exist in some trade unions, which thus far are only forms without a fighting content. It is otherwise in Great Britain. The so-called Women's Guild of the Railwaymen's Union has already done useful work in preparing the women for the coming struggle.

As to the work in the other proletarian mass organisations, co-operatives, Red Aid, I. W. A., Tenants Protection Leagues, etc. those comrades who are engaged in leading posts in these organisations will speak in the discussion.

Twelfth Session.

Evening, June 5th 1926.

Discussion on Report of Comrade Strasser.

Comrade PFAFF (International Red Aid):

The International Red Aid has set itself two tasks: First, the support — moral, legal and material — of the victims of the class struggle, and secondly the winning of new cadres for the revolution by ideologically influencing the worker, peasant and petty-bourgeois strata. This is a task of proletarian solidarity a political task. In both of these tasks of the I. R. A. the women are of great importance.

It is a matter of course that recruiting work must be carried on among the women to make them I. R. A. members and to get them to contribute to the solution of its tasks. It is necessary to bring all women's organisations into the I. R. A. as collective members. The women are to be drawn into the I. R. A. functionary apparatus from the headquarters to the local group, nucleus, etc. The Women's press must concern itself more than

heretofore about the I. R. A., for example put a certain space at the disposal of I. R. A. publicity, and on special occasions, e. g. on March 18th etc. issue special editions for the I. R. A. In the meetings, etc. organised by the women the I. R. A. slogans must be propagated constantly.

The chief task of the women in the I. R. A. however, lies on the field of relief activity. Women are especially fit for the political training of the wives of the victims of class justice. With every new arrest a woman must go to the wife of the prisoner to talk with her at length so that under the pressure of misery she will not develop a hostile attitude against our revolutionary movement.

Of course, the women must also participate in the collection activity of the I. R. A., the more so since the number of proletarian political prisoners rose from day to day, because the

terror is constantly beginning in new countries, as in England now, after the recent events. Relief for the children of the victims of terror is a field that the working women should take over quite particularly for example, by the establishment and maintenance of Children's Homes, adoption of revolutionary orphans, etc.

Comrade WALTER (Germany):

We must make clear especially to the women workers that they must not allow themselves to be scared off by the traitorous attitude of the trade union leaders; we must tell the women that they must get into the trade unions and change them. The women workers especially often fail to understand as yet, how to defend themselves against the attacks of the employers. For this reason we must make it clear to them that they are not merely dues-paying members of the trade unions, but that they must participate actively in trade union life. In enterprises employing considerable masses of women we must bring the working women to the point where they take on functions, et g. become factory councillors. In such cases the woman can do better with the employers because on the basis of her work, she knows more about her own affairs. The trade unions leaders do not fight sufficiently for the working woman.

Furthermore, through our fractions we must undertake special efforts for the creation of trade union unity. We must put the greatest value on this.

For the organising of the working women in the trade unions special Trade Union Women's Commissions should be called into existence in every organisation. These women's commissions must of course be endorsed and recognised by the trade unions, and the latter will endorse them only for educational purposes. But we can and must work in these commissions.

For the founding, spreading, and training of these commissions, a good fraction is necessary. The fraction has a broad field of activity especially now, in the period of rationalisation. We must make clear to the women workers that rationalisation enslaves us more and more, that it can only be carried out at our expense and to the profit of the capitalists. We do not carry on a struggle against advancing technique, however, but in conformity with the technical progress we raise demands for increased wages, shorter hours due to the more intensive exploitation, etc. It is not sufficient to call meetings from time to time through the women's commissions, rather must we put together suitable propaganda material. Our connection with the masses must not be torn off. The creation of such women's commissions will help us considerably in subsequent women's delegate meetings. As yet we have no women's organisers in the fractions. Much of the blame falls upon the wrong tactics of the Party in the period prior to the ECCI. letter, and much of the trade union work is also neglected. We will now proceed to put women's organisers into the fractions so that fraction, women's commission and nucleus will work hand in hand;

Comrade BITTEL (Co-operative Section, ECCI):

Those big organisations which today exert a decisive influence upon the ideological and practical attitude of the masses of working women, come primarily into consideration for the work of the Communist women. Next to the trade unions the co-operatives today constitute the most important mass organisations in all capitalist countries. Internationally they number 50,000,000 members and 100,000 local organisations.

While Communist co-operative work in almost all countries has generally progressed slowly yet partially, this tempo has not been maintained in women's work even though the International Women's Secretariat, especially in the campaigns for International Co-operative Day 1925 and 1926, has repeatedly indicated the importance of co-operative work. The reply of the delegates to the small questionnaire issued by the Co-operative Section are so scanty that we cannot even ascertain from it what has been done and what perspectives there are. The only exception is the CP. of Great Britain whose Women's Department has been able to entrench itself in the specifically British Women's Co-operative Guilds. The latest issue of the British Co-operative paper contains a letter to the head of the British Co-operative movement in which it is stated:

"We point out that we must direct the greatest attention to a tremendous danger which has appeared in the British Co-operative movement, the penetration of Communist women into the Women's Guilds and the radical trend to be observed today in the British Women's Guilds."

The ancient and honourable British Co-operative movement, with its foundations of political neutrality, is being undermined by the activity of the Communist women. The Women's Guilds sent delegations to the Minority Movement Congress, and the Co-operative Central had to fight this tendency vigorously. Our British comrades could not ask for a better testimonial. During the General Strike, especially the Women's Guilds showed their solidarity with the trade union movement by means of relief activity, food credits, etc., precisely as they carried on a relief campaign for Russia during the famine period.

The other Parties showed rather a lack of interest and neglect towards this question. In 1925 about 150,000 general meetings of consumers co-operatives took place in which many millions of women attended. The reformist management of the consumers co-operatives had to report there on their activity. In this connection economic and political questions had to be touched upon. I will guarantee that in these 150,000 general meetings not even 1,000 women took the floor — really, systematically, from a class-struggle viewpoint, and on the basis of previous preparatory fraction work. There can be no doubt that in all these meetings there were opposition sentiments among the proletarian housewives against the reformist policy, for in the present general bad living conditions no one can be satisfied with the results achieved by the co-operatives. We have failed to take advantage of important opportunities for Communist agitation and propaganda here, and where we did come out publicly this was for the most part unorganised, and sometimes the political position of our women comrades, was very unclear.

In contrast to our own passivity is the reformist activity in the co-operative movement, which has been especially intensified during the last two years. Everywhere they are developing a quite systematic activity among the women in defence against the opposition move. In almost all countries there is a widely disseminated co-operative press. In Germany the Co-operative organ is circulated fortnightly in an edition of 960,000 copies, free of charge.

The Year Book of the Central Society of German Consumers' Societies in a special chapter on women's work contains the following passage:

"A Consumer's Co-operative that enjoys the support of loyal women collaborators in administration and organisation work, which has at its disposal enlightened, loyal women co-operators, will be able to overcome more easily the difficulties which confront it, and influence favourably the successes..."

This therefore means that the loyal women are to constitute a protective wall against the opposition sentiments and the organised Communist fraction activity.

Now as to the special Women's Guilds. Here we must carry on fraction work exactly as in the Co-operatives. Two years ago these Women's Guilds combined into an International Guild which has its branch organisations, especially in Great Britain and in the northern countries, but also in France, Germany etc. These Guilds carry on reformist work quite vigorously. In 1927 an International Women's Co-operative Congress will take place in Stockholm with an agenda that offers us thousands of points of contact. Therefore the Women's Departments must now devote special attention to the work in the Women's Guilds. When the International Women's Guild was formed two years ago, the Communist women from Germany, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, gave the Congress its stamp on all decisive questions, even though they were in a minority, and subjected to the extraordinary tyranny of the presiding office. The co-operatives also play an important role as a point of support in the organising of delegate meetings.

In view of such tendencies as are shown in Sweden, e. g. to enter the existing Women's Guilds for the purpose of dissolving them, a sentence was included in the thesis which expresses not only the necessity of fraction work in the Guilds, but even designates as possible that the Communist women might found such Guilds on their own initiative. What is avowed here, is an international organisation and within its limits the reformists will undoubtedly seize the initiative everywhere to broaden the movement. Where by our initiative we bring these Guilds under our influence from the very beginning, we can work better than if we start too late.

Comrade TURNER:

The nature of the work we have done in Great Britain has been determined by necessity and the circumstances in which we were placed.

Our numbers were very small, and we found ourselves surrounded by large organisations of women such as Women's Labour Sections and Co-operative Guilds.

In order to economise the material we had and use it to the best advantage we decided that work in these non-Party organisations was essential. It was also necessary because we as Communists must carry our message to the working women wherever they are and win them away from reformism.

We found that working women readily responded to the policy of the Communist Party although the work was slow owing to our small numbers.

Wherever our women were, they soon began to be looked to by other women for leadership and guidance. The confidence placed in them was won not merely by speeches but because the Communist women took part in the hard practical work and were able to prove by action not words that they were the best fighters for their class.

All our work was carried out under the guidance of the Party. Communist women naturally took the lead in difficult situations because they were able to state clearly and decisively the policy of the Party.

With regard to our work in Trade Unions. We have done very little in this direction and after this conference we must pay more attention to this important part of Communist activity.

We have been hampered in our work owing to the small number of actual industrial workers in our ranks, many of our members being housewives.

Also in the unions offering greatest scope for our activities owing to the large number of women in them — such as the textile unions — the members of the union were nothing more than paying members.

Branch meetings are rarely held some meetings once in three months and other actually once in six months.

We are endeavouring to obtain more frequent meetings and continually raise the subject in the unions.

In Britain while 4,000,000 women are engaged in industry, only one in eight is organised in a trade union, and the Party has brought forward the question of organising the women at the Trade Union Congress, Labour Party conferences and conferences of the Minority Movement in addition to raising the matter in Trades Council and Trade union meetings.

The General Council has at last initiated a campaign for the organisation for women workers, and in some cases the Party has been officially invited to take part.

But official or unofficial, Party members are assisting this campaign and endeavouring to extend it.

Factory gate meetings have been held, and Delegate Meetings called to help on the campaign.

The Minority Movement has been able to assist considerably in making the more advanced workers in the Trade Unions realise the necessity for organising women workers.

Since the last Unity conference the Minority Movement has begun to take an active part in the work itself. The number of women delegates at the Unity Conference was considerably more than at the previous conference, and the keenness they displayed and the letters the Minority Movement has received from women's organisations anxious to take part in the work of the Minority Movement, has induced the movement to intensify its activity among women workers.

In the Railway Women's Guilds we have still a considerable amount of work to do. This should be comparatively easy, as the women in these guilds have one common tie. They are all wives of workers in one section of industry, and any move to reduce wages or lengthen hours in that particular industry hits them all alike.

Our work in the Labour Party and Co-operative Guilds has already been covered in this conference.

We want you to realise that in England our work has just begun. We have not done as much as we should like to have done but after this conference we hope to do a good deal more.

Reference has been made to the comments of reactionaries on our activities, and it has been concluded that because of the agitation displayed by them, we have really done more than is actually the case.

We have achieved certain results, and it is by these results we wish our work to be judged and not by the hysteria of our opponents.

In whatever organisation a Communist appears, the reactionaries immediately start a campaign representing him to be more dangerous than he actually is. It is to their interest to do so as it is part of their policy of hounding out Communist from the workers organisations.

But it will effect us no more in one direction than another. We shall not be tempted to under-rate or over-estimate the tasks before us and the work that is yet to be done, even by the most sensational of their paragraphs.

This Conference will help and strengthen us in this work, and we hope by the time the next conference takes place that we shall have greater results to place before you.

Comrade MALM (Finland):

The number of women in the factories in Finland increases with every year. In 1913 27% women were occupied in industry, now it is 37%. Among the total of 50,000 workers in trade union organisations, 10,000 are women — 20%. In agriculture the organisation of women workers is weak. This is due to their service under private farmers and the difficulty of organising rural working women. In Finland organisational recruiting is carried on by direct agitational work of the trade unions themselves, centrally as well as by the various local committees of the different trade unions. The trade unions organised Women's Sections. In May a Congress of the Finnish Trade Union Federation took place at which a resolution on the question of the women's section was passed. This reads as follows:

"The Congress is of the opinion that the existing Woman's Section of the Trade Union Federation is indispensable and necessary to bring the women workers under the influence of the trade union organisation and to get them into the trade unions; the Congress therefore decides that:

1) The Woman's Section of the Trade Union Federation is constituted as follows: The Executive of the Trade Union Federation will select its five members and three candidates from a list nominated by the Helsingfors local committees of the trade unions in which there are numerous women members.

The chairman of the Section shall be a member of the Trade Union Federation which appoints her, the other collaborators are to be selected from among the Section.

2) The members of the Women's Section have the right to participate in the meetings of the Trade Union Federation Board with voice but no vote, and one representative of the Women's Section takes part similarly in the sessions of the Executive.

3) The Congress instructs the Executive of the Trade Union Federation to prepare at the first opportunity instructions for the Women's Section which are then to be ratified by the Trade Union Federation Board to be carried out by the Women's Section."

The resolution was unanimously, i. e. even the Social Democrats were unable to make any objections to it. This Section of the Trade Union Federation has existed since 1923. Prior to that, since 1922, propagandists worked among the women.

The work of these Women's Sections consists: 1. In organising agitational activity among the working women; 2. in preparing correspondence for the trade union organ and periodical, and 3. in mobilising the women for campaigns on various urgent questions of the day in Finland.

Such activity by no means suits the bourgeoisie nor, of course, the Social Democracy either, which only reflects the sentiments of the bourgeoisie.

The Social Democrats do not fail to undertake an attack against the Women's Section. They accuse it of agitating among the women for participation in the international holidays, especially International Women's Day.

What are the most important tasks in the Trade Union Federation's work among women? First of all the trade union recruiting activity among women must be given more intensive form. Second, the activity of the masses of women must be raised by having the trade unions advance on the road of the class struggle.

At the moment the movement of the women workers contributes considerably towards winning the masses of

women for the **struggle for trade union unity** and against the splitting policy of the Social Democracy. The delegate meetings must also make it their task to break down the influence of the Social Democracy.

Comrade BREANT (France):

In France an exceptionally large of women are employed in all industries; and their number increases incessantly.

In the textile industry they make up from 60—70% and in some towns even 100% (in certain districts where there are two industries, the men e. g. are admitted only in the metal factories and the women only in the textile enterprises). In the metal industry there are 35%. In the chemical industry 50—70%, in the food products industry 50—70%.

For several months the recruiting of membership for the trade unions has been making quite good progress because the women no longer get on with their wages. The women pay far more attention to the increasing cost of living because they conduct the household. This explains the great discontent among them.

Many strikes have broken out in which the women workers, mostly acted first and drew the men along with them. There are cases in which the women were left in the lurch and therefore were unable to put over their demands.

In some trade unions, wherever we could, we founded a Women's Commission for the organising of the women, viz. from among the working women of the various organisations we selected fellow workers to formulate a joint programme of demands. When we see active working women at the meetings, we draw them into the Central Women's Commission. They give us information about the factories, and from them we ascertain exactly the demands of the women. This has already borne good fruit. This is the first year in which on the 1st of May, fellow members of the Red Trade Unions came out of the factory and spoke at public meetings.

The situation is favourable for the organising of women workers, but our men comrades must help us in this work because alone we are not strong enough numerically. The women workers are often afraid of the Communist Party, but if we first win them for the trade unions, they can be brought more easily into the Party after a certain training. Our trade union programme is closely bound up with the programme of action of the Party. When we approach the working women we begin with their small immediate demands but we never forget the final aim of the Party.

Comrade PROKOPOVA (Czecho-Slovakia):

In so far as women are in the movement they know how to advocate their interests. This is shown by various strikes of women workers, as well as the miners strike, in which the women are an active element. For instance in Kladno, the women prevented the transport of coal by drawing themselves upon the rails. In the textile strike in Tannwald in which 70% of the participants were women, the struggle for the maintenance of the eight hour day was carried through victoriously. In the underwear factories where 90% women are occupied, 70% of them unorganised, the working women held out five weeks in a strike, thanks to the collections of the women's departments and the aid of the I. W. A. In the last week of the strike the women workers went from house wherever the underwear was worked on by the home workers, and called upon them to stop work. Then they went from shop to shop and argued with the tradesmen in order to exert pressure through them upon the struck firms during the negotiations. We succeeded in carrying the strike to a victorious end.

Another question involves the leadership of the struggle through the trade unions. This involves also a financial question. Even where it would be possible to win the strike by a walk-out, it is occasionally broken because of a lack of means with which to hold out longer. It is also very difficult to work in the I. A. V. (Red Trade Unions) because an erroneous attitude towards work among women prevails there. Although the I. A. V. is a revolutionary trade union federation it declares its agreement with a view that a woman worker should be discharged as soon as she is married. The

I. A. V. falls back on the pretext that it has no qualified women functionaries for work among the women. This argument is not valid. Especially of late many women have been trained through the women's department, and they could work very well in the trade union field, but the I. A. V. does not draw them in.

Comrade ARTIUKHINA (Women's Department of the C. C. of the C. P. S. U.).

Our conferences must state clearly that the Communist Parties should devote especial attention to trade union work. The Party must get the Trade Union Fractions to work among the masses of women. We cannot cope with this task with our own forces.

This work is extraordinarily difficult also because we have a powerful foe in the Social Democracy. That is why we must lay great weight upon the quality of our trade union women functionaries, only women comrades who are clear as to our aims, who are able to carry out our policy against our opponents, can be considered.

The second difficulty consists in the still insufficient understanding of our Communist Parties for the necessity of serious and tireless work in the trade unions. The question of transferring new forces to trade union work must be put to the fore. We must work towards getting the Party to devote the greatest attention to this question because the individual comrades are not able to overcome all the difficulties which confront them.

Through the Women Delegate Meetings a new corps of activists grows up in the trade unions. The delegates have always helped us, and help us also now to the extent that we approach closer to the trade unions. We have no other cadres. Precisely in consideration of the tremendous importance of trade union work we must therefore devote increased attention to the organising of women's delegate meetings.

The question of work in the trade unions must be tackled also practically. A special form of work is recommended for each individual country. The experiences of each country must be taken into consideration here. Then the essential features of the individual branches of industry must be observed: For the workers in one branch certain forms are applicable that cannot be used in another. At the same time, however, this form may be fitting and common to the women workers of a definite branch of industry in various countries. The theses should be amplified in this sense.

I emphasise again that we can cope with the work of winning the proletarian masses in the trade unions and co-operatives only if we build not alone upon our women forces, but also if we can raise the question as Party members, as C. C. members in the Communist Parties, so that the attention of the entire Party will be directed towards this question. (Applause).

Comrade GESCHKE (Secretariat E. C. C. I.):

Comrade Strasser in her report referred to the rationalisation process which is taking place not only in Germany but in all Europe. I believe that this rationalisation process which we must look at a little more thoroughly, will contribute to getting not only the C. C. of all Parties to devote greater attention to the Women's Departments, but the Parties as a whole to devote greater attention to work among the women. In the rationalisation process the employer is replacing the man by the cheaper and more willing woman. The Communist slogan for industrial unions is now put for practical solution before the German trade unions. These industrial unions will experience a different composition of membership because there will be more women workers than heretofore. The tasks of these unions are becoming greater. The demand for equal pay for equal work is more urgent, the demand for real protection of working women, factory hygiene, etc., is more urgent.

The employers see this process. Their Factory Societies which have existed as yellow unions, are beginning to take on the form of American Company Unions.

So I come to one of the points in the thesis of Comrade Strasser with which I cannot agree and which I urge to be eliminated. I shall introduce another formulation. This is point

4 in chapter 3 on the most important tasks of the proletarian mass organisations. The last sentence of this point states:

"We must strive in branches of industry of decisive importance towards the formation, of auxiliary organisations on the British model for the wives of trade unionists."

I believe that this passage should be discussed very thoroughly. I will make a special motion that it be referred to the Trade Union Commission of Comintern and Profintern, which, through a sub-commission drawing in representatives of the International Women's Secretariat and comrades who know the British trade unions, should study and work out organisational forms and methods for the reaching of the masses of women by the sections of the Third International.

