

# The International Communist Conference.

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(Continued from last issue).

THE executive Committee is to publish in one volume the reports on the movement in various countries; while the sub-Bureau, after adequate study of the situation in each country, is to issue a comprehensive declaration on prospects, tactics and action. This declaration on prospects, tactics and action will survey the whole international movement, measure the maturity and relation of forces, — interpret revolutionary experience and the prospects of revolution, and indicate the phases of immediate struggle most calculated to promote the revolution.

## The Conference and Problems of the International

A vital phase of the theses adopted at the Conference is that they provide the material for an answer to many of the problems now agitating the International. Among these problems are: 1) unionism; 2) the functions of a revolutionary political party; 3) shall Communists stay in the old opportunist organization to "capture" the party, or shall they split; 4) the basis of admission to the Communist International.

1. — The split in the Communist Party of Germany is, fundamentally, the product of antagonistic conceptions of unionism. The Central Committee of the party favors working in the old trades unions — "boring from within," and rejects absolutely the agitation for and construction of industrial unions. The Opposition favors an intense struggle against the trades unions, considering the breaking of their power indispensable for the proletarian revolution, urging the agitation for and construction of industrial unions. (The Opposition, however, rejects the non-political and non-Communist concepts of the I. W. W., conceiving mass action, Soviets and proletarian dictatorship as the means for the conquest of power). On this problem of unionism, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany holds a position of hesitation, evasion and compromise, justifying its "boring from within" policy on the plea that the trades unions include the bulk of the proletarian masses, and a Communist Party must not isolate itself from the masses — a plea familiar to the students of the Russian, British and American movements as being repeatedly used, by the Menshevik and the compromiser. This compromise tendency expresses itself in another form by the Communist Party (Central Committee) participation in the Betriebs-rate (shop committees) — formed by the government and under direct government control, after dissolving the militant Betriebs-rate formed during the Revolution; and participation in these government organization is justified on the plea that "we must not isolate ourselves from the masses." The Central Committee, moreover, argues that Ger-

many being in a state of revolution, it is futile to develop a program of initiating new forms of industrial organizations which would necessarily require a span of years for its fulfillment, thereby hampering instead of promoting the immediate revolutionary struggle for power. — But Communist policy on industrial unionism, as on other problems, considers the moment in the struggle, and adapts itself to the requirements of the moment; emphasis varies as conditions vary. The agitation for industrial unionism justifies itself even should actual organization never materialize, in the sense that it is imperative to break the faith of the proletariat in the trades unions and in the machinery of the trades unions as means for revolutionary action. In the United States, which is not in a state of revolution, more emphasis is necessary on the organization aspects of industrial unionism than in Germany. The defect in the policy of the Communist Party (Central Committee) is that it has no policy on unionism; and that it is, in tendency at least, compromising, is proven by participation in the government Betriebs-rate. The struggle against the trades unions and for industrial unionism (even should new organizations never materialize) is a necessary factor in developing revolutionary consciousness and struggle.

2. — Another fundamental problem concerns the functions of a revolutionary political party — of the Communist Party. Two tendencies are apparent: a) that represented by the British Socialist Party (inherited in spirit from the moderate Socialism of the Second International) which maintains that the political party must not "dictate" to the economic movement, the unions to initiate mass action and general political strikes, the Communist Party performing simply the function of agitation; b) that represented (but as yet only in tendency) by the Opposition in the Communist Party of Germany, which maintains that the unions (revolutionary) and the political party are equal to each other, ever-emphasizing the industrial organizations — a conception which in tendency, particularly when accompanied by rejection of the revolutionary use of parliamentarism, proceeds directly to elimination of the political party. Now it is a fundamental Bolshevik (and Communist) conception that the political party is the spearhead of the revolutionary movement, dominant and decisive in the revolutionary struggle for power. The function of the Communist Party is action, not simply agitation; it must necessarily assume the initiative in developing general political strikes, in mobilizing and directing the mass action of the proletariat for the conquest of political power. The thesis on Social-Patriots and Unity adopted at the Conference proposes four fund-

amentals on the basis of which Communist groups still in the old opportunist organizations should unite, and the first is; "Mass action as the fundamental means for the conquest of power — the Communist Party as the unifying and directing factor in this mass action."

3. — The Conference decisively rejected the concept of "unity of the party" — that concept which degrades revolutionary initiative and audacity, and which, at this moment, prevents a Communist Party being organized in France and Spain, and keeps the Left Wing Independents of Germany still in the party of the betrayers of the Revolution. In Spain and in France the Left Wing is out to "capture" the Socialist Party by the process of inner transformation. The Communist struggle in an old party stultifies itself if it allows "the unity of the party" to penetrate its consciousness: nor must it become a movement to "capture" the party, thereby weakening the struggle to capture the revolutionary masses in the party. The machinery of the old party can never become an adequate movement to "capture" the party, aspirations and practice; the simple fact of a split, of a decisive break from the old and the creation of a new party in itself contributes enormously to the development of revolutionary ideology and practice. The ideology of "capture" of the party is usually identified with that of "unity of the party" — and each is Menshevik in tendency. To persist in the struggle to "capture" the party and avoid a split means to make an end the means, to compromise our revolutionary purposes; the "capture" of a party, with the retention of the Centre (and perhaps of the Right) is antagonistic to uncompromising revolutionary practice. Our most dangerous enemy is the Centre; the "capture" of a party (or its ideology) means to agree and unite with the Centre, while to split the party means immediate and rigorous separation from the Centre. The Conference emphasizes the necessity of rigorous separation of the Communists from the social-patriots and opportunists, — urging Communist groups still in the old party organizations to split and unite in the Communist Party. — The concept of "unity of the party", which some Communists still cherish, is as much a phase of the petty bourgeois ideology of moderate Socialism as are reformism and parliamentarism. This "unity of the party" concept dominates the Socialist Party of Italy, preventing the expulsion of the social-patriots and opportunists, and prevents even disciplining the parliamentarians who openly flout the party's revolutionary aspiration and practice. This situation in Italy has its immediate and peculiar reasons, perhaps; but still it is a serious defect produced largely by the concept of "unity of the party."

4. — One of most important and immediate problems is the basis of