

What Happened at the Barbusse Congress?

(Continued from page 1)
 mulated by a single Congress delegate. Quite the contrary." He lies deliberately. The delegates of the Left Opposition refused to make themselves accomplices in the criminal confusion of this manifesto, they refused to grant their confidence for the permanent struggle against war to a committee composed of Gandhists, Barbusseists, Fascists and Stalinists. The Official Bulletin of the Congress records our vote as follows: "The manifesto is adopted amid delirious enthusiasm of the Congress by more than 2,100 votes against 6 votes of the French Trotskyists." And further: "In the same way, the list of the members for the Permanent Committee of the Congress against War was adopted by more than 2,000 votes against the 6 votes of the French Trotskyists."

Let us now examine briefly this character on which the Centrists at least made no reservations.

The idea of class is totally absent from this manifesto. In our view, in the view of the Marxists, the question of war is a class question, and the role of the proletariat in war is determined by the class character of this war. We are against the imperialist war, for the civil war. We support certain national wars. Each case requires a specific analysis. In the manifesto, nothing of the sort is to be found. Its language is vulgarly democratic.

The Congress, it says there, "does not deny the existence of ideological and political nuances which may divide the elements composing it". . . Thus, between the Indian bourgeoisie, between the Western petty bourgeoisie and the revolutionary proletariat (all represented at the Congress), there are nothing but . . . ideological nuances! After that, nothing stands in the way of unanimity for hollow generalities, devoid of any class sense.

Precisely, the whole of the manifesto is a laborious assembling of paragraphs carefully doctored to give satisfaction to everybody, and they bear the indelible mark of Centrism.

The Indelible Stamp of Centrism

One finds a very vague analysis of capitalist disorder and of the way in which it engenders war, which concludes as follows: "The Congress proclaims that out of this whole state of affairs it is the human (?) masses who are and who will be its victims. By the effect of the crisis of over-production and the defective (!) distribution of production, derived by the action of an increasing unemployment, etc. . . the multitudes of labor are crushed, those who were cut down by the last war and who for the last fourteen years still bear the sorrows and wounds of it."

Then the manifesto comes out against "the maintenance of artificial (sic) frontiers imposed by the peace treaties", it asserts that "article 217 of the Treaty of Versailles incriminating Germany with the sole responsibility, constitutes a crying untruth (sic) which, exploited by a play of demagogic mysticism has in part provoked the Fascist reactions of Germany". . .

It is not possible for us to dwell upon each of these phrases. They contain a whole world of confusion. Let us mark out simply the passage that for the Congress the frontiers of Versailles are "artificial". Are there, then, "natural" frontiers? According to the manifesto, there are; that is it sinks fully into petty bourgeois nationalism which simply reproaches the Versailles negotiators with having "badly cut up" the map of Europe!

Finally, the manifesto takes up its tactic of struggle against an imperialist war. Here is literally what it says on the subject: "Determined to stand up as much as it is humanly possible against this march to the abyss which involves all living beings, the Congress sees salvation only in the concerted action of the workers, the peasants and all the exploited and oppressed of the world." And that is all. Immediately afterwards, it adds: the Congress "declares that no other means of struggle against war is sufficient."

What does this mean to say? We defy any sincere comrade, whoever he may be, to explain this paragraph. Is there in it the slightest serious explanation of the methods of struggle against war? Isn't it a purely social democratic hollow phrase? "Concerted action"—What action? Concerted among whom and whom? By means of which organizations and to what end? etc. . . All these questions must be answered!

After this, the manifesto adjures the "conscientious objectors" to renounce their tactics. It speaks of "noble dreams", of "unfortunately useless sacrifice", of "splendid moral attitude", of "heroic methods". Who can explain the meaning of this phrase: "To the men of character and courage who preach heroic methods and by accepting for themselves the very grave consequences, it asks to be also (!) with the others (?) in order to build up, stone by stone, from the bottom, a massive and collective barrier" . . .

Finally, the last paragraphs must be quoted: "The Congress turns towards the innumerable proletariat whose sovereignty depends only upon conscious organization (and not upon the overthrow of the bourgeoisie—a purely social democratic thesis).

"Strong with the mandate confided to it by a multitude of persons risen from all the horizons of the universe and different tendencies, but united in the sincere and ardent desire for peace: strong

with the profound conviction that the struggle against war is not upright except to the extent that it is effective and weighs down on affairs.

"It urges the mass, the only invincible power in the tragical disorder of our times, to enter with disciplined ranks into this disorder and make its voice heard there loudly!"

And right after that, is added: "It is in this sense (but what sense? has any of it any sense?) that it intends to have the Committee of Struggle against War, which it has formed, work: to extend this labor front throughout the world."