Comrade Artiukhina said that our work must be carried on also in the Christian trade unions. In Germany we have big

strong Christian trade union organisations, and also quite strong Hirsch-Duncker organisations which sail more in democratic channels. According to the decisions of the International the Communists are to form fractions in all organisations, but nobody should entertain the idea that in these Christian organisations any considerable masses of Communists are to be found. If the reformist trade unions, the A. D. G. B., and its affiliated unions kick the Communists out of the unions, then the Christian trade unions will not exercise the toleration that they preach for the benefit of the Communists. I know for instance in the Christian Miners' Union we have fractions. We have perhaps individual Communists in some locals, but we cannot speak of systematic Communist work. Under certain circumstances we will be forced to commandeer comrades into the Christian unions in order to be able to carry out the work there. Our work in Germany will have to concentrate primarily upon activity in the free trade unions affiliated to the A. D. G. B.

Report on the Delegation to Comrade Clara Zetkin.

Comrade KOVANOVA (Soviet Union):

During the first days of this conference it was decided to send a delegation to Comrade Clara Zetkin. Today the Presidium sent me, together with two comrades from Great Britain and one each from France and Germany to the hospital in which Comrade Clara Zetkin is staying at present.

Comrade Zetkin was delighted with our visit. When I mentioned that at the festive gathering of Moscow women workers the mention of the name of Clara Zetkin caused the hall to shake with applause, Comrade Zetkin was greatly agitated, and her eyes filled with tears. She bade us to bring her greetings to our conference and deeply regretted her inability to attend. She was with our conference in spirit however and was observing its work attentively. She expressed the wish that the Moscow organisation should arrange several large meetings in which the women comrades who have arrived

from Great Britain could report on the events there. These comrades are the first living witnesses who are able to give us the truth about Great Britain, since they were actual participants in the strike. She emphasised that it was necessary for our women's press to popularise the British strike among the masses of toiling women since this strike has an international significance. She suggested that the speeches of our British comrades be published in a small pamphlet in a large edition so that every working man and woman can read what happened and what is now happening in Great Britain.

When we presented her with the carpet offered in the meeting in the Hall of the Columns, she expressed the wish that the Uzbekian women comrades visit her in the hospital and likewise the two Chinese women comrades who are participating in our delegation.

Comrade Clara Zetkin sends the whole conference her warmest greetings. (Enthusiastic applause.)

Thirteenth Session.

Evening, June 6, 1927.

The Non-Party Women's Organisations.

Reporter Comrade STURM (I. W. S.):

When we speak today, under a special point on the agenda, about the non-Party women's organisations, this does not mean that we consider this field of work a specially weighty point of our activity. We are all entirely clear on this — that the chief value must be laid upon reaching the women workers in the factories. But there were, and there are still are, differences of opinion and lack of clarity on this question which make it difficult for us, inside of the Party, to utilise certain possible forms of approach to the masses. The question has a certain principal importance. If we did not allow ourselves to be misled by quite severe attacks upon the International Women's Secretariat for its position on this question, it was because on this point at various times a sterile attitude was shown, an incapability of entering upon the special conditions and various situations in the different countries, and the adaptation of the Communist Party tactic with due consideration to the tactics of the enemy. That is why we have to put this question in part as a question of principle and in part as a question of practice.

We are of the opinion that in the disputed question a tactical question is involved in the founding of non-Party women's organisations on the initiative of the Communists. On the other hand however principal arguments have been raised against it. These misgivings are based upon the de-

isions of the Second International Conference of Women Communists in 1921, which states that the Comintern very decidedly opposes the formation of women's organisations. We cannot recognise as correct such a principle in this rigid form, because it blocks our way to the masses. In studying this "principle" we should be clear as to the extent to which this principle has been carried out in the hitherto prevailing practice. In this connection I would like to start from the **Women's Delegate Meetings.**

When this question was raised for the first time at the V. World Congress, Comrade Kuusinen wrote an article in the "Communist Women's International" in which this method was disputed on all possible pretexts.

These arguments which are entirely correct are made to state that the principle of rejecting all special organisation of women is a false principle that makes it difficult for us to get ahead with the special training of women for public life. Obviously our Russian brother Party has not concerned itself much with feminism when it created its delegate meetings. The practical living example of Russia shows that through this special organisation the women are not isolated from the Labour movement, but on the contrary, that this was the means with which the women could be attracted more strongly into public life. We also must reckon more with the realities of life in fixing the forms of our work.

If we put the question thus, — through what special organisational forms can we approach closer to the masses of toiling women, we must also raise the question of the **women's organisations**. In what manner can we organise the women outside of the Party, how can we utilise the form of non-Party women's organisation in the sense in which the Russian Party has been able to utilise the women's delegate meetings? Of course we do not look upon the women's organisation as an end in itself, it is a means to the end, a helping organisation. Among other things it also aids us on the road to the women's delegate meetings.

What kind of women's organisations have existed until now? In Western Europe, in America, there are tremendously more such organisations than ever existed in Russia. We must realise this in order to appraise correctly the significance of this question. The questionnaires from the various countries, especially Sweden, Norway and Germany contain very interesting compilations about organisations that we hardly knew of heretofore, and which demand very great attentiveness on our part. We can designate **three big groups of women's organisations**.

First, such women's organisations as are closely bound up with the general labour movement. The classical example of this is **Great Britain**. The organisations there constitute a clear-cut type of proletarian character which offer a big field of activity for our work.

The second type (group) includes the organisations directed by the bourgeoisie, mostly by clericals and nationalists, in part also by liberals. These organisations recruit the prepondering forces of their membership from the working class. We saw this quite definitely in **Germany** in the elections in which the influence of such women's societies drew the numerous votes of the working women towards the reactionary parties. Similarly in **Czecho-Slovakia**. The organisations which are under a liberal leadership naturally recruit their chief forces from the petty bourgeois strata and the wives of the intelligentsia. From the Swedish report it can be seen quite clearly that employees, school teachers and similar elements, but workers' wives and women workers are also strongly represented. **Norway** offers similar examples — in the Reichstag elections in 1924 a bourgeois women's united front was formed. The Liberal Party organised apparently non-Party women's clubs about the systematic political exploitation of which they themselves write: "Well, strict Party politics is not suitable to us women. But we have the greatest of pre-conditions for getting many women into the Party through a women's club."

The third group of non-Party organisations is that of the sympathisers, about which I will speak specially.

It is self-understood with respect to the **British organisations** that the women Communists most unquestionably enter these organisations in order to carry on fraction work there. This is not yet fully comprehended by all Parties, for about six months ago we had a discussion with the Swedish comrades over the women's co-operative guilds because they had the idea of going into the guilds with the intention of dissolving them. Such a viewpoint we consider basically wrong. We are of the opinion that an organisation of proletarian women in itself constitutes a step forward as compared with an unorganised condition. If a proletarian woman decides to join an organisation, this is a first step on the road to the advocacy of her proletarian class interests. We have sufficient confidence in the class-consciousness of the proletarian women to feel that we must succeed in enlightening the women who are misled by the bourgeoisie and reformists, once they have stepped out on the road of organisation. We should utilise such existing organisations as a field of operations for the influencing of the women in our sense.

A further question is whether the Communists under certain conditions may or should take the initiative to found new women's organisations. Under what conditions can the creation of proletarian women's organisations become useful to us? Our comrades from Sweden wrote us, we shall work in the Women's Guilds but the founding of such organisations we will leave to others. Who are the others? The reformists and the bourgeoisie. Let us see clearly what such an attitude means? It means that we waive taking over the leadership in these organisations and permit the opponents to corral the proletarian women for their purposes. The one who takes the initiative in a case like this, holds the masses in hand.

If we do not go into these organisations first we will find it very hard later to win the women away from our opponents.

What is "special" in the form of the "women's organisation" as compared with the hitherto recognised organisational forms of work? The resolutions of the Org. Bureau unequivocally stated that around the Party corps we must gather loose groups of sympathisers in order to broaden our influence upon the masses. The boundaries between such groups and those of the sympathising women's organisations are rather fluid. Comrade Kasparova, who has a very negative attitude towards the women's organisations, came to the conclusion, after detailed information and discussion with Comrade Hansen of Norway, that the housewives' societies there are fundamentally the same as the original forms of the women's delegate meetings.

The whole difference between a "group" and an "organisation" lies in the following points: The "organisation" is generally more firmly knit. Its members have definite rights and duties on the basis of a fixed constitution. In addition the organisation is generally larger numerically and has a natural tendency to spread out. Thus the Red Women's and Girls' League in Germany already has 9,000 members.

With regard to the content, the task of these various organisational forms, the Sections which have had certain experiences can confirm that in essence they are the same. Here as there everything stands or falls with the clear programme and goal-conscious activity with which the Communist Party seizes the leadership of the organisation.

It might be replied: Why have other special women's organisations, if we have the Women's Delegate Meetings? Cannot the latter fulfil all purposes? Viewed abstractly, the objection is correct for the very reason that the purpose of both methods is a similar one. There may however be situations which involve a strategical question, viz. whether we can counter our opponents' activity with sufficient force by means of a delegate meeting. The structure of the delegate meeting will have a somewhat slower tempo. We will not immediately include large masses of women in these delegate meetings. It is a fact that in the West broad circles of women have a requirement for a special women's organisation and if they then have the choice between a firm society such as the clerical and bourgeois societies, and such a loose union as the women's delegate meeting, then there will be grave possibilities that the women will feel themselves drawn more to the societies and the bourgeoisie, thanks to their special forms of society life, will entice these working women into their net. We will not be able to re-act with sufficient rapidity and effectiveness to this sort of activity on the part of our foes.

Comrade Hansen of Norway put the question correctly at the last Plenum when she said: "Shall we permit the bourgeoisie to draw the working class women over into its camp?" Or shall we not make the effort to draw the proletarian women over into our camp by means of a form adapted to the practice of the bourgeoisie? We believe that with all the caution that we exercise towards the women's organisations, we must nevertheless in every case study the situation very carefully in order at all times to apply the most useful means. Of course we can never permit that by such women's organisation the forces of the Party will be diverted from the central tasks in factory and trade union.

Now as to the question of the relations between the Women's Delegate Meetings and the non-Party women's organisations.

Comrade Overlach stated that we can utilise these women's organisations as a reservoir from which we can select the elements that we can draw over into our Party, we can prepare them and make delegates of them upon which we can depend, delegates who can establish new connections for us with the working women in the factory. In Norway, e. g. the Party does not confine itself to organising only housewives in their house-keepers societies, but they accept every working woman that can possibly be won and used for the organisation. The Red Women's and Girls' League has 50% of women workers among its members.

After pointing the points in favour of the women's organisations I by no means wish to neglect the underlining of sources of danger in this field. We have classic examples with very instructive material in **Norway** and in **Germany**. One must again and again underline that for the sake of work in the

Women's organisations we cannot lose sight of our central tasks. I believe that serious danger exists here among our Norwegian comrades. In 1924 the Party was confronted with the task of liquidating the Communist women societies while still in some sort of organisational form attaching the sympathisers who could not be immediately taken into the Party as members. At that time there arose the question of the creation of housewives' societies. Immediately after that Party Congress we very clearly called out Norwegian brother Party's attention to the dangers indicated. In our letter of August 1925, after the Second Party Congress and the Second Women's Conference, we depreciated that the attention of the Women's Conference had been concentrated too heavily on this one question, and we underlined the course of the International Conference towards the reaching of the factory women workers.

Most recent reports and an article by Comrade Hansen seem to confirm the fact that the work of the Norwegian Women's Department has met with great successes in the housewives' societies, but that they have concentrated entirely on this field. We believe that although the Norwegian comrades did right at that time in founding the housewives' societies, they have nevertheless strayed somewhat from the correct path. This is shown by the standpoint of Comrade Olsen who wants to establish women's delegate meetings without factory nuclei. With such an erroneous attitude we will get delegate meetings in Norway composed of housewives without working women.

In Germany the Party made very serious mistakes in the founding of the Red Women's and Girls' League. We recognise that this organisation has done very good work and that it can be very valuable as an auxiliary organ of the Party in carrying out its tasks in factory and trade union. Nevertheless we have observed three mistakes.

First, the starting point. This women's organisation was founded by the Party at a time that the Red Front Fighters' League, in agreement with the Central Committee of the C.P., had thrown out its women members with the explanation that they were harmful elements. This repulsing of the women from a joint class organisation of the proletariat naturally produced a mood not of solidarity but of a certain hostility of the women towards the men that even reached into the ranks of the Communist Party. The women who had been thrown out said to themselves: The Party does not concern itself about us, and we will therefore open up our own shop.

Out of this first wrong step there then followed all the subsequent errors. Our German brother Party at that time was absolutely unclear as to the consequences of its action. At the first step it was free, at the second it was already a bondman. When the expelled members of the Front Fighters League spontaneously organised in various towns into women's leagues, the Party was compelled to gather them together and to take over the leadership of the new organisation. But for months, from the July Party Congress until November, the question was up in the Party: What shall we do with the

Red Women's and Girls' League? There was lack of clarity, from the Central Committee down to the last Party functionary.

This lack of clarity resulted in that a complete disharmony arose in the relations between the Red Women's and Girls' League and the Party. There developed a sort of competitive struggle between the Party and the Red Women's and Girls' League. The Party supported the work of the R.W.G.L. far more perseveringly than the general work of the Women's Department which was pushed into the background. The R.W.G.L. conducted more campaigns among the masses of women than did the Women's Department, it issued more material, it had the chance to undertake agitation and instruction trips into the districts which the Women's Department was not able to do. It founded its own organ "Frauenwacht" at the same time that the Party leadership was about to liquidate its own women's periodical, the "Kommunistin". The R.W.G.L. thereby was given a fateful preponderance over the Women's Department of the Party. The hegemony of the Party over the non-Party women's organisation was really broken, at the time. Only gradually did they begin to see clearly that this could not go on in this way.

Until very recently the Party has failed, furthermore, to take organisational measures to make the League of service to the aims of the Party: viz. to create Communist Party fractions in the League. To a great extent the women Party members in the districts have categorically refused to enter the League, to take over functions there on the instructions of the Party. Only recently the Party is beginning to realise how necessary it is to assure itself the leadership of this organisation for systematic political work. The leadership of the Red Women's and Girls' League already signals the danger that the League, with its 70% non-Communist members will grow over the head of the Party. If after a careful investigation of the situation a Party will at all venture to create a new women's organisation, it may do so only if from the very first moment it takes hold with absolute assurance by organising a systematic fraction work in this organisation.

If we are clear as to the chances of results in such a women's organisation, but on the other side also of its dangers, our work will be held upon the correct line. We cannot be passive for fear of the dangers. Fear of dangers is not characteristic of a Communist. Every activity of the Communists is bound up with dangers. To the arguments of those who reject a method or tactic because one might slip thereby to the right or to the left, we must reply that there is no panacea against deviation. Our plumb line is the fundamentals of Communism which we must apply with understanding, to every concrete situation. To assure this we state that in every single instance the Party C.C. must very seriously study the situation. If on the basis of special conditions the C.C. decides for the application of such special methods as the creation of a woman's organisation, then without internal friction we should all travel the road that seems useful and effective for us to approach the broad masses and to lead them on to the road of Communism.

Discussion on the Report of Comrade Sturm.

Comrade OLSEN (Norway):

It is necessary to say a few words more about how the sympathetic women's organisations in Norway originated. The members of these organisations are chiefly former members of the women's societies of the Norwegian Labour Party which after the split of the Party either went over to the Communist Party or else sympathised with the Communists. I believe things are similar also in Germany. But the conditions of Germany and Norway do not coincide with those of other countries. Therefore the Women's Secretariat and the Women's Conference must not work too much in the direction of founding similar organisations also in other countries.

In the former international direction we were forbidden to found new women's organisations. Nevertheless in some places we were forced to. In Odag, for example, where the Communists, especially the women, play a leading role, the Tranmaelites proposed the foundation of a co-operative women's guild. This proposal was for the purpose of

undermining the influence of the Communists. The Party was therefore forced to collaborate in the foundation of this organisation and it was successful. The power of the Party in this town was maintained.

Comrade Sturm has mentioned the grave danger contained in this work. I am also of the opinion that these dangers are really great. The Norwegian Party has very large and important tasks to solve in the existing women's organisations. It is the task of the Party to control the most various kinds of elements, to draw them closer to the Party. But our forces are very weak. They cannot exercise this control to a sufficient degree. Furthermore we have other important fields of work, such as the activity in the co-operatives, etc. Finally, we must sometimes also effectuate the delegate meetings.

The organisations already existing in Germany and in Norway must of course be utilised. But we should not draw the conclusion that we should found similar organisations of this kind in other countries.

Comrade OVERLACH (Germany):

The Red Women's and Girls' League in Germany already looks back upon five months of activity. We have gathered many practical experiences, the utilisation of which may be of importance also for the other countries. I will of course have to restrict myself greatly in my remarks and will not be able to deal with all the questions.

A word as to the origin of the League — because Comrade Sturm has cited a series of mistakes in which some things must be corrected. First as to the question of the separation of the women members from the "Red Front Fighters' League". Of course in principle we stand upon the position that the women are to be organised jointly with the men in one common fighting organisation. But in practice the question was thus — that in the Red Front Fighters' League there were preponderantly non-Party workers who did not have a correct attitude towards the women within such a fighting organisation, so that in practice, disputes developed in the Red Front Fighters' League. The work in this organisation suffered in that man and woman did not look upon one another as comrades. To this must be added the fact that the women were not equal to the physical efforts required by the League. For these reasons the question was actually that we could not hold the women in the League. The advantage of a purely woman's organisation lies in this that far broader masses of women are organised than could be done through the Women's Departments of the Red Front Fighters League.

It was stated further on by Comrade Sturm that the question of founding the Red Women's and Girls' League was up in the air in the Party, for a very long time. The C. C. Bureau had very many differences and discussions over this question for six months, and Comrades Thälmann, Geschke and Zetkin occupied themselves with this question thoroughly and worked out its directions. If nevertheless the question was up in the air so long, this was due to a certain neglect of the question by the Women's Department of the Party which even only recently declared itself to be not in agreement with the Red Women's and Girls' League, using primarily an argument that this was simply military play-acting. In my opinion the Women's Department failed to understand that what was involved here was a revolutionary movement among the women masses themselves, which had grown out of the crisis, out of the intensified terrorism of the employers. Similar arguments were used in their time against the Red Front Fighters' League. The effect of such an attitude of the Women's Department upon the members of the R. W. G. L. was often such that they saw their enemies in the Party comrades. It was very difficult for Communist functionaries to work in the League.

If such an attitude even prevailed in headquarters, it was of course transplanted into the broad membership, all the more so since the ideological attitude towards women's work is in general an unfavourable one. It is not true that the Party did nothing for the fraction work. Already in January the Party issued directions, and I am of the opinion that it should have been the task of the Women's Department to see to it that they were carried out.

In summarising it must be said that the other Sections can draw lessons from this, they must observe all movements of the women's organisations in their country with greater attentiveness, and that immediately upon the inception of new organisation forms they must take a position on them seriously.

I emphasise that I am not of opinion that on the basis of the good results from the Red Women's and Girls' League we should now planlessly introduce such organisations into all other countries, rather all of the pre-conditions must first be investigated very seriously, the available forces, the actual conditions must be taken into consideration before deciding to call such an organisation into being. Such work is very difficult and is bound up with great dangers.

I now come to the practical activity of the R. W. G. L. and its composition. The Red Women's and Girls' League, which originated on Nov. 29, in the amalgamation of the loose groups which had emerged from the Red Front Fighters' League, very quickly found powerful acclaim among the broad strata of women. This is due partly to the methods of its work. The League is today composed of 70% non-Party women and 30% Communists. The Communists exercise leadership in the Leagues. This very composition itself shows that if these Communist women will lead the League upon clear principles, this

League can become a valuable reserve for the Party, a reservoir of indifferent women, for the purpose of leading them in the struggle, in order later to bring at least a part of them into the Party. In this respect, we have already achieved astonishing results. In Itzehoe, e. g. all of the members have joined the Party, in Schwedt, about half entered the Party. What really counts is to conduct systematic fraction work in order to make this organisation into an auxiliary organisation of the Communist Party.

In Germany there are 3000 bourgeois women's societies which are amalgamated into one league. We have the Queen Louise League whose members wear uniforms, and whose programme advocates two years' compulsory service for women. It is an avowed nationalist organisation. On the countryside we have agricultural women's societies everywhere. To overlook this and to fail to notice that the trend of the women into such organisations today becomes stronger and stronger because of the feeling of the need to seek some relief from their misery, — this would be a serious mistake if due to a narrow political concept, we would quietly look on these doings of the bourgeoisie, if we would stand idly by while the working women were being taken hold of by the bourgeois organisations. We look upon the special organisation as a means to our end. In these special organisations, we must strive gradually to draw the women out of themselves, we must strive to raise the self-consciousness of the women, to turn them into class fighters on the basis of the daily struggles, in order then to enrol the best elements in the Communist Party.

We have taken hold of this task practically. In the People's Referendum Campaign our women carried on recruiting work jointly with the men, and they have arranged joint demonstrations in the unemployed campaign. In Hamburg, Berlin and other towns, our women approached the tenants' societies for a struggle against the new rent extortion law. We have worked jointly with the Socialist Doctors' Society, and with the Socialist Sport organisations. Thereby we have begun on a new path — the formation of Unity Committees. By these practical tasks, we have activated and trained the women. We give our women practical tasks. It is quite astonishing how in a short time new forces develop. For example, we instructed one woman to speak at a demonstration, and even though the women are very timid, they nevertheless get up and make their speeches. Their self-consciousness has already been elevated, their faith in their own strength has grown. We are organising functionary courses in which we work out reports with them, thereby training them.

As to the social composition we have about 50% women workers and 50% housewives. I want to emphasise especially to the Russian comrades that these housewives are not to be conceived of as petty bourgeois women, they are housewives who only yesterday were in the factories, and who perhaps tomorrow will again be in the factories or doing work at home. The League is recruited in its overwhelming majority from such elements. We have working women from all branches of industry.

Now after we got together the sympathisers available for the League by means of public demonstrations and broad recruiting campaigns, we are proceeding to a systematic activity. We put our centre of gravity on factory work. In the last weeks we have discussed seriously the methods of factory work and have now set ourselves the task of forming circles of women workers in the factories. This work inside of the factory for the formation of circles of women workers constitutes one of the pre-conditions for the delegate meeting, and I am of the opinion that we can penetrate into many factories, even where there are as yet no Communist.

Our League today includes 9000 dues' paying members. Entirely with our own forces we have now founded a small newspaper of which the first edition was 20,000, and of which we now circulate 30,000 copies. We utilise it for the political training of our members. We are now proceeding to get subscribers in the rural districts in order to establish points of support there.

With respect to the method of agitation I would like to point out that we combine political training with proletarian entertainment material. These proletarian entertainments can be utilised as a means towards the end, in order to bring the

women workers under our influence. The proletarian entertainment forms the frame to sweeten for the women the politics which often appears to them a bitter pill.

I come to a close. The question of founding such non-Party mass organisations will come up also in the other countries' because the class antagonisms are constantly sharpened everywhere, because more than ever before the bourgeoisie is proceeding systematically to get hold of the proletarian women. We must be very careful not to proceed with

this business until all of the conditions have been thoroughly discussed and studied. On the other hand however, we should avoid falling into pessimism by declaring that we have no forces for the work. If we take this position we cannot do anything at all. I believe that if we have even only a small corps of well-trained forces, we can draw tremendous new forces out of the women workers by means of systematic work. I would therefore urge the comrades from other countries to discuss this question thoroughly from this standpoint.

Fourteenth Session.

Morning, June 7, 1926.

Continuation of the Discussion on the Report of Comrade Sturm.

Comrade KASPAROVA (I. W. S.):

That we Communists must participate in all general non-Party organisations, and in special organisations of working women, we are, of course, all in agreement. But whether special women's organisations must be created upon the initiative of the Communist Party — on this there are differences of opinion in the International Women's Secretariat itself and in the Russian delegation to this Conference. I have received the consent of the Russian delegation to present my personal standpoint here since question is up only for discussion here, and the final decision is to be made by the E. C. C. I.

I am of the opinion that the question of non-Party women's organisations need not have been raised as a special point. It would have sufficed to take up a special point in the report on mass work, as to how we are to utilise the already existing women's organisations, as well also of those among these women's organisations which contain the proletarian or semi-proletarian women, but which for the time are still under the influence of Amsterdam, the II. International and other organisations hostile to the Communist International.

In what consists the organisational principles of Bolshevism with respect to the forms and methods of the work among women? How must we Communists work among the women in order to avoid isolating this work from the general struggles of the working class and revolutionary peasantry? We can avoid this only if we are active in the depths of the proletarian, semi-proletarian and peasant masses in solid ranks, shoulder to shoulder in the general, class, Party, trade union and co-operative organisations. Hence, one of the weightiest tasks of the Comintern and of our Communist brother Parties of East and West is work among the working men and women already organised in trade unions and, the winning for the trade unions of those not yet so organised.

From the speeches of the delegates to this conference, the following seems to strike the eye: The Women's Departments of our brother Parties have worked among the housewives, among the wives of Party members, among the wives of workers, among the middle strata, and also among a certain section of the economically occupied women intellectuals. But with respect to the organisation of women workers, to their influencing both inside and outside of the factories, thus far extremely little has been done. The chief directions which this Conference must draw for our comrades are the following: The whole energy of our comrades must be directed in first rank upon the organising and ideological training of broad masses of women workers in the factories and in the general class organisations. Therefore, at the VI. Enlarged Plenum of the E. C. C. I. in April, in the theses on work in the mass organisations, the mention of the utilising of non-Party women's organisation was rejected, and only that of activity among the women workers with the aid of the Women Delegate Meetings was adopted as the basic unpostponable method, which must be put upon the agenda of all our Parties. The point on work in non-Party women's organisations was rejected also by the German delegation to the Plenum.

Two forces — the Comintern and the capitalists — fight for influence upon the working class and the intermediate

strata closest to the proletariat. One of the tasks of our Communist Party is the organising of these intermediate strata under Communist influence, but not in the special women's organisations, but in the general, non-Party mass auxiliary organisations such e. g. as the I. R. A., I. W. A., Society of the Friends of Soviet Russia, antimilitarist societies, organisation against colonial oppression and the oppression of the peoples of the East, proletarian self-defence organisations, etc. To these organisations can be attached Women's Commissions or Departments which under the general direction of the Central Committees of these organisation will work among the broad toiling masses of women. Some West European comrades think that the "delegate meetings" are the same thing as women's organisations. These comrades thereby prove that they have not grasped the content of the work and the system of the delegate meetings.

The Women's Delegate Meetings, as Comrade Stalin strikingly put it, are the transmission belts which connect the Party with the broad masses of proletarian women. They are organised under the direct instigation of the Party with the aid of its Women's Departments and the aims and tasks of these meetings are realised, first, in that the women workers are in the majority as compared with the middle strata affiliated to the delegate meetings, and furthermore, that its working plan is prepared in harmony with the programme and tactics of Party and trade union work. The standpoint that the formation of "women's organisations" might contribute to the formation of delegate meetings of women workers is entirely false. Under West-European conditions, the working women can be organised directly in "delegate meetings" without the preparatory school of special "women's" organisations. The masses of toiling women must be organised and gathered together in the general organisations. To establish a preparatory school in the form of women's organisation means to embark upon the path of least resistance.

What should be the basic line of our work in participating and utilising the "women's organisations", containing proletarian and semi-proletarian elements? We participate in them, but we do not dissolve in them, organising instead a Communist fraction directed by some Party central. Our Communist Party must consider the objective conditions and seize suitable and timely measures in order to direct the Communist women's fractions in the organisations with a firm hand, and in order to prevent the dissipation of their influence in the general stream of malien petty-bourgeois sentiments. As yet we have no cadres of trained, influential, experienced collaborators, hence we must send well-schooled Communist women into these "women's organisations". Yet the Communist Parties should not found non-Party women's societies on their own initiative. In the women's organisations already in existence, there is work enough to be done. One part of the members must be taken from them, others must be neutralised, and finally, we must win over their proletarian and semi-proletarian elements and draw them over to our side.

A few words on the Red Women's and Girls' League in Germany. It is a useful organisation, but might very well be affiliated to the general Red Front Fighters' League as a

women's section. If the C. P. G. had taken timely care of the direction of the work among the women affiliated to this League, then the women and girls would not have been excluded from its ranks and the C. P. would not have had to gather up those who had been thrown out and organised them into a special women's organisation in order to avoid their falling into alien hands. If we give the women the opportunity of joining together in special organisations, we thereby slough off the responsibility for the work among women from the Party as a whole, to the shoulders of a few Communist women comrades, specially selected for this work and who, as a result of their inadequate qualification, may make a lot of irreparable mistakes.

The Party can and must feel the pulse beat of the life of broad masses of toiling women if they are in the common ranks. In China our comrades have been able in the course of the last three years to work on the inside of "women's organisations" and to gain influence over the national revolutionary and class struggle of the Chinese proletariat. Since the liberation movement in the East is carrying on under the influence of the Russian Revolution its organisation forms and methods of working among women are found applicable not only in the Communist Party, but also in the national revolutionary parties. The Women's Departments of the Kuomintang and of the C. P. are organised according to the model of the Women's Department of the C. P. S. U., in structure, working forms and methods they resemble those of our Communist Women's Departments in the Soviet East.

Comrade SAVARYAN (Soviet Union):

At the beginning of her speech, Comrade Kasparova said that she considered it wrong to give special treatment to the question of non-Party women's organisations. The delegation of the C. P. S. U. thinks that this question must be differentiated from a series of others and subjected to a thorough discussion. Especially in those capitalist countries in which our Parties live and work illegally or semi-legally, this question deserves increased attention. We believe that organisational forms are not established once and for all times — that they do not involve any dogmas. We Bolsheviks are accustomed to change forms for reasons of utility as this shows itself to be necessary. Just think of the history of the State Duma in Russia. We were against the first State Duma and boycotted it. But in the second we participated. When for the good of the cause we consider it necessary to displace one form with another, the Bolshevik Party does this without hesitation.

What is the Situation in Western Europe? From the report of the comrade on the Red Women's and Girls' League it appears that this League is carrying on powerful work, that it has a periodical with a circulation of 30,000 copies, and that it is extending its influence over broad masses of women. Furthermore, the comrade informs us that in Germany alone, there exist roundly, 3000 bourgeois women's organisations. This means that not only the II. International, but all reactionary organisations are striving to bring the masses of women under their influence and to organise them for their political purpose. But in order to counter their influence with our influence the Communist Party must, in some cases, when it appears necessary, take the initiative for the organising of non-Party women's organisations. This is our standpoint, and we believe that the Communist Party, if it does not want to be towed in the wake of the movement, but stand at the head of the women's movement, it cannot give the II. International and other organisations the opportunity of capturing the masses of women for itself.

Organisational forms must be elastic and pliable, if we want to extend our influence on the broad masses. Even if the creation of non-Party women's organisations is a side form, an auxiliary form, for the mobilising and organising of the toiling masses, we cannot waive this organisation form either in view of the growing activity of the masses.

At the Conference it has appeared that in organising the masses of women, we laid chief weight upon the Women's Delegate Meetings. When we consider the organising of delegate meetings as highly important, as the first task, we must nevertheless also raise the question of organising non-Party women's organisations.

As an example, I should like to cite some things from our Russian past since in some points the conditions of the struggle

in Western Europe resembled those of our pre-revolutionary period. What kind of methods and forms did we apply at that time? In order to gain influence over the broadest masses, we organised the entire mass of discontented women in order to utilise them in times of elections, strike movements, disorders, and various demonstrations. This, our purpose, was completely achieved. Such an organisation was created by us in 1916—1917 in Baku, and since during the elections it was up to us to put over candidates for the State Duma, we utilised them to the fullest extent.

I believe that in the capitalist countries of Western Europe, there stands upon the agenda the initiative of our Communist Parties in the organising of such non-Party women's societies.

A few words on the objection that by founding such extra Party women's societies we are supposed to undertake a counter-position to the Communist Party, and that we so to say, exclude the women from the general movement. I believe that this statement is not quite true, or, rather, that it is false. Our forms and methods result in no counter-position, on the contrary, in this manner we extend our influence over the masses of non-Party women: Women's Delegate Meetings, Women's Departments, all other forms for the extension of our influence over the broad masses are good — if they achieve this purpose. This is the chief thought that I wanted to express here in the name of our delegation.

Comrade Kasparova has emphasised that the Social Democracy in Western Europe is powerful, that it influences the masses, and that we also must stretch out our feelers into the masses. She bases her viewpoint on this, that we must not permit ourselves to be dissolved in the masses, nor split up our forces, but that we must create a firm kernel. I believe that by this statement, Comrade Kasparova has refuted her own statement. If the Social Democracy, is strong in Europe and has its tentacles in the masses, if it organises the masses in every possible manner, we must marshal our influence in order to break its influence over the broad masses of women. (Applause.)

Comrade GESCHKE (Secretariat of the E. C. C. I.):

I would underline quite particularly the remarks of the representative of the Russian Delegation. Comrade Kasparova raised the question of least resistance, but she certainly did not put this question when she proceeded with the formation of women's clubs in the East. For us the foundation of extra-Party women's organisations is not a question of least resistance, but a question of utility. Whether we call ourselves a club, or a Red Women's and Girls' League, fundamentally this is all the same. I believe that we must fulfil the task of extending the Party's radius of action as far as possible. We have to fulfil this task, especially towards the women. We need only look at the statistics of the Party. There is hardly a Party in which the number of women members makes up more than 15% of the Party membership.

Comrade Herta Sturm pointed to the dangers and mistakes made by the Central Committee of the German Party, by the Party as a whole. A few words on this in order to awaken an understanding of the difficult situation in which the German Party Central Committee found itself. In the Red Front Fighters' League we had Women's Departments. We ascertained that due to its military character, the recruiting power of the Red Front Fighters' League among the masses of women was too small. Because of various happenings, the National Executive of the Red Front Fighters' League went to the point of expelling the women from the League. This was a mistake. What Comrade Herta said, that the Red Women's League was now entirely up in the air, is correct. We thought this matter over thoroughly and discussed what should now be done, should the Party act according to the remarks such as Comrade Kasparova made to-day, or whether should these women and girls go. These women and girls would probably not have gone over to the Social Democracy, but rather to the C. L. P. G. (K. A. P. D.). After much thorough consideration, we then agreed, jointly with Comrade Clara Zetkin that a Red Women's and Girls' League should be founded.

What is the Red Women's and Girls League? You need only look at the emblems. It is again the Red Front Fighters' League they really have the programme of the Red Front Fighters' League. Even if the programme of the R. W. G. L. is somewhat imperfect, and deficient it nevertheless contains in essence also

the demands which the Party raises. If I am not mistaken, the Party has about 20,000 women members. It exists since 1918. In these eight years it has organised 20,000 women. The R. W. G. L. in the five or six months of its existence has already gathered 9000 women.

Has the Red Women's and Girls' League only specific women's slogans? No. That cannot be said. No one can get up here and claim that the Red Women's and Girls' League has sunk to the level of the broad masses. But it has the greatest opportunity even by its very form, to attract the broad masses — as a transition form, as an auxiliary organisation of the Party.

As Comrade Overlach emphasised, the Party has the leadership in its hands everywhere. I might remark right here, that over in Germany we once had certain flood tide in which masses of women streamed into the Social Democratic Party. This was about 1912—13, when in the working class there was raised the question of the strike against child-birth — on which there was a great disagreement between Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin. And what can we record today? Through the R. W. G. L. we, also, have similar successes to record.

But what else is noticeable in the R. W. G. L.? A powerful initiative of its own. In the Ruhr an organisation of the Red Women's and Girls' League took a stand, on its own, for the British miners. Well, we might say, we can do the same thing as Communists, for this purpose we do not need the R. W. G. L. I will go into this question a little later. The organisation in the Ruhr took a stand on the question of the British miners and there in the Ruhr, coming out of the Red Women's and Girls' League, the demand for delegate meetings for this great struggle was raised. This is also a sign that we must take notice of.

A psychological point should also be taken into consideration by the Party with respect to the Red Women's and Girls' League. In mixed organisation together with the men, the women still continue to feel themselves to be more backward, but there, in the Red Women's and Girls' League they develop far more of their own initiative such as, unfortunately, they had seldom or ever developed in the Party. This is likewise a point that must be taken into consideration.

How do we as a C. C. of the C. P. G. stand on the question of forming women's organisations of a similar character in other sections? Do we absolutely recommend them for Finland, Great Britain, America, France or Czechoslovakia? No, the Russian comrades, and especially Comrade Herta Sturm underlined sharply that in every country the conditions must be studied, investigated quite thoroughly, before the Party can proceed with the formation of such an organisation. I underline this. Notwithstanding the fact that the Red Women's and Girls' League of Germany grew to 9000 members in a very short time, we should really not step forward without further ado to the formation of similar organisations.

Comrade Hertha now says that perhaps not the Central Committee, but may be the Party resisted the foundation of the Red Women's and Girls' League. Certainly, and we are still fighting against this conception even to-day. Here still another part of the old ideology of the Ruth Fischer Central Committee has to be wiped out, under whose leadership women's work was greatly neglected. The Communist Party of Germany sees in the Red Women's and Girls' League that which its National Executive has seen in it from its foundation to the present day — an auxiliary organ of the Communist Party, a means for the purpose of winning broad masses of women, for the fulfilling of the slogans of the III. and V. Congresses.

Comrade MALM (Finland):

Concerning which organisational forms is there lack of clarity?

In not a single speech of this conference was any lack of clarity revealed as to whether the Communists should form fractions in the trade unions, co-operatives, Red Aid, tenants' leagues, and maintain their influence over these mass organisations. But with respect to the delegate movement there is lack of clarity.

Comrade Sturm puts the question of whether the delegate movement can replace, in Europe, the organisations of sympathisers. And to this she answers in principle: Yes. But in

practice she comes to deny it. And why? Because in practice the delegate movement does not constitute the organisational form which corresponds to the existing bourgeois organisations among the women.

What does this mean?

1. That the Comintern and the resolution of the VI. Enlarged Executive concerning the delegate movement is correct in principle, but wrong in practice.

2. That the policy pointed out by the Comintern for the attraction of masses of delegates under the influence of Party policy is wrong.

Can Comrade Sturm, on the basis of her position, take an energetic stand for the delegate movement? Her own conclusions lead to a result in which she accepts the resolution with one hand and does something entirely different with the other. And how does this happen?

We must create new organisation forms for work among the women — this was the sense of the speech. Exactly the same thing Comrade Sturm and her supporters proposed in March at the Enlarged Executive. But her policy was not admitted into the resolution.

Why does Comrade Sturm want new organisation forms?

1. That the Comintern and the resolution of the VI. Enlarged Executive represent practically an organisation corresponding to the existing club and social organisations of the bourgeoisie.

2. Because the old traditions of the European labour movement on organisational questions are much too strong. The women would rather go into social and club organisations. What results from the political argumentation of Comrade Sturm, and what is the meaning of this argumentation?

1. That from a practical standpoint these resolutions to carry on the delegate movement are wrong.

2. That Comrade Sturm makes obedience before the old organisational customs that represent a heritage of the Social Democratic ideology. This conception of Comrade Sturm is the counter-piece to that conception that the Communist Party cannot get a foothold in the factories, an argument which likewise represents an inheritance of Social Democratic ideology. This latter standpoint is now generally overcome. Comrade Sturm warned against Left deviations and designated it as an error if the Communist Party does not work in all mass organisations. But her warning was merely a cloak under which she hid her actual attitude towards the delegate movement.

Now what are these new organisation forms?

In her speech, Comrade Sturm mentioned Norway and Germany as examples. What does the Norwegian example show us?

It shows us:

1. That although housewives societies were founded, to parry the organisation of similar bourgeois societies, nevertheless no mass movement has arisen from them. They remained small combinations of the vanguard of the working class and their immediate environment.

2. Why could not a real counter-blow develop from them?

Because this organisation form was not anchored in the factories and in the families — which for their part are likewise factories in a certain sense — and because they remained societies which are built upon obsolete Social Democratic forms.

Comrade Olsen has said that these societies do not fulfil their purpose and that they represent a false start. She pointed out positively that their field of activity must be broadened — on the basis of the delegate movement. Comrade Olsen did observe this mistake, but Comrade Sturm did not.

What does the Red Women's and Girls' League in Germany show us?

Comrade Sturm argued that the organising of the League was a mistake. Is this really so? In my opinion the chief mistake consists in that the C. P. did not promptly realise the sort of process under way among the proletariat women. If the C. P. G. had grasped this in time, they would have gotten to work accordingly. It was confronted by accomplished facts. A stand had to be taken and a stand was taken.

What does the Women's and Girls' League represent? Is it applicable as an organisational form to other countries? Comrade Overlach warned against imitating these organisational forms.

What follows from this?

1. First of all that the organisational form of this League must not be copied, schematically.

2. That on the basis of the situation in Germany the League arose for special purposes and that consequently in principle, this organisational form of the League cannot be copied.

Now what is this special purpose? The same purpose as that of the Red Front Fighters' League which, in the final analysis serves for the preparation and carrying out of the armed uprising. In connection with this, the question arises: Shall the proletarian women prepare themselves first of all for the armed uprising? Of course! But is that to be done in the Women's and Girls' League, or in some other kind of an organisation? Comrade Overlach stated that this League was not useful. It is not becoming a mass organisation. Its organisation is not solid, not anchored in the factories. In this lies the chief shortcoming. This organisation cannot play the rôle of the Red Front Fighters' League either. The disintegration of the League is likewise possible if its members are not combined organisationally.

Who are the members of the Women's and Girls' League?

In first rank proletarian women with an instinctive feeling of class hatred, and perhaps also women from petty-bourgeois circles. But women who are ready to fight, who are ready to enter upon the open battlefields in which the armed members of both classes confront each other, women who are ready to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Secondly, there are Communist women in the League. In this manner, in the form of this League, the Communist Party of Germany has the precious possession, the elements which enkindle the revolution. The women workers marched in front as the trail blazers of the Russian Revolution. The Comintern must indicate to the German Communist Party those correct organisational forms with the help of which the ability and fighting spirit of the members of the women and girls league will be correctly utilised as a League against the exploiters, and this in the present situation as well as for the ideological preparation for the uprising.

We must send greetings or issue a manifesto of our Conference to the members of this League, and in it we must refer to the delegate movement.

Comrade Overlach discerns a certain purpose in the Women's and Girls' League and warns the comrades of other countries.

Comrade Sturm does not see this purpose and does not want to see it. In her opinion, the organisational forms of the Women's and Girls' League are such as will give us those new organisational forms for work among the women. Only the programme of the League has to be changed for this.

These two examples cannot serve as adequate confirmation of Comrade Sturm's conception that the delegate system, while impossible in practice, is possible in principle.

What do the circles of women workers represent?

They mean that the practical realisation of the delegate system is postponed into the Never Never Land. The resolution of the Enlarged Executive of the Comintern (March) gives a clear policy and clear directives. Cannot the delegate movement be made the foundation of political study? Very well. It is a school and at the same time an ideological preparation for the uprising. The Russian examples of the circles are unusable as such in the present period of imperialism. The comparison is halting. With respect to the circles of women workers, our attitude should be a categorical rejection. They are Comrade Sturm's strongest reservation against the delegate movement. They do not foster, but they hinder the execution of the Comintern resolutions.

Comrade BITTEL (Co-operative Section E. C. C. I.):

The question of the creation of women's groups and departments, or even entirely new women's organisations is especially acute in the co-operative movement of a whole series of countries. Of course we must study all pre-conditions that

exist as well as the prospect of success before we proceed with the creation of our own organisation. In the co-operatives this involves especially the Women's Guilds. If the Conference adopts the proposed thesis, it signifies a change in the tactical conception held by the last Women's Conference.

In the thesis of the Women's Conference two years ago, it is stated that the Communists are opposed to the establishment of co-operative women's guilds because they see in this a splitting up of proletarian forces. In those theses the argument was specially raised that the guilds are political organisations in the service of reformism.

But experiences have shown that we could not hold to this basis. If the women's guilds are political organisations, in the service of reformism, then it is especially necessary to enter into these organisations. The Swedish comrades took up this question with the Women's Secretariat. They were of the opinion that we have to fight such women's guilds and concern ourselves with their destruction. Comrade Olsen of Norway showed us a practical example yesterday of how the question stands there. The Tranmaelites wanted to form such a women's league in a town near Bergen. The Party at first took the position of trying to prevent this organisation. When it saw that it could not be prevented, it participated, and thus got the leadership of this guild into its hands. I believe that there can be no doubt that this is the only possible Communist tactic.

In Germany we have no women's guilds, but in the consumers' co-operatives, special women's groups are formed. And naturally the reformists believe that in this way they can better defend themselves against Communist influence. The formation of such women's organisations is continued systematically. It is self-understood that in these women's groups we must form fractions and, if we have the necessary forces, we must also participate in the founding and leading of such groups in order to work on these women and given a proletarian class character to the groups.

To this must be added a special point in the women's guilds that must be taken into consideration here. There is today already an International League of Co-operative Women's Guilds. Representatives of the Soviet Russian co-operatives also belong to this League. The "International Co-operative Women's Guild" is a unity organisation in whose executive there are also Communist representatives. Within the confines of the International Women's Guild we must endeavour to have the broadest possible Communist opposition front. In the countries where we are the first to seize the initiative, we will certainly have a greater influence from the beginning than elsewhere.

The Co-operative Section as such, has not yet taken any definite attitude to this question; I therefore speak personally. We must vote for the point concerning the women's guilds in the thesis of the mass commission, especially that sentence reading: "Where there is a prospect of furthering these aims with the aid of women's guilds, the Party's own initiative must be taken into consideration for the creation of such guilds where none as yet exist."

I am very glad to be able to say that in the commission, Comrade Kasparova voted also for this paragraph. I should like to emphasise that, of course, the greatest caution must be used in the founding of such guilds, and that such steps can be undertaken only after an exact study of the forces of the Party and the whole situation, and according to the concrete decisions of the Central Committee.

Of course, the chief task of the Communists in the co-operative and trade union movement and in all other organisations must consist in a correct fraction activity. We must begin with this fraction work, and in connection with it, only recognise clearly whether special women's departments, groups or guilds should be created.

Comrade FAUSSECAVE (France):

We believe that it would not be a good thing to include in these theses that organisations of non-Party women may not be formed. What attention should be called to is, that these organisations should be created only after a very thorough study by the leading organs of the Party.

The Committees of Widows and Mothers Against the Morocco Work were founded by the action committee of this campaign without previous study and without an agreement

with the C. C. In the face of the stream of membership, it was difficult to raise quickly enough the necessary forces to influence them. Thus the danger arose that the feminists, of whom there were many, would obtain leadership, so that the prospect of dissolving the committee was already entertained. In order not to lose the support being won, we affiliated these committees to the republican league of ex-fighters, and now these comrades are occupied with the matter under the effective leadership of the Party.

Our chief task must lie in the trade unions. Yet we believe that in addition, we also have a chance to attract the women through the Red Aid and the Workers' Aid. In the Red Aid we have begun a quite important campaign — during the period of persecution following the campaign against the Morocco war. We had up to 300 fighters in prison. We succeeded in interesting the women for the campaign of the Red Aid. We organised collections and the Red Aid is just issuing the slogan for patronage over the prisons by certain large factories, certain districts, or towns. The women who react are quite numerous.

We believe that we can no longer remain indifferent towards the feminist movement as we have hitherto been. In France, this has a very confused appearance. It has, so to say, no organisation; they meet on the occasion of some event or on the eve

of a Congress; and it is therefore rather difficult to organise a fraction here. For some time in connection with the preparations for the international women's suffrage congress, the feminist movement has been displaying a certain activity.

In agreement with the C. C. of the Party, we contemplate the publication of a special issue of "L'Ouvrière" so as not to let this congress pass unnoticed. This issue is to be devoted to the feminists' campaign and is to expose them since in the municipal election they did not support women's suffrage. This issue of "L'Ouvrière" is to be circulated widely at a meeting organised by the Feminists for June 5th. A Party comrade, a very well-known intellectual, is to speak at this meeting. She is to present herself as secretary of the women, elected in the recent municipal elections in France.

To summarise, I can say that the French Delegation is in agreement that in our case no other women's organisations are to be called into being. Nevertheless, we cannot say, as some comrades do, in a very definite form, that one may never contemplate the creation of such organisations. In certain illegal countries, it seems to us, it is at times very difficult to attract the women, whereas through by-ways we can manage to develop our propaganda and thus gain an increase for the Communist Party.

Fifteenth Session.

Evening, June 7th, 1926.

Conclusion of the Discussion on the Report of Comrade Sturm.

Comrade OSTROVSKAYA (Soviet Union).

The question of work in the Women's Guilds must be dealt with as a quite special question because it has to do not only with the women organisations, but because it affects an organisation, already in existence, which has organised the broad masses. It is an auxiliary form. Through the co-operatives we can reach the women not belonging to Party or trade unions. Comrade Bittel considers the necessity for women's organisation as very urgent. I believe the contrary; if the women's departments and the parties had carried on the work in the co-operatives more energetically and organised certain masses of women, the question of forming special co-operative women's guilds would not have arisen.

Comrade Bittel refers to the good example in England where fruitful work has been done. Let us get a little closer to this matter. In England there are men's guilds and women's guilds. In the Ghent Congress there was a preliminary conference of women's guilds as well as of men's guilds. Therefore, one is organisationally duty-bound to work in the women's guilds in England. They embrace proletarian masses. Propaganda and cultural work is conducted in these British guilds. The British Communists have carried on really serious work in the co-operatives and the women's department directs this work. But these British conditions constitute an exceptional case. In the name of the conference, we must in general, adopt a different standpoint. We must issue definite slogans, and quite different slogans, in order to strengthen to work. In Germany, where we have no entrance into the co-operatives, our Communist policy consists precisely in drawing the masses of women into general co-operative work. That is why the standpoint of Comrade Bittel is not correct.

At the International Women's Conference in Ghent we attempted to advocate our viewpoint, for example, on the war danger. In the other questions, however, the ladies did not let us speak at all. We are absolutely for work where there are proletarian masses, we are against the organising of new women's guilds.

The question of co-operative guilds must be separated from the question of extra-Party women's organisation because in the case of the co-operative it involves an already existing organisation which contains the masses.

Comrade BITTEL (Co-operative Section of E. C. C. I.):

The remarks of Comrade Ostrovskaya on the question of founding women's guilds turn the sense of the thesis sentence proposed by the commission upside down. In my two speeches, I emphasised that the primary factor is fraction work, in the existing general organisations as well as in the special women's guilds. The remarks of Comrade Ostrovskaya concerning the ladies' organisation and the bad experiences at the Ghent Congress only emphasised the necessity of working more energetically in all countries.

I announced, furthermore, that there are situations in which our initiative is of importance in the founding of new women's groups or guilds. Two years ago this question was flatly rejected. In the thesis at that time it was said that the initiative can never be taken. My statements showed that in a number of countries this question was raised practically. Today we no longer want to block up our road, and if we are of the opinion that this road should be kept open, the conference should give corresponding directions here.

As to the social composition of the women's guilds, there can be no doubt that e. g. in England, there is a large number of women workers in the guilds. In Germany there are no women's guilds, but women's groups. The Central League has issued directions that such women's groups shall be formed everywhere. Thus far there are 14 co-operative women's groups with 983 members. A few weeks ago a conference took place in Erfurt where a slogan was issued to form women's groups everywhere. Shall we now take the standpoint that we fight these women's groups, or shall we say that we want to be in on the founding and try to get the leadership from the beginning? We must unquestionably exploit these women's groups. That this has not been done must be recognised as an error. In principle there is no difference between guilds and women's groups; in the united international organisation, they are combined as women's guilds.

Comrade Ostrovskaya has not spoken about the importance of the International Women's Guild. In this respect, there is an interesting fact: A Russian comrade is on the international committee as a consultant. She can appear at international congresses. It would be of great importance to have also other countries delegate Communist women to the international

guild congresses. We absolutely must be on the job when the reformists found such organisations.

In conclusion, I emphasise once more: It is self-understood that nobody will found women's guilds blindly. In every concrete case the central committee must pass a decision. But we

should repeal the old sentence in the theses by which it was laid down rigidly that under no circumstances could we participate in the founding of such guilds. We must do every thing that will serve the purpose of better exploiting the existing organisations in a Communist manner.

Work Among the Peasant Women.

Reporter: Comrade DOMBAL (Peasants' International):

The work among the peasant women is absolutely new, especially in the capitalist countries, both with respect to the methods of attracting the peasant women as well as the methods of work among them.

We might say that almost no work whatever is being conducted among the peasant women by the Communist Parties. There is nothing astonishing in this. The Communist Parties, the majority of them still young, are forced to direct their attention to the most important tasks and they are not in a position to take care of the work to its fullest extent. But the time is approaching in which the Communist Parties will be forced to devote increased attention to this so important work among the peasant women.

Since three years ago there has existed an international peasants' organisation which is trying to broaden its work. The majority of the Communist Parties have already recognised the importance of work among the peasantry. We must not approach the question of work among the peasant women from the standpoint of a special women's work, since all the questions which concern the peasants, concern also the interests of the peasant women to an equally great extent. At present the importance and the role of the peasantry is entirely different from what it was before the imperialist war. At that time the peasantry constituted a prop for the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the revolutionary workers. One section of the peasantry, which had wandered into the towns, into the factories, became proletarianised, while the other refrained from revolutionary struggle in the hope of getting out of their misery by the aid of savings, and, under the influence of bourgeoisie and clergy, they were hostile to the Socialists.

What position did the II. International take towards the peasantry at that time? Its ideologists, of the Kautsky stripe, wrote: "The quicker that the proletarianisation of the peasantry proceeds, the quicker these barbarians are ruined, the better for the world revolution". This means that they themselves had a hostile attitude toward the peasantry. In Kautsky's book "The Agrarian Question" it is stated that the peasantry interfered with progress.

Does the peasantry constitute a uniform whole or not? Capitalism has divided the peasantry, yet we cannot separate these strata quite sharply from one another. One can divide them, approximately, into four groupings: the semi-proletarian, the poor, the middle and wealthy peasant strata. In addition there is also a village bourgeoisie and elements standing close to it. The fifth strata are the agricultural labourers. In this manner Lenin characterised the stratification of the peasantry in his theses to the II. Congress.

On the one hand the peasant renders forced labour, and on the other hand he is himself a landlord, or even a speculator. Our attitude towards the peasantry is quite a different one than towards the proletariat. The peasantry is the ally of the working class. As a proletarian ally it does not go as far as the working class in the struggle for power, it does not strive to overthrow the existing order, which it can do only under the leadership of the working class.

The great role of the peasantry is obvious from the figures. The peasantry constitutes the vast majority of the population of the globe: Of 1,700,000,000 total population 1,200,000,000 are peasants, 50% of them women.

What is it that forces the peasantry into struggle, why does it no longer constitute, as heretofore, a neutral mass? In

the first place it is land hunger. I shall give some figures: In France of the 7,200,000 farms, 400,000 are pigmy farms with an area of 1½ hectares, these farms occupy only 2.14% of the total land, whereas 27 big landlords own more than 2000 hectares, making up 3.07% of the total land. In other words 27 big landlords have 1½ times as much land as 400,000 peasant families. This is the situation in a country in which a bourgeois revolution was waged against the feudal lords!

In Great Britain 85% of small tenants have at their disposal only 2% of the total land, whereas 1% of tenants with more than 500 hectares occupy more than 50% of the total land.

In the countries in which the peasantry has not fought the bourgeoisie for the solution of the peasant question, the situation is still worse: In Czecho-Slovakia 667,526 farmers have each less than ½ hectare of land and occupy altogether 1.32% of the total land, whereas 400 landlords own 31% of all land. In Carpatho-Russia 93 big landowners occupy 33% of all land. In Poland 7 million hectares are in the hands of 4000 big landlords, an average of 500 hectares each, whereas there are only 4 million hectares in the hands of 2,400,000 farms.

The struggle for land is one of the most important slogans in capitalist countries, just as in the East, where the remnants of feudalism have not yet been eliminated

In China out of about 60 million families, 40 million are peasant families. The landless peasants and tenants comprise 11,308,000 families, while 9,247,000 families possess only a very tiny plot of ground, 20 million families are poor peasants, for which the land question is a revolutionary driving factor. Hence not less than half of the Chinese peasant population is ready for revolutionary struggle.

In Japan of the 50 million inhabitants, 64% belong to the rural population. Among these there are 5 million poor peasants, having one dutcho (0.91 dessiatin).

In India of the 319 million total population, there are 280 million peasants. Of these 140 million peasants have only tiny plots of land at their disposal, and in addition there are 45 million agricultural labourers. We thus have a population of 185 million that is ready for a revolutionary struggle for land.

Thus the bourgeois revolution, despite the elimination of feudalism, has not solved the land question.

In the colonial countries where feudalism has not yet been overthrown, the agrarian question is a revolutionary factor. We must push the land question into the foreground there, and since the peasant women suffer from the lack of land no less than their husbands, fathers and brothers, they will take up this slogan.

We must not fight for the establishment of a collective economy, as the II. International proposed, but first to tear the land from the landlords, give it to the peasants, and only then fight for the raising of agriculture. The question of how the nationalisation of land is to be undertaken is secondary. In general we must remain on the basis of the theses of the II. Congress and issue the slogan: **All land to the peasants.** This slogan consolidates the alliance between workers and peasants, this slogan has led to the victory of the proletarian revolution.

Another slogan with which to urge the peasant woman into active struggle against capitalism, is the slogan: **Down with the tax burdens.** During the war the peasantry in many countries

was loaded down with heavy taxes, with direct and indirect levies. The tax burdens sap all the marrow out of the peasants' bones.

While the peasantry needs support, **cheap credits**, it finds no sort of support from the State. So broad masses of peasants can also be mobilised around the credit question.

Another very important question is that of the war. The Anti-War Congress in Marseilles interested the peasants much more than the workers, and the peasants displayed greater activity than did the workers.

When we work in the village we must devote great attention to the **daily needs of the peasantry**. One must ascertain what the peasants lack and bring our slogans into contact with it. Every country has its needs.

I now come to the tremendous importance of work among the peasant women. Throughout the whole world we face an **organised struggle for the peasant masses and also for the peasant women**. Heretofore this struggle was conducted without organisation. Now we see a special Agrarian Institute founded in connection with the International Agrarian Institute in Rome, upon the initiative of Dr. Lauer, the head of the League of rich peasants in Switzerland. We have furthermore the **Green International**, created by Stambuliski with the aid of Witos in Roumania. Furthermore there is a National Agrarian Bureau in Prague.

But if in the struggle for the peasantry, we forget the peasant women, it will mean to do this work only half way. The IV. International Women's Conference must raise the slogan of winning the peasant women for the mass movement of the peasantry. The Conference must utilise the experience of the Russian Party and study the conditions of the work in all countries. And we must, as far as it is at all possible, begin this work among the peasant women and gradually carry it further.

In a number of countries, our enemies know how to work better than we do. The **bourgeoisie, landlords and rich peasants** put great hopes upon the clergy, the bearers of bourgeois influence in the village. The tenants' league in Belgium, one organisation of farmers in America, are under the direction of the church. A number of bourgeois and semi-bourgeois parties are organising the peasants, men and women, into leagues based upon the struggle against alcoholism, with the goal of defending womanhood, in philanthropic societies, in kulak parties, in various agricultural organisations. They create women's sections which they attach to their organisations, e. g. in the American farmer parties. Recently, a woman's section has been affiliated to the Kuomintang in China and to the Angora Party. The latter is not a bourgeois but a national-revolutionary Party. There are purely women's organisations, e. g. in Great Britain, which have no great influence in the village. There is a "Women's Equality League" in China, and the "League for Equal Rights for Women" in Turkey.

Our enemies and our more or less questionable friends and occasional allies are working while we are actually doing nothing. I can cite certain examples from the Belgrade organ of the "Agricultural Societies" about the chairman of these organisations who declared in a women's club, in a speech on the theme "The Agricultural Society and the Women's Movement", and about Serbekogo, a noted leader of this organisation, who declared that its chief task was "the winning of the peasant women".

In America there are a number of women's organisations fighting for women's rights. There is a paper there "The Tenant" which has a big circulation.

In France a considerable activity is noticeable even though the clerical organisations have a big influence in the villages there. In recent times in the conferences called by the Communist Party a growing participation of peasant women delegates is to be observed.

In Belgium there is a "Peasant Women's League" and in addition there are a number of women's clubs, but unfortunately the clergy still has great influence.

In Italy there are a number of women's organisations: women's societies, young women's society, Society of Catholic Women Students, all of which are active among the rural women. Among the proletariat women affiliated to the agricultural trade

union, the clergy is busy. Of late the "Association for Peasant Defence", which is affiliated to the Peasants International, has begun to work among the peasant women. This organisation is fighting successfully against the influence of the clergy. This work is very difficult because 42% of the women are illiterate.

In Germany, affiliated to the "Reichsbund" we have the Society of Women Farmers, which publishes the periodical "Land and the Woman" in which all questions of interest to the rural woman are dealt with. The "Reichsbund" has branches in all districts and actually dominates the village. Our comrades have as yet made no effort to do anything in this direction. Our Women's Departments do not even know about the existing reactionary organisations which hold the peasant women in their grips.

In the East the work among the peasant women was begun by the democratic revolutionary elements. There we must fight for woman's equality.

By our connections with Christian societies, and even with individual reactionary leaders we have learned that the work is actually being carried on there in an organised form, that a number of periodicals, newspapers and pamphlets has been published, and we must now take to this line of work ourselves.

The conference must decide to take up the work among the peasant women. An effort must be made to affiliate women's sections to the existing peasant organisations. Wherever there are no mass organisations some sort of point of contact must be found, according to a decision of the V. Plenum, to organise a woman's club for the peasant women to join. It would be very good to instruct one comrade in each country to obtain this material for the women's department.

The work among the peasant women should not bear an avowed Communist character. We must make contact with the daily needs and interests of the peasant women and utilise the non-Party, revolutionary organisations of the Peasants International in this work. We must try to get a page, or even only a quarter of a page, to be devoted specially to the women in the non-Party press organs. We must be on the job in all the reactionary, semi-reactionary or liberal organs which have special women's pages, in order to try to penetrate with our agitation. (The organs of the peasant parties put one page at the disposal of the peasant women every month). As the work in the village develops, courses for groups of from 5 to 10 people should be organised. The International Agrarian Institute will assist the International Women's Secretariat in this work.

I make just one proposal — that the work among the peasant women actually be begun. Nothing else. The methods of the work must be studied. We must try to establish contact with the mass of the peasant women, and to adapt ourselves to the concrete conditions of every country, whereby the experiences gathered in the Soviet Union must be utilised. Then we shall be in a position, at the next Conference, to formulate more concrete slogans the we can today. We want to fight so that the peasant women will become the ally of the proletarian revolution. (Applause).

Comrade KALIGINA (Soviet Union):

I want to describe to you the experience of the CPSU. with respect to work among the peasant women. I will begin with the illegal period in which we first began to work among the peasant women. We had no Party nuclei, nor was there at that time any union of agricultural and forest labourers. The female rural population consisted almost entirely of illiterates. The conditions of our work were very complicated. Not even the organisation of small groups and the gathering of individuals was permitted.

Nevertheless we had a certain connection with the peasant women, especially with the poor strata. We did not develop special activity among them, but they did take part in the peasant uprisings and in the movements to take away the land from the big landlords. In what way were we active among them? We issued political and economic slogans around which not only the peasants but also the peasant women rallied. In order to win the peasant women also for the Party, we took into consideration the interests of the peasant women, despite

the complicated conditions, by formulating special demands. Not a single country can be compared with our old Tsarist system and with illegality in Russia.

We began our work on a small scale. With the aid of **individual women Communist**, we fished out the elements inclined towards among the wage labourers and village poor, made them acquainted with our Party, sought after sympathisers among the intellectual forces of the village: nurses, teachers, gave them definite tasks: the liquidating of illiteracy, in order in this way to get close to the peasant women and, all unnoticed by them, to bring them closer to our ideas.

In 1917-18 it was already possible to call **big meetings of peasant women** and broad conferences in a number of towns. Already in 1918 we began to organise delegate meetings of peasant women, of course, not yet such as we have today. At that time the delegate meetings were predominantly not elected, and perhaps they hardly deserve the name of delegate meetings, but rather meetings of poor peasant women, viz., all those who sympathise with the Party of the working class and who belong chiefly to the ranks of the agricultural wage labourers and village poor. Only in 1919-20 did we begin to elect delegates and even then not everywhere. In the beginning we contented ourselves with seeking for sympathisers, who, after proper training, could be utilised for work among the peasant women. Individual Communist women we trained as agitators. Even though at times they were completely uneducated and uneducated politically, they did us great service in this work. They knew the situation of the peasant women, they knew how to begin working on them, and in the various towns they did an extensive work.

Of course it is entirely unthinkable to simply transfer our experiences to other countries. But in your case the situation is far more favourable than it was at that time for us. In Czecho-Slovakia and Italy there are Communist nuclei in the villages. There the work among the peasant women is to be assigned to one of the Party members as Party work, and the task of this member will be to seek for sympathetic intellectuals and active elements among the peasants and peasant women. For the development of this activity it is necessary to establish an apparatus. I am in complete agreement with the view of Comrade Dombal that we will never find the way to reach the peasant woman if we do not create small groups of active peasant women and undertake a proper training of the women. The training of women functionaries from among the ranks of the rural intellectuals and the active peasant women must receive the greatest attention. You also have **unions of agricultural wage labourers** which, although not affiliated to the Peasants International, can be utilised by the Party.

You also can and must draw the women into the **campaigns for March 8th, against the war, against high prices and taxation**. All possible means must be utilised.

Special attention must be devoted to the establishing of a **close contact between women workers and peasant women**. The class conscious woman worker must help her backward sister, the peasant woman. In Russia the class conscious women workers in 1917-18 did a great deal to penetrate the masses of peasant women and to draw them closer to the Party organisations. Many women workers who had connections with the village, wrote agitational letters, took along literature, when they visited the village on holidays and for their vacation, and developed an agitation.

The Communist Parties must begin this work, applying the experiences of the Soviet Union, Italy and other countries. Did we ever, during Tsarist times, have a **club in the village**? You have clubs in some places. We must try to organise **dress-making and sewing clubs** in them, this is a very successful form of work among the peasant women which we have applied. Thereby they can be drawn into conversation to which a Communist content should gradually be given. The best way to reach the peasant women is by **organising creches, consultation stations**, etc. The Party organisations must concern

themselves with these questions. We can exert influence upon the peasant women through the **co-operatives** and other social organisations of the village.

We know that it will be more difficult abroad to find the way to the peasant woman than it is for us. Our peasant women lived under a double pressure, and became revolutionised more rapidly. But of late, the peasant women of other countries are also being revolutionised, and we must direct the desires and strivings of the peasant women into a definite channel. You might say to us: It is easy for you, you have funds at your disposal. I must answer you, however, that we have a whole series of schools and circles that were organised at the expense of the peasant women themselves. It is necessary to select the way in which the interest of the peasant woman can be awakened, and in this way she can be brought closer to the Party. Furthermore we must take care that certain forms and methods of dealing with the working women can also often be carried over to the peasant women.

The most important weapon to be exploited under your conditions is the **press**. For us the situation was much more difficult in this respect. Also at present our peasant women, in the majority, are unable to read and write. We furnish books for the village, for the active cadre, but the broad masses read practically nothing. You, on the other hand, have many peasant women who can read and write, who are accustomed to reading, although of course, they do not read what is good for them. On some sort of campaign a small popular leaflet might be issued especially for peasant women. For such a leaflet a special language adapted to their understanding is necessary. It must deal with a question which, at the given moment, stands in the centre of the peasant woman's interest. It is the pride of the West European peasant woman that she prepares the food for her husband and lives in comfort and cleanliness. She considers this condition not only to be normal, but also preferable. The Parties must expose the horrible situation of the peasant women and agricultural women wage workers, robbed of all rights.

At present our work is entirely different. We have a broadly extended **network of delegate meetings**, which have won for themselves a right of citizenship among the peasant masses. We have a tremendous number of delegates — more than 300,000 — plus more than 100,000 Soviet members, a vast number of elected women functionaries in the co-operatives, societies for mutual aid, judicial organs, etc. Among the delegates we develop a systematic, programmatic activity. We arranged periodical conference of the Soviet members on questions of the Soviet, co-operative and other fields. The elected peasant women are in their majority members of delegate meetings, who have shown their aptitude for practical work. It would be a utopia to recommend that you do the same everywhere. In a number of countries however it would be possible to organise primary circles and even delegate meetings. In the peasant women's circles and delegate meetings, practical questions, such as taxes, organising of creches, play grounds, etc., are to be dealt with.

Now as to work among the masses. We have various forms. In the village, we utilise the **social gatherings**: The peasant women come together in one of the houses with some sort of knitting work, sewing, etc., and then we develop our activities. It is impossible to begin at once with politics. Many of the West European peasant women cannot even conceive of the miracles which the women workers and peasant women of the Soviet Union have achieved in the struggle against their class enemies. We can tell about the agricultural products we export to other countries and the conditions under which the peasant women live there. We can enter upon the relations between the peasantry and working class, and their ties with the exploited of other countries. We must begin with concrete questions: utilise all possibilities of working on the peasant women, individually and in groups, and by all this bring the peasant women to an understanding of the Communist idea.

Sixteenth Session.

Morning, June 8, 1926.

Schooling and Press.

Reporter Comrade ALEXANDER (I. W. S.):

To attain the goal set us by the V. World Congress and the May Resolution of the E. C. C. I. work among the women as the task of the whole party has really only been attempted with respect to organisational questions so far — educational work has not kept step with organisation.

Comrade Clara Zetkin told us in her letter: "The working women should no longer submit to history. They should make history themselves". The Russian women workers and peasant women are already doing this.

The Plenum of the Enlarged Executive has set as our chief task the winning of the broad masses — half of them women — and above all their organisation.

The schooling of the Communist women within the framework of the educational work of the Party as a whole means for the Women's Departments that they must raise this task before the Party, that they must have the initiative, make proposals on the basis of the special experiences that they have gathered, and the requirements that they have learned.

The Women's Departments must see to it that a sufficient number of women comrades, first of all working women from the factories, enter the general Party courses, and that the attendance at courses and circles is an active one. They must draw the timid hesitant women into them, give them courage, since very often it is only a lack of self-confidence that hinders their entrance into the general schools. We must tell them about the Russian working women of whom many thousands have been literate only a few years, yet they are now leading the work and carrying on an active educational work. And furthermore the Women's Departments must see to it that the educational programme of the Party take into consideration all the questions that involve the women beginning with the historical theme of the women's role in industry and the production process down to the all the urgent questions of all everyday life, such as mother and child protection, birth control, dual role — and by way of contrast — the achievements of the working and peasant women in the Soviet Union. How much is still to be done on this field of ideological self-understanding and clarification even of women functionaries, we all know.

Our French Comrades have reacted very vigorously upon all questions in their periodical "l'Ouvrière", conducted clever campaigns, won over sympathisers but unfortunately the results, especially the organisational results, were not as great as they expected. And for this, as they themselves recognised, not only the ideological attitude of the men towards women's work was at fault, but the lack of fundamental clarity on great political questions. There were not the mistakes of the Women's Department but the erroneous attitude of the Party as a whole. This was shown especially clearly in carrying out the Women's Day campaign, and first of all in the press, in "l'Humanité" as well as in "l'Ouvrière". The women comrades were not able to tie up the national slogans with the political and international demands, with respect to colonial policy and the trade union question.

In trade union work, for the sake of the economic demands, the immediate demands, they forgot entirely the political viewpoint, the international struggle for trade union unity. This mitigated against the value of the entire vigorous recruiting work of the trade unions which was carried on by our women comrades. I recall the example of the strike in Douarnenez. For us, Communists, the value and centre of gravity of the trade union struggle lies that we turn it into a political struggle, that we utilise the trade unions as combat organs against the reformism of the Social Democratic leaders.

We still generally leave to accident or to the initiative of the Party or its members, which is generally weak, as to how many women participate in the schools, and as to whether or

not they are fit or adequately prepared. Thus it is a fact that the participation of women in general courses was but small.

Just before the date of our conference Comrade Schwab reported to us about the district schools held by the Women's Department of the C. P. Cz. early in 1926. After the Party crisis, many trained forces had left there. Thus the district schools were established, attended by about 400, the majority women, but also some men. The success of this intensive training work already became evident in the conduct of International Women's Day. With the aid of these newly trained forces, the Women's Department was able to hold 350 meetings.

Although this does not at all involve a special course for women, but only a course for the training of functionaries for work among the women, nevertheless the circumstance that the attendance of women was numerous as contrasted to the general Party schools, once more raised the question of special courses for women for discussion in the I. W. S. The strong participation shows how great is the need for elementary education among the women, and that they prefer to come to a course which in character and contents corresponds to their slight preparation and special interests. We have spoken with the Agitprop on this question and established that in general there is actually a need for even more elementary educational opportunities than is offered in the present elementary courses.

It is therefore necessary to find, quite generally, a form of preliminary training that meets these conditions, that can give a common basis for joint elementary schooling of men and women. We can already predict that probably more women will participate in such courses than men. Therefore it is the task of the Women's Department to raise before the Party the task of carrying out such courses. It is altogether conceivable that e. g. such courses should now be introduced for both sexes in the Parties in which we must combat especially the reactionary attitude of the men towards work among the women, e. g. in France.

It is important in laying down the plan to bear in mind the available forces, and accordingly not organise more courses than there are teachers for.

In all courses we must hold to the principle of joint education, and this will be all the more necessary just now that the programme in general is: close collaboration with the Party. Here this means: close collaboration with Agitprop.

Now a few words under the heading of observation, study and criticism of our opponents as a means of struggle as well as of training and fundamental enlightenment. It is clear that if I want to fight the enemy, I must exactly know him, his ideology, his tactics, that I must be in a position to refute him, and to turn my policy according to his. We, Communists, have neglected the observation of our opponents, not only with respect with the work among women, but also in general. How fatal may be the consequences of this sin of omission, how often it may lead to an underestimation of our foe and consequent erroneous political attitude and false measures, is shown by the example of the Reichstag and Hindenburg's elections in Germany where, as a result of the underestimation of the vigour of the nationalists and their influence upon the broad toiling masses, they polled double the number of women's votes than we did. What was told us in the commission on the co-operative question about the lack of knowledge of the events in the hostile camp, must be remembered here.

Likewise also the Communists press in general, and still more the women's press, has neglected criticism and political attitude against our opponents. In order to be able to carry on this criticism, we must, of course, carefully follow up all the expressions of the foe, primarily the hostile press, and especially also the women's papers of other tendencies.

This brings us to our second cardinal means for the training of the toiling masses — the press. Here also we women must have the initiative. But we must also know how to use our press as a weapon in the struggle. The comrades even where they have, ideologically, fewer objections towards women's work, have nevertheless occupied themselves not sufficiently with the question of winning the women, with their special tasks. This became evident e. g. also in Germany, where in a meeting of the Polbureau, it was seriously considered on the question of the "Kommunistin", whether it might not be better and accord better to the requirements of work among women, to eliminate a central organ altogether and to issue only local organs, such as the "Arbeiterin" as it appears in Berlin and Chemnitz. The arguments in favour were that a central organ was not timely with respect to local questions, especially factories, and that consequently it would not be so much in demand.

The comrades who even raised this possibility entirely disregarded the meaning of the central organ for the fundamental discussion of all questions of a general political and economic character in their relationship to the women, and the necessity of a fundamental explanation from a central office also of all urgent problems that affect the toiling women themselves. It is clear that if we confine ourselves to local papers there will no longer be possible any sort of uniform direction, any uniform presentation of problems or ideological clarification, disregarding that a large cadre of editorially skilled forces would be necessary to man all these local editorial staffs. A uniform political line would itself be endangered.

In "l'Ouvrière", by way of contrast, we have the example of a large scale paper, four large pages weekly, which offers a lot of room for ample lay-outs. We must say that the French comrades take great pains to make up their paper in a lively form, also by means of illustrations and a wealth of articles. They have really developed initiative here and taken a stand on all questions. But unfortunately the large amount of space at their disposal is not always utilised as might be, because of a lack of a fundamentally clear attitude on the various questions. The wealth of material sent in by women workers' correspondents, which occupied almost an entire big page, is not utilised sufficiently for a fundamental explanation and ideological clarification of the concrete questions which appear there, in the political part of the paper.

What "l'Ouvrière" lacks above all is an unequivocal proletarian face, such e. g. as the Berlin "Arbeiterin" has very strongly. The "Arbeiterin" also, which especially of late has a much more lively effect than the "Kommunistin", suffers from this that the numerous women worker correspondences offer nothing further than a quite mechanical reflection of the life and status of the women workers in the factory, without being sufficiently worked over in special articles into positions of principle. It is very important however, to constantly illuminate the urgent general questions and our Communist position on them, precisely on the basis of all these experiences of factory life. For example the question of the dual role, which is again especially burning, the question of "equal pay for equal work", etc.

In the factory we must make contact with factory questions, but nevertheless we must train the women workers to look beyond the factory to the great political struggle and to our Communist aims. For this especially the press must be utilised. By reaching broad masses of working women, it must serve as the connecting link that coalesces our work in the factories and gives it the uniform goal, the general perspectives. Of course the precondition here is that we attract a broad staff of women worker correspondents and first of all that we train them systematically, but also that we are able to do more with this material than the mere printing of the correspondence.

Now as to the question of the central organ. I believe that we must discuss the character of the central women's paper in detail. We probably all agree that precisely in the present situation in which it is up to us to win influence over the broad masses, it is no longer permissible to narrow down our paper and cut its pattern only for the Communist women, as was mostly the case in the past, e. g. the German "Kommunistin" which in addition, as a supplement to the "Rote Fahne" had only a narrow opportunity for work. We need a central organ for the broad masses of women now, which bears this character

also outwardly. We must put the centre of gravity of our work upon the winning of the women in the factories. But I believe that in our paper we should not confine ourselves to this circle.

We must give better form also to the feuilleton part of our paper. Of course, most of our papers have but little room for this, but even where there is sufficient room as e. g. in "l'Ouvrière", it must be utilised better in that we must look more to the proletarian and social character also of the literary contributions. This is of course difficult, because in general there is but little usable material available in all languages. It is therefore necessary that we begin to organise an international exchange of proletarian literature available in all countries, especially the wealth of Russian material, of course such literature which in content and character interest the women. Furthermore we must develop the illustrations more than heretofore. We must use photographs to compare the contrasts of the capitalist world. For this it is necessary to organise not only the exchange but also the production of photographic material.

Now as to another important task which has been seriously neglected in the past and the fulfilment was left entirely to chance. This is the permeation of the entire party press with our questions and tasks. If the comrades do not come to us then we must go to them. We must do this systematically, and not only by means of women's pages, which perhaps, may also be given no attention by the men comrades, but by articles in the general section of the women's organs, in the scientific organ, the trade union and co-operative press. There must be no question which concerns the working woman which is not discussed in its relationship to the burning general political and economic questions. In connection with such practical questions, there constantly arise old and new problems. Now e. g. the new question of the role and situation of the women in the rationalisation process, to take just one example, which after being cleared up among the women functionaries must be discussed before the general public. And such articles, as well as the women's pages must find their way into the factory papers. Here also the women must collaborate actively. We must show the working women that we are here, and what we want, if we want to win them here.

And of course we must also exploit the non-Party press for the discussion of our problems and the presentation of our demands. First the papers of sympathetic non-Party proletarian organisations in which we must also instigate the establishment of women's pages. And then we must insinuate our material also into the press of the proletarian and petty-bourgeois organisations not influenced by us, through able intermediaries, in the form of a clever polemic bound up with some practical question.

By such a polemical position we must also first of all utilise the women's periodicals of other tendencies, as well as our own, which we can give a fighting character precisely by criticising our opponents. For this of course we require a careful observation of the entire press of other tendencies.

In order to fulfil all these manifold tasks, we must first of all systematically train a broad circle of collaborators and editors, we must do this in special circles. But the worker correspondents must also be gathered together and trained in circles.

And furthermore we must organise an exchange of experiences, and above all also of material on the situation and conditions of women's work — national and international.

With this we come to an important question which we wanted to discuss thoroughly here, namely the creation of a bulletin as a leading central organ for a principal treatment of practical questions and problems and for an international exchange of national experiences in campaigns, organisations and press.

We have heard the cry for an international exchange of experiences in the various countries from practically all sections. The Women's Department of the E. C. C. I. has of course at all times felt this shortcoming very severely. That we have not already been able to begin with a regular supply of this material was a question of forces, for such a compilation naturally presupposes a certain preparation, but also a better and more regular reporting service by the sections.

We have already realised clearly here that a journal such as the "Fraueninternationale", such as we had, appearing in only one language as a monthly, does not meet with the requirements. It has been our experience that for editorial and technical printing reasons such a periodical cannot be published here with such despatch that all sections will be able to receive and utilise the material in time. In our "Fraueninternationale" we had a periodical which offered a wealth of scientific deep material — but unfortunately it was not possible to publish it so that it was timely and in several languages. The editions in the various languages would become too expensive on the small scale in which they would be needed. So we became convinced that we would have to issue a bulletin, mimeographed in various languages, which could be gotten out without great

expense at short intervals, and put at the disposal of all Sections.

In this we must combine several things in order to satisfy the manifold demands. We must, first, arrange for a speedy exchange of news, a practical supply of facts, for which purpose we require the collaboration, the prompt reporting of all Sections. In addition, however, we must illuminate all our experiences in a fundamental manner.

As an example, and model for the form of our press we can also recognise here the work of our Russian comrades. The exhibition in this hall is an eloquent testimonial of this. Let us copy them! Let us make our papers into a means of struggle as well as of the training of active women revolutionaries!

Discussion on the Report of Comrade Alexander.

Comrade HOWARTH (Great Britain):

In the Communist Party of Great Britain we have a good system of general training for our members. Every member, new or old, male or female, must pass through the Party training before he or she is considered a full member of the Party. Of a special training work among our women members or special training of functionaries for work among women we have done very little, although much is needed in this direction. The smallness of our membership among women accounts for this neglect, and with the new women gained since the General Strike we may hope in some measure to remedy this.

The present Party training classes, while excellent for members who have some political experience, however small, are not very well suited for totally inexperienced housewives, such as are the majority of our new women comrades. Our chief need in this direction is a very much simplified syllabus and classes made up of women comrades alone — as they are frequently very shy about speaking in front of the men at the beginning.

On the other hand we also need badly the formation of a trained body of workers for work among women in our Party.

On the subject of the press. Good work has been done among women workers by the workers life pages of the "Workers Weekly" where letters from women in factories and domestic work on the subject of all sorts of grievances often appear. Every month we are supposed to have a Women's Page in the "Weekly", but since March we have had the new monthly women's paper, the "Woman Worker", in circulation. Our paper has met with a very good reception. It was very much needed, in England there being absolutely no real Labour Women's paper, except the "Labour Woman" which is run by extreme Right wing leaders of the Women's Sections of the Labour Party.

In the big industries which employ large numbers of women, such as the textile industries in the Midlands and Scotland we have a few factory groups which have women members, but the numbers of these are very small. Some of them have however managed to produce women's factory papers. In this work at least a beginning has been made, and we hope to extend it much further in the near future. A few general typewritten sheets have been issued by various locals such as the St. Pancras woman worker and the Watford "Seed". These contain material of interest to housewives, and have at times attained quite good circulation. This whole question of education and the press is one which can be greatly developed in Britain, and our Women's Department, must give it their closest attention.

Comrade HALBE (Germany):

We are in agreement with the proposed theses as well as with the statements of Comrade Alexander. A thorough political schooling of the women comrades is undoubtedly necessary. But it must not be carried out separately, the women comrades must participate more than hitherto in the general educational evenings of the Party. Last winter the German Party conducted an elementary course which was attended by

relatively few women comrades. In the districts in which good women's work was done, the participation was the best.

But information evenings must also be held for Party workers who conduct the work among the women. Concerning the effects of rationalisation upon the women, the dual role, protection of women workers, there is great lack of clarity among the functionaries. Instructive reports with discussion following will bring us a good step forward.

We can but confirm what Comrade Alexander has said about the press. In the German press also far too little is written about the living conditions of the proletarian woman, the wage and working conditions of the women workers, etc. Because of the poor financial situation of the papers it is very difficult to publish regular women's pages. The Party thus far has no women's periodical of its own either. The "Kommunistin" which appears as a supplement, is by no means sufficient. We can report however that the CC. has promised us the publication of this periodical in the very near future.

The two papers, "Arbeiterin" appearing in Berlin and Chemnitz, which are sold chiefly in the factories are meeting with excellent distribution and reception.

Comrade GRÜN (Austria):

For us, in Austria, the starting point of all work among the women was the establishment of a regular monthly periodical devoted to the interests of the toiling women.

This means is all the more important for us since the Social Democratic Party has carried on tremendous work precisely on this field. In addition to the monthly Party organ "Die Frau" ("The Woman") for the last two years they have a paper "Die Unzufriedene" ("The Discontented Woman") which has declined absolutely to the level of the trashy journal (Gartenlaubenblätter), and on which even members of the Central Women's Committee refuse to collaborate. This paper appears in an edition of between 100,000 and 200,000.

At the beginning of our systematic work we put the greatest weight on the getting out and distribution of the "Arbeiterin", and so within three months we were able to enlarge the size of the paper from 8 to 12 pages and to double the circulation — from 2,000 to 4,000.

In addition, we have a fortnightly supplement to the Vienna "Rote Fahne", the "Women's Supplement" which is written especially for the Women Communists. Since May we also publish a paper of our own for the information of the active women comrades, the "Funktionärin", written on typewriter and then mimeographed, containing almost solely organisational notes and instructions. For the Czech minority, viz. chiefly for the Czech women workers in building and brick making, we have thus far put out two issues of "Prukopnice" ("Woman Pioneer"), for agitation in these circles.

Our first question was, how we can train in our women comrades for organisational and agitational work? How can we activate our women Party members? Our first training activity was a course for women functionaries of 6 evenings, to which women comrades were sent from all Vienna districts and which in contrast to all other courses was marked by an

increasing attendance, beginning with 18 and numbering 26 at the conclusion. The circulum was the following:

1. Party structure.
2. How can I carry on recruiting and literature circulation work?
3. How do I serve as chairman, recording secretary, treasurer? — technical and practical hints.
4. Working women correspondents.

In addition there was a course for women speakers which prepared 8 or 10 women comrades for definite actual speeches: International Women's Day; birth control, paragraph; May 1st, etc.

The women worker correspondents organised in a club of "Women Worker Correspondents", meet fortnightly prior to the publication of the "Arbeiterin", discuss the proposed issue with the editor and criticise the last issue, the letters received, etc.

In order finally to take up the work in trade union and factory, 6 women comrades were designated by the Central Women's Department to take a training course on our tasks in trade union work, and on the basis of available material carry on practical work in factory and trade union with the comrades of the Trade Union Department. We expect better results on this field than have hitherto been attained by the district women's departments.

Comrade NIURINA (Soviet Union):

The question of training women functionaries is to some extent still a new one. The comrades from the West have little experience on this field, and therefore this question has not been given such a position as the question of the press.

The remarks of Comrade Grün were correct. To train functionaries is to do a considerable part of the work which aims at the capture of the masses. The fundamental principles which the reporter laid down with respect to Party education are entirely correct. It is not necessary to establish special schools and courses for the women comrades. It would be superfluous, even dangerous, to create a special woman's part of the Party educational apparatus. In the working out of all plans for Party agitation it is necessary to take into consideration the preparatory education of the membership, and wherever there is a considerable number of members with little schooling, auxiliary courses must be established with a programme fitted to these groups, not specially for the women, but for the more backward members, whether men or women.

The reporter was entirely right in proposing the inclusion of a series of so-called "women's questions" into the general programme. I should like to concretise this question. Hitherto the view prevailed that in the whole programme of Party educational work only extraordinarily important and general problems could be included, but not the so-called women's questions, such as the alteration of the situation of woman in relation to economic evolution, etc. But this is wrong. We are of the view that the most important thing that the Party school must give, consists precisely in getting every Party member, regardless of sex, to understand correctly the Leninist conception of work among the women. This is the fundamental question, which must find place in theoretical as well as practical work throughout the whole network of Party education.

In my opinion the study of the position of woman in production must also be included in the programmes. In view of the extensive rationalisation process now going on in the capitalist countries, and in view of the fact that in connection therewith woman labour power is being employed in a greater extent, this question becomes extraordinarily timely and urgent. We therefore consider unnecessary the establishment of special women's programmes and schools for the training of our women Party members, but do not dispute the necessity of courses and schools of all kinds for a specially thorough training of functionaries to work among the women.

Comrade FAUSSECAVE (France):

The reporter made some criticism of the women's press in France, especially the "Ouvrière". I should like to sharpen this question. For this reason I will go back to the V. Congress. At that time "l'Ouvrière" was practically unknown in work-

class circles. Our edition was about 2,000 copies, including a large number unsold. At present "l'Ouvrière" has a normal circulation of 9,000 and of 12-15,000 on the occasion of important events such as International Women's Week, May 1st, etc. This is a result that we have achieved only after many efforts, of course, and which still appears entirely insufficient.

We want to make "l'Ouvrière" into a propaganda and educational organ of the masses of women. We are trying to give it a rich and varied content. On the first page we speak about the current political facts, as seen by Communists. We put weight upon giving much space to trade union events in order to attain greater circulation among the trade unions. A whole page is at the disposal of the worker correspondents for the facts of factory life in general. And finally to win the interest of those who are not politically inclined we publish very simple medical gossip, extracts from the best French and foreign literature, etc. We are the Party journal which possesses the best developed network of worker correspondents. We have about 160 such correspondents. Since these comrades are scattered in all corners of France, it is difficult for us to call conferences, due to lack of material means. Yet we do give periodical instructions to our comrades in writing, we lead them, we make suggestions.

As to the "Humanité", we had great difficulties. We received two columns a week. The Women's Secretariat was entrusted with the editorial work. We sent articles regularly, but in most cases they were published after a delay of one day or the appearance of a woman's page. This page showed an entirely false conception on propaganda among the women. Our comrades were interested in winning the wives of Party members by advice on "fashions", "good housekeeping", etc. We protested against this conception of propaganda and also against the fact that this column which particularly involves our Department, was introduced without first notifying us. Our protests met with vigorous resistance on the part of the Party Executive and "Humanité". The first column bore the heading "The House", which gives an idea of the erroneous conception. But a certain change seemed to have taken place since the latest issue is better. The column is headed "The Woman" and, in addition to practical advice, writes a good deal about the women fighters in the Commune.

On the field of publication, we are rather weak. We have issued only few pamphlets. When we see the great mass of pamphlets of the Russian section, we feel our poverty still more. We will need the help of the International Secretariat. We have long intended to put out a pamphlet on the life of the Russian working women, but we had no material. Such a publication will meet with great success.

Comrade BOYARSKAYA (Soviet Union):

Especially today, in view of the labile world situation, in view of the tremendous social transformation that we are called upon to witness, the improvement of the Communist Women's press to a certain ideological and practical level is of extraordinary importance. I should like to indicate the tasks confronting us in the improvement of the Communist Women's press. For its extension, the most active support of the C. C. s is requisite.

When in 1920 we organised our Central organ, "The Woman Communist", and a number of prominent comrades worked on it, including Inessa Armand, Kollontai, etc., nevertheless Comrades Bukharin and Krupskaya joined the editorial staff, and the old Bolshevik Oljinsky replied to our invitation with a letter in which he stated that he considered it a great honour to participate in the organisation of the women's press. This standpoint is correct and we must endeavour to have the C. C. s of our Communist brother Parties act accordingly.

During the last two years the women's press in a whole series of countries has reached a higher level. Nevertheless it still remains a press for the women workers and not a press of the women workers themselves. We have many women worker correspondents, but no systematic work is carried on in their ranks although this would be possible even under the present difficult conditions. The comrade from Norway has related to us that a number of working women write for her paper. But my question as to whether these women correspondents were called together to a meeting occasionally, was answered as follows: "What for? The one comes to me on Tuesday, the other on Wednesday, and I speak to each one individually". If

would be much better to gather the correspondents together and discuss the current issue of the magazine. This work requires a plan and a system. Comrade Grün related that on March 8th an issue appeared of which 9/10 was from the pens of working women. But when we asked, who was on the editorial board, she replied: "Communist women, and recently two non-Party women were added". If there are 20 women correspondents, I believe that some of them could probably be drawn into the editorial board. Therefore I propose that the drawing in of non-Party working women into activity should be recognised as an urgent task.

It is unnecessary to talk at length concerning the tremendous agitational importance of the material on the conditions of women's work in the Soviet Union and on the forms of women's participation in the work of construction. In the course of this year the Department for Work among the Women of the C. C. of the C. P. S. U. has sent more than 100 articles with such material abroad. But this material has not been correctly utilised. We sent more material than was necessary, so that the Communist Parties, in conjunction with their campaigns, could take what they wished. For example in Germany a municipal election campaign was conducted, and the proper material for this was selected. This is the way we look at the matter. But the comrades misunderstood us and generally simply printed the material they received in chronological order. On the other hand, e. g. the Italian mass periodical "Compagna" did exploit all of the material it received in an excellent manner, always in closest connection with the campaign momentarily upon the agenda.

The Communist women's press of the West lacks almost completely a column on the international movement. Practically nothing is stated about the activity of other Communist brother Parties. The reason is simply a deficient use of the material. Therefore, the publication of the bulletin that Comrade Alexander spoke of will fill this gap. But in addition to the material which will be sent by the I. W. S., every editorial board should also have its own women correspondents. Our Moscow Conference must give editorial boards an impetus to getting women correspondents from other countries.

Comrade BILLETTA (Italy):

I will speak briefly about the Italian Communist press for propaganda among the women.

In 1922 the C. P. established a fortnightly periodical for women, "Compagna" ("Woman Comrade"). After Fascism took the helm, we were frequently forced to discontinue its publication. Since the end of 1925 it has again been stopped, and there is little prospect of its reappearance. The eagerness with which the police counteracted the publication of our magazine, proves that the enemy appreciates the importance of our activity among the women. We have frequently tried to replace the muzzled "Compagna" with a special column in the "Unità". This column was filled by women worker and women peasant correspondents. This correspondence has developed well despite the great difficulties. In addition to this legal press, the illegal Party periodicals, especially the "Verità" often published articles on women's questions. During the International Women's Week a special issue for women was published. At the same time thousands of manifestoes were also distributed. On March 8th, 1925, 10,000 copies of a small Lenin pamphlet on the women was circulated. On this field also, regardless of persecution, we have done everything possible to make the Communist word accessible to the masses of toiling women.

Our periodical, "Compagna" has been published in an edition of 9,000 copies, whereas the Party numbers only 300 women members. The distribution of the periodical by the women comrades and women sympathisers of the Party, supported also by the youth, has demanded a great deal of work. The 9,000 readers of our periodical were constantly subjected to police persecution, they had to expect at any time to be arrested or discharged from the factory.

Two examples of the women's correspondence published by the "Unità":

In a factory in Reggio Emilia all women workers suspected of being Communists were discharged, because several copies of our papers and pamphlets had been seen in the hands of some women workers. In Milan all women workers were discharged from one factory, after correspondence concerning the women's wages in this factory had appeared in the press.

The reporter spoke here about wall papers for women factory workers. Also on this field we have already done something. The factory papers are sometimes printed, sometimes typewritten, or sometimes simply written by hand. The working women have great sympathy for these papers, and are beginning to participate in them. The spreading of the papers is very difficult because of police chicanery, but nevertheless we always succeed in sticking it up in some corners frequented by the workers.

Thus far nothing has been done for the political training of the women comrades. The women take part in the general educational institutions of the Party, but this educational work is perforce limited. We are establishing a Party school with instruction by correspondence. Among the 900 participants are 35 women. Short-term courses (lasting only a few days) are being organised, but the women have been able to participate in them only with great effort, due to the illegal conditions in the conduct of the courses. None of these schools have dealt with questions of special interest to women. If we want to train a staff of women comrades capable to work successfully among the masses of women, we must take into consideration the organising of special women's schools. In this case the difficulties of an illegal nature can be overcome.

Comrade SCHWAB (Czecho-Slovakia):

The question of a special school for women functionaries can be viewed only from the standpoint of utility. But the Party must work with such an untrained mass that it is impossible in picking a cadre for special work among the women, to organise work school without a political introduction. Proceeding from this standpoint we designated as an introductory lecture an introduction to Leninism, and only then followed with other lectures dealing with the special theme. We designated as material for agitation and propaganda lectures on woman in history, in capitalist society, and in Soviet Russia; and to acquaint them with organisational questions we had lectures on the structure of the Party, distribution of work within the Party, and then the special work of the Women's Department from the Central Committee down to the nuclei, work in the trade unions, co-operatives and in rural districts, and in conclusion the question of the women's press and the organisation of literature agents and workers' correspondents.

The schools were held in the districts and lasted 8 weeks. The comrades were nominated for the schools on a district scale by the nuclei. The teachers who were assigned to the various districts each conducted an entire course. The lectures were worked out jointly with the Agitprop Department of the Central Committee and the teachers were supplied with reference material so that a uniform line could be maintained. The method consisted in lectures which, according to the instructions, were to be based upon concrete questions, and these were followed by circle activity. The questionnaires which were filled out by the students enabled the director of the school to get a certain survey over the students and their distribution in the various circles which dealt those questions that were assigned as tasks by the teacher. The introduction of student and teacher protocols made possible the gathering of experiences which could be utilised for the organising of subsequent schools.

Now what were the results of the schools? Since they were preceded by a good ideological and organisational preparatory work, the social composition of the students was very good, women factory workers were represented up to 40%. Since the schools were held on Sunday afternoons, attendance was constant. The desire to learn was surprising, and the students' protocols showed that the women were thirsting for knowledge. It was characteristic that the comrades constantly referred back to the first theme "Introduction to Leninism" and considered this as a basis for their further self-education.

The training, however, did not remain solely theoretical, but the comrades were immediately, according to individual aptitude, assigned to the various fields of work, such as trade union work, co-operative work, etc. designated as correspondents, used as speakers, sent into the country to organise literature distribution, etc.

The experiences that we have gathered in the conduct of these schools argue convincingly for the further organisation of such schools.

Now a few words as to the press. Hand in hand with the transformation of our work into mass activity, the reorganisation of our press must also go forward. Thus far our press could not become a mass organ, because it confined itself entirely to the narrow boundary of our women Party members, and was unable to express those questions that set the masses of women into motion. The painstaking extension of the press, the reorientation towards the women factory workers, the concentration upon the most burning questions of the day, and a good extensive factory correspondence, these are the preconditions for the transformation of our women's press into a real mass organ.

Comrade STAL (Soviet Union):

I should like to direct your attention to the **organising role of the press** — it is tremendous. Already during the periods of illegality Lenin taught us to organise the masses around the press, and he showed us practically how we are to do this.

On the initiative of Comrade Lenin in 1901 we published in Russia the first leaflet for women — "**Woman as a worker**" by Comrade N. Krupskaya. Upon his proposal in 1914 the periodical "**The Woman Worker**" began publication with prominent Party workers on its editorial staff. The editors of the periodical were able to coalesce the most active women workers of Leningrad around the periodical. "**The Woman Worker**" did not confine itself to Bolshevik propaganda, however, but it also concerned itself with the organising of the working women. In the midst of preparations for the celebration of International Women's Day (March 8th), the editors were arrested, but the periodical nevertheless appeared in time, and the comrades who had remained at liberty organised a successful celebration of International Women's Day.

After the October Revolution the proletarian press reached its full bloom. If prior to the war (1914) there was only one Bolshevik workers' paper and one Menshevik organ, in 1926 we already have 172 Communist mass papers with an edition of 1,700,000 copies. Prior to the revolution we did not have a single peasant paper. But today there appear in the Soviet Union 143 Communist peasant papers with an edition of 2 million.

Our army of worker and peasant correspondents affiliated to the Communist periodical press is beginning to draw also the masses of proletarian women into its ranks; today it is 30,000 persons in round numbers. The worker correspondent develops into the worker journalist and concludes his education in the State Institute for Journalism (300 students).

Instead of the one periodical "**The Woman Worker**", which, as has been said, extends into pre-revolutionary times, we have today 14 women's papers with an edition of 350,000, and with 5000 worker and peasant women correspondents.

The women workers' delegate meetings issue **wall papers**, organise women worker correspondents sections. The most talented collaborators are developed into journalists and writers.

Side by side with the worker journalists the **poets and writers** are also developing. The number of literary club circles has risen into the thousands. These circles are smithies of proletarian creative power, from them will spring the new proletarian literature. The majority of the young proletarian poets and writers have originated out of the worker correspondents' circles, and their roots extend deep into the factories.

The **Group of Proletarian Women Writers** affiliated to the Women's Department of the Moscow Party Executive has likewise sprung from the women worker correspondent circles. Many of these writers only became literate three or four years ago, but today tales from their pens are printed by the State publishing house. Examples are the stories by Helen Novikova, and the plays of the factory worker Priakhina. The working women and peasant women are writing for their backward sisters because they are the ones who best know their psychology and demands. The development of the women's movement, the growth of the women delegate meetings (about 500,000 throughout the Soviet Union) also leads to the development of the women's press. If 25 years ago we had at our disposal only the booklet of Comrade Krupskaya, we have today hundreds of books whose edition in 1925 amounted to about 5 millions. This press gives us the opportunity of organising new millions of women and of training new fighters for Communism.

Seventeenth Session.

Morning, June 9th, 1926.

Report on the Mothers League.

Reporter Comrade HOFFMANN (America):

I am the chairman of the Mothers League of New England (Boston) in America. I will report on the work of my organisation. In America also the old Social Democratic Party, prior to the split did not carry on any systematic work among the women. Only general campaigns took place. Since 1916 the bourgeoisie has intensified its work among the American proletarian women and has founded many clubs and organisations for the purpose of systematically bringing these proletarian women under its influence.

Very few comrades recognised this danger, nor did they try to counter-act the bourgeoisie by means of a proletarian women's movement with systematic propaganda and organisation. Only in 1916 did a few comrades form a mothers organisation. For about 3 years, up to the split of the Socialist Party, this organisation worked rather without aim or purpose. The systematic work only began with the founding of the Communist Party. Since then this Mothers League has been working quite sharply on a Communist line, hand in hand with the Party. The League is striving to enrol the women into the class struggle waged by the men. It is organised in courses in which working women are being trained under the direction of women Communists. The League does not extend over all America, nor is it organised nationally. At present it consists of individual clubs and groups which we plan to gather during the next year.

In 1923 there was a big shoe workers strike. The Mothers League immediately intervened actively, participated in the commissions, organised strike kitchens, in order to keep the workers above water during the strike. In the programme of statutes of the League there is a special paragraph that states that every member of the League must support some political party advocating the class interests of the workers, and we repeatedly tell the women that only the Communist Party fights for workers' class interests.

The bourgeoisie spends a lot of money in order to capture the working women. In its clubs there is free music, refreshment is served and petty bourgeois instincts are fostered. They offer vacation grounds in the summer for the women's children, clothes are given the children, etc.

The Mothers League is combatting these organisations energetically.

Systematic efforts are now being made in America to divert the working class from revolutionary ideas. They are taking special pains with the immigrants, the foreigners. Laws are being prepared to prevent the foundation of such organisations as the Mothers League. Of course we develop an extensive propaganda against these laws. We have held about 1,500 meetings in the various districts. The bourgeoisie constantly emphasises that the Mothers League is an absolutely Com-

unist organisation. Our women comrades also tell the full truth to the women that the Mothers League is a revolutionary organisation, that the Communist Party is the only Party fighting for the interests of the workers, that the working women and workers' wives must fight shoulder to shoulder with the working men if the struggle of the workers' wives is to have any result.

For a long time the Party did not want to have anything to do with this organisation and did not support it even though the organisation had at all times followed the policy of the Party. We have now succeeded in getting our resolution adopted at the last Party Conference which emphasises the necessity of joining the Mothers League and carrying on fraction work there. We have good fractions in all local groups. In the week just before my departure a group of 30 women who had been organised for 9 years in a bourgeois club, went over into the Mothers League with the explanation that the Mothers League alone represented their interests. The bourgeoisie are brilliant in their ability to influence the mothers through special children's campaigns. Women and children are systematically

influenced by the bourgeoisie through the schools. The League has the complete support of the Communist Youth. Upon my return, a conference of all the local groups of the League is to be called in order to organise a national organisation.

In New York there is another women's league, the "United Council of Working Women" which is likewise under Communist leadership. We are striving to unite these two organisations.

At the time of the British Strike the Gompersites and the Social Democrats took action at a special conference. The Mothers League sent its delegates to the conference but they were not seated, similar to those of the Party and Young Communist League, on the pretext that the Mothers League was a section of the Communist Party. The Mothers League then undertook an independent campaign for the British Miners' Strike. In the textile workers' strike in New York the Mothers organisation collected a lot of money. It is represented on the strike committees and is trying to arrange all sorts of benefits for the strikers. The Mothers League participates in every campaign of the Communist Party.

The Results of the Eastern Commission

Comrade KASPAROVA (I. W. S.):

The Eastern Commission, which was formed from delegates to the International Conference plus representatives from the countries of the Far, Middle and Near East, and the corresponding E. C. C. I. Secretariats, has discussed the theses on the work among the toiling women of the East which had already been adopted as a basis by the Colonial Commission of the Enlarged Executive of the E. C. C. I. (April) — and in the main has accepted it.

Comrade Kasparova reports briefly on the chief questions in the theses: organisational structure, activity on the juridical and economic fields, education, domestic and social customs, drawing of Eastern women into public life, Party, trade unions,

co-operatives, work among the peasant women and female youth, attitude towards the national-revolutionary women's movement and the non-Party women's organisations (women's rights organisations), special forms and methods of mass work, training of active collaborators from among the ranks of the women of the East, press. All these questions were not discussed in the Plenum of the Conference, but in the various commissions.

The theses on the work among the toiling women of the East were then received in the various delegations and discussed, and finally read in the Plenum of the IV. International Conference.

The theses were adopted unanimously.

Concluding Speech of Comrade Fried: The Party Apparatus for Work among the Women.

In the discussion on my report very little attention was paid to the theme itself. Most of the speakers discussed the question of the delegate meetings. I will merely touch upon a few points.

First of all I must take up the viewpoint of Comrade Malm, because her speech expressed most crassly the unhealthy appraisal of the Party apparatus. From her six speeches we must unquestionably get the impression that she under-estimates the rôle of the Party apparatus, since she says that everything can be attained without factory nuclei, etc. Even though we must not over-estimate the rôle and importance of the Party apparatus on the one hand, nevertheless on the other it should not be under-estimated. First of all the correct political line is important. But even the best political line will not be carried out without the necessary organisational form which pave the way for this policy to the masses. Policy and organisation are closely bound up with one another and this applies completely also to the apparatus for work among the women.

The comrade from Poland polemised a bit against me. I know that the Polish Party has always been built on the basis of factory nuclei. But the experiences of recent years have proven that the factory nuclei cannot be a Russian privilege, but that they must apply to all Parties. This does not mean that I did

not see the correct structure of the Polish work. I spoke of the typically Western Parties which originated in the old Social Democratic Parties.

Now as to Czecho-Slovakia. The Czech comrade considered it necessary to refute my statements. She said that my criticism of the C. P. Cz. no longer applied. I would be very glad if the conditions in Czecho-Slovakia were better. But in the past this was not the case, and naturally I had to refer to this.

There were no major principal differences. There was only a small principal difference with Comrades Overlach and Geschke, over the direction of the fraction in the women's organisation, but in the end the viewpoint of our directions was recognised.

The other changes were of a supplementary or stylistic nature. Nothing was changed in principle in the directions. (Comrade Fried reads the various changes decided upon by the Commission.)

I recommend that the resolution as well as the directions for the structure of the Party apparatus for work among the women be adopted.

The directions as well as the resolution on this point were adopted unanimously.

Concluding Speech of Comrade Strasser on the Report: Work in the non-Party Mass Organisations.

It is not possible to enter upon all the valuable suggestions given in the discussion on the point "Mass work". I will therefore speak only on the theses of the Commission. These theses have been very considerably changed in form and structure. But in content very little however. (Comrade Strasser enumerates the stylistic changes made in the theses.)

A small difference of opinion there was on the question of the founding of new co-operative women's guilds. We finally agreed upon the proposal of Comrade Ostrovskaya. The Co-operative Section presented a different version which in essence contained the same thought however.

The passage that auxiliary organisations were to be created on the English pattern, for the purpose of organising the wives of the trade unionists, has been deleted. This was not because we considered the demand superfluous or even wrong, but on the contrary because we consider it so important (as Comrade Geschke already pointed out) that it must be subjected to a detailed study. We recommend that a commission be formed representing the Comintern, R. I. L. U. and the International Women's Secretariat to consider this important question.

The theses were adopted unanimously.

Concluding Speech of Comrade Alexander on the Report: Schooling and Press.

The discussion on the point on our agenda "Schooling and Press" revealed no differences of opinion.

I should only like to reply, in a few words, to Comrade Faussecave. I certainly recognised that a great deal of worker correspondence was published in the press. What was lacking however, — and this is the case in our women's press in general — was the tying up of workers' correspondence with the basic tasks of our work.

In one single point we did not altogether succeed in clearing matters up in our commission. We agreed to leave the question open here and to refer the final formulation to an editorial commission. This involves the character of the central women's party periodical. In our theses it states: "The centre of gravity is to be put upon the organisation of the broad toiling masses in and outside the factories."

The comrades from Czecho-Slovakia, Germany and Austria considered this formulation too general. They referred to what Comrade Stal said about the organising power of the press. There is not only the possibility, but even the urgent requirement of reaching through the press the decisive strata. For example in Czecho-Slovakia we have a rural population of

5 million. We must be able to tie up the various fields of our practical work, the various strata to which we appeal. Then we will also not deal with these questions schematically and separately in our press. Thus, e. g. the Berlin "Arbeiterin" has an expressed proletarian face, and it has certainly put specific gravity into the work in the industrial factories. But, of late, it occasionally devotes a half page to the peasant women and agricultural labouring women, and it reports about rural propaganda, and about the actually established smytchka between the working women in town and country. If we want to practically tie up the factory woman worker also with, e. g. the housewife and home-worker in this form, then we require a somewhat broader formulation.

We therefore propose the following formula:

"In the sense of a tying up of our practical fields of work, proceeding for an actual smytchka we must turn our attention also to the women of the decisive strata for the respective country (e. g. peasant women, home-workers)."

The remaining changes are merely of a stylistic nature in which what was said was given a sharper outline.

The theses were adopted unanimously.

Declarations on the Attitude of Comrade Malm-Finland.

Comrade OVERLACH (Germany):

The written speech of Comrade Malm on the question of non-Party women's organisations is just one chain of errors and distortions. If it should be said that this is due only to mistakes in translation then my statements about the Red Women's and Girls' League would have had to be wrongly translated word for word and sentence for sentence — which is not to be assumed. I must say that the speech of Comrade Malm convicts itself, because it betrays a non-Marxist conception in questions of the class struggle. What claims does she maintain?

Comrade Malm says that I had declared the form of the Red Women's and Girls' League a failure, that I had warned the comrades against founding such women's organisations. Here the wish must have been father to be thought. I declare that the utility of the Red Women's and Girls' League is well proven in the great results of its practical work. Nor did I advise against such women's organisations in other countries but merely pointed out the dangers involved. On the other hand I also pointed out that one cannot reject the foundation of such organisations on the basis of excessive pessimism, because one is convinced in advance that the forces are inadequate.

The purpose and tasks of the Red Women's and Girls' League, as well as the role of the Communist Party, have been completely misunderstood and distorted by Comrade Malm. She declares that the masses in the Red Women's and Girls' League entered this organisation due to instinctive class hatred, but they are ready to fight, weapons in hand, against the bourgeoisie. I ask why should we then have a Communist Party if Comrade

Malm assigns to the Red Women's and Girls' League this task of organising the uprising? The Red Women's and Girls' League, like all proletarian class organisations, fulfills — under the leadership of the Communist Party — only a partial task in the proletarian class struggle, and its purpose can only be the gathering of the broad masses of proletarian women, their activation and their training.

Comrade HALBE (Germany):

The German delegation would like to make the following declaration with respect to the remarks of Comrade Malm in her discussion speech on the women's organisations. She constantly spoke there about the views of Comrade Hertha Sturm and the attitude of Comrade Hertha Sturm. We must say that we know of no such views of Comrade Sturm, but only the views of the International Women's Secretariat. All our correspondence has been with the International Women's Secretariat and not with Comrade Sturm.

We cannot share the viewpoint of Comrade Malm that the International Women's Secretariat sabotaged the calling and preparation of the women's meetings. We received a great many suggestions on this question from the International Women's Secretariat, so many suggestions that we could not carry them out. There can be no talk about the International Women's Secretariat having sabotaged the women's delegate meetings, instead all sections were given suggestion for the preparation and conduct of delegate meetings. We emphatically repudiate this accusation of Comrade Malm.

Comrade ARTIUKHINA (Women's Department, C. C. of the C. P. S. U.):

The delegation of the C. P. S. U., has authorised me to express its position on the attitude of Comrade Malm.

We must say first of all that the tone used by Comrade Malm is not a tone in which one speaks at our Russian conferences. We consider such a tone utterly impermissible. Then, as to what Comrade Malm said about the work of Comrade Hertha Sturm, in such statements we consider not only Comrade Hertha Sturm but the entire Women's Secretariat, since in fact Comrade Hertha Sturm conducted the work of the Women's Secretariat.

We object most decidedly against the statements of Comrade Malm. For the last six months I personally represent the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the International Women's Secretariat and take these expressions as referring also to myself. What Comrade Malm has said I have never been able to observe. What Comrade Hertha Sturm might think — that I cannot say. We have only seen what she did, the whole work went through the Women's Secretariat and the whole business always took place in the presence of a secretary of the E. C. C. I. The statement or the accusation that she at any time sabotaged the introduction of delegate meetings, or that she wanted other forms in their place, is not correct. No one can present such documents.

Now as to the last point on the circle. The delegation of the C. P. S. U. does not agree with Comrade Malm who thinks that the circles might interfere with the women delegate meetings. We believe that we cannot begin in the factories to organise women's delegate meetings unless we have first organised circles. We find that the circles are a preparatory stage to the delegate meetings.

Comrade TURNER (Great Britain):

Comrades, in the name of the British delegation I wish to state that we disassociate ourselves entirely from any remarks

that have been made, criticisms levelled at the Women's Secretariat with regard to the Delegate Meetings.

We feel that we in England are in a position to speak with certainty on this occasion as the work that we have done in organising Delegate Meetings, has been done entirely at the instigation of the International Women's Secretariat.

When our first meetings were held, we sent reports of them to Comrade Herta Sturm and received in reply letters dealing at length with all our difficulties and filled with helpful and constructive criticisms of our work.

These letters have helped us considerably, and the reason we have not done more than we have done up to the present, is entirely due to circumstances in our own country.

No one by the wildest stretch of imagination could assert that the importance of delegate meetings has been overlooked by the Secretariat as far as England is concerned, and we wish to express our appreciation of the assistance we have received in that direction.

Comrade BREANT (France):

The French delegation declares its complete solidarity with the English and German delegations in respect to the statements of Comrade Malm against Hertha Sturm. If we in France had thus far organised no delegate meetings, it was not due to any lack of instructions by the Women's Secretariat, but to a shortage of our own forces.

Manifesto to All the Working Women of the World to Support the British Miners.

The Manifesto prepared by the Commission was adopted unanimously. (Applause.)

(For text of this Manifesto see Inprecorr, Vol. 6, No. 46, p. 749.)

Eighteenth Session.

Morning, June 10th, 1926.

Concluding Speech of Comrade Sturm on the Report: The non-Party Women's Organisations.

In the commission on non-Party women's organisations we had probably the hottest debates. I will not enter upon the discussion in the Plenum. The misgivings and objections of Comrade Kasparova and others were fully and decisively refuted in the speech of Comrade Savarian in the name of the delegation of the C. P. S. U. As to the form of the opposition of Comrade Malm, this has already been adequately repudiated by the declaration of the delegations of the C. P. S. U., and the German, British and French Parties. I need not deal with it here.

There was a vigorous debate as to whether the non-Party women's organisations could be utilised for the recruiting of new members for the Communist Party. We came to the conclusion that this cannot just simply be done in all women's organisations, but rather that one should concentrate upon the proletarian strata, primarily on the women workers in the factory. Only the advanced elements are eligible for attraction into the Communist Party. These women workers should go through the school of women delegate meetings, everywhere there is a possibility for this. But this formulation shall not mean that it is forbidden to take working women direct from the women's organisation.

In the paragraph on the exploitation of women's organisations for propaganda and election of delegate meetings on the proposal of Comrade Malm of Finland the formulation expressed still more definitely that in the organising of dele-

gate meetings we must see not to a single gathering but to a systematic method of work.

On the question of the creation of new women's organisations, we had a principal debate. We wanted to get a political agreement and therefore drew the representatives of the opposition into this commission. But while up to this point we achieved unanimity, we unfortunately did not succeed in doing so here.

Comrade Malm of Finland made the radical proposal to strike out this chapter altogether. This meant the repudiation of the policy expressed at the Conference. Comrades Kasparova and Malm voted against this entire chapter of the directions, Comrade Ostrovskaya (consultative vote) abstained from voting.

This chapter was shortened on the one hand, and sharpened on the other. It is distinctly emphasised that it was not sufficient that the C. C. shall decide on a new foundation, but that in every case the consent of the Comintern, or the International Women's Secretariat, must be obtained.

Other editorial changes refer in the main to the elimination of detailed instructions and the repetition and underlining of the strict fractional direction and control of the organisations through the Party.

The final vote on the directions was the same as that on the chapter referring to the creation of new women's organisations. Comrades Malm and Kasparova voted against and Comrade Ostrovskaya refrained from voting.

On the proposal of the delegation of the C. P. S. U. it was decided to attach all the directions as a special chapter on mass organisations, and to submit it in this form, like the other instructions of the conference, for the ratification of the Org. Bureau.

As to details the formulations which in part were adopted

in essence, are to be worked out by the Editorial Commission that will be appointed to go over all resolutions.

In the vote the directions were adopted on the motion of

the commission, against the votes of Comrades Kasparova (I. W. S.), and Malm (Finland).

Concluding Speech of Comrade Artiukhina on the Report: The Women Delegate Meetings.

The Commission also dealt with the proposed instructions on organising delegate meetings and proposed a series of changes. They are by no means of a fundamental, but all of a practical and editorial sort. (Comrade Artiukhina reads the changes in the instructions decided upon by the Commission).

The Commission also dealt with the proposed instructions "on delegate meetings" and has adopted them as a basis. The Editorial Commission to be elected here to act on all resolutions is to be authorised to give it final form. No proposals for essential changes were made with respect to the directions "On the Delegate meetings".

Now as to the work done thus far. The comrades who have already carried on activity on the field of delegate meetings, have interjected many practical points into these instructions. This was true of the British comrades, who made some things more definite, also by the German comrades, who are about to take hold of this work, and also the other members of the Commission.

Now a few words on the discussion of the report "Concerning the Delegate Meetings". I will take up each country separately.

I will begin with Germany. From what the comrades have told us of their preparatory work, our comrades may draw the conclusion that the preparations in Germany are almost completed. The German delegation has promised us to overcome all the difficulties which stand in its way in organising the delegate meetings. The practical activity of our Conference and the decisions adopted here, will make it possible to take hold of the organising of "delegate meetings" immediately after the Conference.

Now as to Great Britain. The British comrades have told us here that despite difficult conditions they have already begun with the organising of delegate meetings. One British comrade told us in a private conversation that 14 delegate meetings had already been held there. We must now strive for the security of these "delegate meetings" so that the delegate who attends one meeting will also come to the next. The comrades report that they notify the delegate of the meeting date through the respective organisation — trade union, co-operative. We must arrange that these organisations send always the same women delegates to the meeting. The British comrades have set as their task the winning of ever new strata of working women through the "delegate meetings". But this is already a later task, in the beginning one must have the aim of securing for ourselves the same delegates that attended the first meeting. When possible the factory should always send a certain delegate so that she may be worked on better and actually carry our influence into the masses.

I now go over to Finland. The comrades there have a great desire to organise delegate meetings, advocate this question in the Party, and have displayed a great enthusiasm at our Conference with respect to this question. We must emphasise this, but at the same time we must tell the comrades that even though the work is more or less systematic, it nevertheless lacks that which is necessary in a delegate meeting, viz, that a certain factory is constantly represented by the same woman worker in the "delegate meeting".

The facts show that the delegate meetings are called quarterly. That is a long time, so that such a meeting of working women (in which, not the entire meeting consists of women workers, since its composition is predominantly a mixed one) cannot really call itself a "delegate meeting". These are rather periodical calling of conferences, plenary meetings of circles, but not delegate meetings. The basic essence of a "delegate meeting" consists precisely in the frequency with which it is called, so that the delegates do not forget between

meetings what was said at the last meeting; it consists chiefly in that the same delegates participate in every meeting so that there is a connection between the meetings. With respect to Finland we get the impression that there is the desire to work.

Now as to the question of Communist nuclei. The conception that a delegate meeting can exist without a Communist nucleus is altogether wrong. In my report I stated that the organising of a delegate meeting without a Communist nucleus is inconceivable; but it is necessary that the comrades should grasp the difference between a delegate group or individual delegates in the factory on the one hand, and a "delegate meeting" acting as an independent unit, on the other. If the comrades maintain that there can be a delegate group or an individual delegate in a factory without a Communist nucleus, then they are right. It is correct that the delegate herself, by gathering sympathetic elements around her, can later on organise a communist nucleus. It is possible, without a Communist nucleus to organise a fraction in the trade union or in the Red Aid, to assign a women's organiser. But to have a "delegate meeting" in a factory without a factory nucleus is absolutely inconceivable.

Then the comrades raised the question that in our report nothing was said about the organising of delegate meetings among the peasant women. We are of the opinion, comrades, that this question should be dealt with in all detail, on the basis of material and experiences, at the next Conference. You have heard the report on work among the peasant women and a few words on the activity of our Party on this field.

Now as to the composition of the delegate meetings. Here we need a sure policy. Our comrades will have to exert a lot of energy in order to attain the composition we need for the "delegate meetings". The main part, 99% of our attention, must be devoted to the women workers. Representatives of the middle strata (employees and housewives, etc.) can also belong to the delegate meetings but in the first ranks these petty bourgeois elements must not be organised. Delegate meetings are organised of and for working women!

Now as to France. Some comrades expressed their doubts here as to whether a non-elected meeting can be called a "delegate meeting". Comrade Niurina has already replied to this. We are of the opinion that this term can and should be carried by "delegate meetings" not elected in the beginning but composed of the representatives of circles.

Now as to the question of the difficulty of organising a "delegate meeting". Of course we must reckon with the conditions. One must take into consideration that your Communist Parties are small, that there are a few women in the Party and we by no means demand that in France as many delegate meetings be organised as in the Soviet Union. The accusations directed against us that we want to mechanically transfer our forms of work to other countries is utterly unfounded. This is positively not the case. On the basis of the discussion of this question we are convinced however, that this form of work can be applied under your conditions.

As to Italy Comrade Billelta has made a very good speech which promises a good deal. In this it is stated that the comrades admit positively that this form is necessary and that it corresponds to the conditions prevailing in Italy. With respect to practical results however, Italy thus far differs very little from France. It was very pleasant to hear that the comrades like this form of work and that they are ready to proceed with the solution of this task. They have as yet no delegate meetings but they promise however to take hold of their organisations. We will therefore wait for the results.

Now as to Czecho-Slovakia. Here it would be possible to go further. In Czecho-Slovakia there is a Communist mass

Party with a large percentage of women. The Party must, to be sure, devote attention to the social composition of its woman membership, it must increase the number of women workers belonging to the Party, but nevertheless the number of women Communists is so considerable that greater steps forward can be taken with this cadre for the organising of delegate meetings. These comrades have done important work with respect to the special training of women Communists and we expect that there are cadres for the organising of delegate meetings. The preparatory work is already begun and in a whole number of factories there are women workers sympathetic to us. Furthermore after our conference the question of organising delegate meetings in a whole series of towns is to be raised in the Party's C.C.

Now as to Austria. The comrade from Austria delivered a warm speech. She said that "delegate meetings" were a necessary,

good form of work, that they have a whole series of small corps, groups of women workers in the factories, which can be transformed into circles of sympathetic women workers. The comrades have prepared the work, they have made a start, the women's press and the general Party press are at their disposal, and public opinion is being properly prepared in this question. It should be possible to utilise the prevailing conditions in an extensive manner, to make contact with the factories and then raise the question in the Party and try to proceed immediately to the organising of "delegate meetings".

We have heard enough assurances that this form of work is a good one. We will now await the actual results with respect to the creation of "delegate meetings" by the various organisations.

(Applause.)

Declaration of Comrade Malm (Finland) on the Report of the Commission of Delegate Meetings.

Since I had no opportunity to participate in the work of this Commission, I am compelled to state the following here:

1. In view of the fact that Comrade Artiukhina stated in her concluding speech that the German comrades have declared that they have now overcome the greatest difficulties in the way of the calling of delegate meetings, this means that they can now proceed to the immediate organising of delegate meetings in Germany without placing the chief weight upon the organising

of circles of women workers as stated in the instructions, I can support the proposal of the Commission.

2. That in the Commission, on section IV, I would have proposed the inclusion of a point on the formation of women worker activists in the place of the women worker circles.

* * *

The Principles and Instructions on Women Delegate Meetings were adopted unanimously.

Concluding Speech of Comrade Sturm on the Report of the International Women's Secretariat and the Immediate Tasks.

The Commission on the Report of the International Women's Secretariat and the Immediate Tasks, which was attended by representatives of all the important sections, has taken into consideration, in discussing the thesis on the first point of the agenda, the results of the discussion of all central points. It came to the conclusion that this thesis is acceptable in the main, with certain supplements and strengthenings which all go in a definite direction. The red thread of our directions and discussions is to be expressed still more definitely, viz. that the winning of the women workers in the factory, the organising of women delegate meetings is the central point of our activity. I will mention only the important changes.

In the discussion of the introduction to the thesis it became evident that there were certain nuances concerning the character of these theses, the tasks of this Conference. We believe that the great experiences and successes of Russian comrades on this field, especially also in recent times, as described by Comrade Artinkhina in her big report, will be a political support, a strengthening for our brother Parties in West and East towards a recognition of this work as a field not standing in the background but a big important partial field of the work of our Communist Parties as a whole.

In this sense we undertook also to strengthen the formulation in point 2 of the thesis. By giving broader discussion to the first central directive: "strict integration of work among women in the whole work of the Party".

The second central point of our work is the transfer of the centre of gravity of our work to the winning of women workers in the factory and trade union. The discussion at this Conference has brought out this point even much more clearly than did the conference of 1924.

In the Commission there were 3 remarks of political interest. Our English brother Section which has had considerable success in work among the women so that a successful work can be

done if all forces are mobilised 100% even with the small staff of forces — 600 women Communists in a total Party membership of 6,000 as against a gigantic powerful reformist organisation — this very British section proposed a diminution of the recognition of its successes since the Party recognised quite clearly that they have only accomplished a beginning.

In appraising the work of our French brother Party it was expressed that the Party was working under extraordinary difficult conditions. This was recognised. Hence, certain critical remarks concerning the deficient organisational consolidation of propaganda successes was somewhat weakened, in conformity with a formulation by Comrade Faussecave.

The third remark was a proposal by our Finnish comrades. With respect to our presentation of the activity of the Finnish Party in the Women's delegate meetings she called our attention to the fact that we can only speak in Finland of efforts, of beginnings. The Commission has recognised the correctness of this proposal but at the same recorded that the same holds true for Germany and England. That is why identical formulations were used with respect to these three countries, in which the organising of their delegate meetings is designated as only the first efforts and beginnings.

In the paragraph concerning the extraordinary political importance of the propaganda for Soviet Russia the importance of the press propaganda, in addition to the utilisation of workers' delegations, is to be stated more broadly.

The paragraph on the reaction to the tactics of our opponents is to be somewhat more extensive and refer to the past weakness of our Parties on this field.

In the paragraph concerning the women peasant and women agricultural workers the task is to be expressed in a more positive form, and Poland and Germany are to be added to the countries enumerated as those in which work among peasant women can now be begun.

In the chapter on the immediate tasks there is lacking a paragraph on the question which was made exceptionally clear in the report: the necessity for the further extension of the Women's Departments of the Party apparatus, with strictest integration into the general Party apparatus. One number must be interpolated into these contents.

The theses, with the proposed supplements and changes were adopted unanimously by the Commission.

I will now proceed to a political statement of the work of the Commission by giving a brief outline of the results of the debate on the first point of the agenda. The conference showed that in the main there prevails a powerful unanimity among our Sections and between the Sections and the International Women's Secretariat. We have been convinced that the policy according to which we have endeavoured to carry on the work has met with understanding. The Sections have contributed to the strengthening of this policy, so that we now have the assurance of continuing to work uniformly and unitedly.

In all questions up for discussion it could be seen that our Sections have grasped very well the central point of our work. All delegates, have expressed with great determination and definiteness that the central point of our work must be the reaching of the women workers in the factories.

Nevertheless we had a central principal opposition at our conference. It was represented by Comrade Malm of Finland. Even though she appraises the importance of the women's delegate meetings very highly, even though she approaches the question with great enthusiasm, we nevertheless believe that there is still lacking here an altogether clear conception of reaching the women workers on the basis of the factory nuclei. But we believe after her last statement with respect to the women delegate meetings, that the broad discussion will contribute to the clarification of this basic question in our Finnish Section, so that we will have no further deviations in the future work.

Of another sort was the deviation of the Swedish Section. This involved an under-estimation of the special role played by the Party apparatus for work among the women. Now that Comrade Sillen has stated that the practice of the Party is better than its theory, that it has done a certain concrete successful work, we believe that we will overcome this deviation especially if in the immediate future we occupy ourselves more with the work in Sweden than was possible hitherto.

In appraising the work of the Women's Secretariat on the part of the Sections I would like to begin with the point which contains a certain criticism of the activity of the Women's Secretariat. Several delegates expressed in more or less direct form that the relations between the International Women's Secretariat and the Sections were not sufficiently close I believe that without any danger to our prestige we can admit quite openly that our connection can unquestionably be better than heretofore. We gladly accept every practical proposal for a better, closer contact.

A very far-reaching proposal was made by Comrade Olsen. She asked whether it would not perhaps be in the interests of a rapid connection of the Women's Departments with the E. C. C. I. if all reports were sent direct to the Land Secretariats. Technically there is no objection in this question because the Land Secretariat and the International Women's Secretariat are served by the same apparatus. But if the proposal is to have a political meaning that the reports of the Women's Departments of the Sections shall also be dealt with by the respective Land Secretariats, this would mean the liquidation of the International Women's Secretariat, and this, under our international statutes, we could never agree to.

When we admit that we must establish closer connection we also have prospects, furnished by definite guarantees, that we will be able to carry this out. After the last Plenum the whole apparatus of the E. C. C. I. was reorganised. Thereby the E. C. C. I. has a more systematic and intensive connection with the Sections, and the Women's Department has closer contact with the rest of the E. C. C. I. apparatus. Thereby we believe that with the support of the Land Secretariats we shall be able to do our work more thoroughly in the future.

Furthermore, the Women's Department will be strengthened, and I believe that the Conference should welcome this also. Another Russian comrade will work with us full time in order to establish the closest connection with the Women's Department of the C. P. S. U. and utilise these experiences for the other Sections. Furthermore we will draw additional representatives from the Western countries for work in the I. W. S., especially

one French and one British comrade, who, on the basis of their intimate knowledge of the situation in the various countries, will be able to render affective aid.

The International Bulletin which we plan has been welcomed on all sides. Comrade Alexander has spoken in detail about it and has expressly characterised it as a means for the better international connection of our work.

Now as to the appraisal of the work of our Sections by the International Women's Secretariat and by this Conference. We are forced to speak unreservedly about certain shortcomings. But despite all shortcomings we have recognised everywhere that in the last two years a considerable and successful work has been done. Even if in connection with general Party crises in some Parties retrogression took place, we are now nevertheless on a good road in most, if not in all Sections.

In certain Sections, especially in France, we observe a certain mood of pessimism, a lack of self-confidence, a disbelief in success under difficult situations. Precisely our French comrade who have taken over the heritage of the Great French Revolution, should not be depressed. The working class in France is fully able to solve the tasks put to it, if it has a goal-conscious and strong leadership in the Communist Party.

A word on a question that seems of extraordinary importance to me: the work of our Russian brother Section. The great report of Comrade Artiukhina, which was supplemented by reports of responsible Party workers from the various provinces in Russia, a Moscow-Rayon Women's Department, and a factory nucleus, has opened up tremendous perspectives for us. There is probably not a single participant in this conference that is not under the deep lasting impression of how vast are the successes of the work among the women in our Russian brother Party, and how manifold is the plenitude of suggestions resulting from this work for us in the West and in the East. In our great admiration for this work we must confess that in general we have learned far too little as yet from our Russian brother Section. We must learn more than hitherto. For this purpose we must establish a much stronger collaboration with the Russian Party, and we must inform our Sections more extensively and more thoroughly concerning the work among the women in Russia.

But this question has still another side which is likewise very serious and important for us. The Russian Party will be able to support us in our international work all the more effectively, the more exactly it is orientated on the conditions in the West and in the East. Nine years of Soviet power lie behind us. The Russian Party is today working under entirely different conditions, in the building of socialism in its country it is faced with entirely different problems as compared with the Parties that are still to wage the struggle against capitalism. Even though the old Bolshevik cadres of leading comrades, men and women, have at their disposal a plenitude of experiences from decades of struggle against Tsarism the great tasks of the present demand such a straining of forces that it is almost impossible for them to occupy themselves in detail with the situation and conditions of the work in the other countries. We nevertheless have the greatest interest in that our Russian brother Party shall also know the questions of our international work, that it shall struggle and work with us so that we may arrive at a joint clarification of aims and methods.

Therefore, we on our part must do far more than hitherto in order to furnish our Russian brother Party, by means of a systematic extensive and thorough reporting service on the work of the Sections, the necessary material for the most fruitful and possible collective collaboration between the West, the East, and the Soviet Union.

When upon the conclusion of the Conference, our delegates will meet with our Russian women workers and peasant women in Leningrad and in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, they must help to create close relations between the working women of the West and East and the working women in Soviet Russia.

A last word about the usefulness of our Conference at this time. According to the decisions of the V. World Congress such a conference should have taken place much earlier, but we could only call it after the VI. Plenum. We had serious misgivings, the time was very short, the forces for preparation were weak. Above all Comrade Clara Zetkin could not participate in the preparations and conduct of the Conference. Despite all this we decided to carry out the Conference now because we consider it to be politically necessary. This decision was correct. The Conference has shown the great value of our

talking face to face so that in joint discussion we may find out what was good and what was bad in our work. We saw where we must get busy in order that in the future our work may be even more successful.

Above all however, our conference was necessary from a larger, general political standpoint. The fact that upon the basis of thorough debates we have come to the result that **the general policy of our work was correct**, that it must be continued, this gives us a great assurance in continuing the work, and this gives you also, in the Sections, encouragement to strengthen your activities. The Conference therefore gave us the opportunity of amalgamating all our forces for definite practical work.

Two months of intense activity in working over the results of our Conference, preparatory to the winter work lies before us. In the autumn we already contemplate starting the first women delegate conferences in various countries. We, the representatives of the Women's Department, active functionaries in the work among the women, must become a factor in the Party, not a mechanical apparatus but a living limb in the Party organism. We do not wait for the "Party itself" to do this work. It is rather our task, as a driving force with full energy and initiative to establish for work among the women the importance that it deserves.

In this sense our Conference was necessary and successful. Our Parties realise that all forces must be aroused in order to reach our goal. They will carry out the tasks set for them by the Conference. (Applause.)

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On the motion of the Russian delegation a resolution on the work the C. P. S. U. is unanimously adopted as a supplement to the theses. The theses on the agenda point: "The Report of the International Women's Secretariat and the Immediate Tasks of the Work Among the Women", were adopted unanimously.

Comrade GESCHKE (Secretariat of the E. C. C. I.):

In the name of the Executive of the Comintern I congratulate you upon the result of your work, upon the result of this International Conference of Communist women.

You have met at a time when the full relativity of capitalist stabilisation is proven, even more clearly, more sharply than hitherto on the one side by the General Strike and miners' strike in Great Britain, and on the other by the national-revolutionary movement in the East, especially in China. You have met at a time when Fascism and Bonapartism are making advances against the proletariat in various countries, when new economic oppression and new social disfranchisement is being foisted upon the entire working class. You have met at a time when the forging of a united front of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie has become a bitter necessity.

You have set yourselves tasks that were worked through not only theoretically, but also practically — it was a work conference, in the best sense of the word. We should not content ourselves by stating here that you have worked, but every single participant in this conference has the duty of seeing to the carrying out of the principles and theses in her country, in her Section, in the working class of her country.

We put as the central point of this International Conference the question of ascertaining the forms and methods with which we can win still broader masses of women for the Comintern, for the aims of Communism. Now, we believe, that precisely now, the question of women delegate meetings, must be put in the foreground in the Western and Central European countries, as the principal, weightiest task in the winning of new masses for the struggle against the bourgeoisie.

From this Conference we issue an appeal to the Central Committees of all Sections, to conduct and intensify work among the women as an activity of the entire Party. It is not sufficient to ratify our decisions, we emphasise particularly that activity among the toiling women must be undertaken more intensively, more actively, as the tasks of the entire Party we emphasise that the Party must draw lessons from all of the economic and political struggles, and from the importance of the role of woman in the struggles as in society.

I believe, Comrades, that you yourselves, when you return to your Sections, to your Parties, will now have to prove your will to activity, you will have to transform into reality there what you have expressed here.

If the International Conference is utilised in this sense, if every single comrade and every single Party works in this sense, only then will we be able to stand on a level of equality with our Russian brother Party. For the time being we must compete, as sections of the Comintern, to be the first to reach that goal which our brother Party, the C. P. S. U., has already attained. We recognise quite particularly the tremendous work that has been done by our women comrades here in Russia, and on the basis of the collaboration at this Conference we see the great advantages we have attained by your active collaboration in this conference. Without high-sounding words we must endeavour to transform these lessons into reality — over there, each in her own country.

Every one who has come here to the International Conference — as director of a Women's Department, as a delegate — every one must close her eyes before the tremendous successes, which our Russian brother Party has achieved. Every individual delegate, when she returns from this motherland of the revolution, will take new strength, new forces back home with her.

On, with fresh courage, to the work of revolutionising the masses. On, in the spirit of Leninism, to struggle and victory. (Applause.)