Here comes the grandiloquent oath that was taken in common, without the least reservation, by the Patels, the Fontenys, the Monnets and Bergerys, the General von Schoenichts, the Muenzenbergs and the Cachins:

Cachin's Pledge and . . . Patel's

"Each of us here takes a pledge and we take it all together:

"We pledge that we will never allow the formidable unity which has been established here among the exploited and victimized multitudes to be broken up. We pledge to fight with all our force and with all our resources against capitalism, purveyor to slaughter-houses.

"We pledge to dedicate ourselves with all our strength and all our resources to the immediate and urgent tasks, standing up against . . ." Here follow the general slogans:

Against armaments, against the preparation of war by the "public powers which rule us", against chauvinism, against Fascism "which organizes the civil war", against war budgets and loans to Fascist states, against the campaign of incitement against the U. S. S. R., against the dismemberment of China, against the exploitation and oppression of the masses of colonial peoples, for the struggle for national and social liberation, for the support of the Japanese workers, for the support of the transport and munitions workers, for the struggle by "all means" against the "imperialist system."

This is the substance of the manifesto which was adopted unanimously save for 6 votes, amidst general confusion and without a SINGLE COMMUNIST SPEAKER HAVING EXPRESSED THE SLEIGHTEST RESERVATION OR AMENDMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

And now, let us put these questions: 1. Why hasn't this manifesto, this "charter", this "basis for action", which is to "orient" the struggle of the party against war, been published to this day? What does this silence conceal? What alterations, after the fact, are being prepared for it?

2. What organizations, what Communist meetings, gave a mandate to and authorized the Communist leaders to vote for such a text without reservations? How should the vote without reservations for the Barbusse platform be designated except as a swindle against the ranks of the party?

3. This confused text was adopted by the licensed representatives of the big bourgeoisie, of the "social Fascist" LEADERS, of the petty bourgeois pacifists, etc., who find nothing in it different from the resolutions of their own parties. To vote jointly with them without reservations, doesn't that mean to make an UNPRINCIPLED BLOC from above, in the dark of the moon?

In the whole manifesto, one single paragraph makes allusion to revolutionary methods of struggle. It is the following: the Congress "asserts that the Japanese workers have already showed by heroic examples how the struggle against the imperialist war should be conducted, by standing up against their own bourgeoisie, by endeavoring to oppose the production and transportation of munitions, and by opening the eyes of the soldiers themselves as to the rapacious character of this war." Naturally, this paragraph was inserted to "satisfy" the Communists. But in spite of this, it sows confusion for it does not say that it is a question of utilizing the war to beat the bourgeoisie, to overthrow the capitalist regime, to substitute the proletarian dictatorship for the bourgeois dictatorship. As it stands, the paragraph may lead to the belief that it is simply a matter of a "pressure" upon the national bourgeoisie to bring the war to a halt. And it is just for that reason that Monnet and Planche, who vote for the war budget of Herriot-Boncour, also voted for this resolution in all tranquillity!

Take the text of the recent resolutions of the Second International in Zurich. Do we not also find there the slogan of the defense of the U. S. S. R., of the sabotage of munitions transportation, etc. . . Don't we know that those are hollow phrases which only serve, in the last analysis to dupe the masses?

How could the Communist party rally to these hollow phrases without a word of reservation, of amendment, of criticism! At the inevitable moment when the Patels, the Fontenys, the Monnets, etc. will show that they stand in the long run for the interests of bourgeois democracy rather than those of the proletariat, revolutionary struggle against war, what will be the attitude of the Centrists who united with them on the same platform?

The bloc, without conditions or limitations, without clarity, serves only confusion, opportunism, that is, in the last analysis, the social democratic and treacherous petty bourgeois leadership.

Against that, the party must be warned, as well as the revolutionary vanguard who have been caught in the snare of ambiguity and confusion.

It must be asserted loudly: this mani-

fest, this "charter", this platform, will be an obstacle to the struggle against war. The party, the trade unions, the various committees, will be unable to engage in a real struggle against war except by trampling upon this text, by rejecting the advice of the International Committee, by fighting fiercely to put through in every meeting a precise, limited program of action of the united front with all the workers' organizations. There is no other way.

For where in this "charter" is there anything precise and serious about the methods of struggle, on the revolutionary struggle, on the tactic and strategy of the struggle against imperialism? Nowhere. You find nothing but badly bloated literature!

The party leaders refuse the honest, united front, that is, one based upon limited, precise proposals, made by the party with full independence, discussed by the party and responsibly adopted by it, addressed to the responsible reformist organizations which embrace hundreds of thousands of workers. Instead of this, they camouflage themselves behind pseudo-united front committees, in confusion, and they are led to make a bloc from above with the enemies of Communism! These are the facts which no insinuations, no quibbling, will conceal from the eyes of the vanguard. And the inevitable conclusion is this: for the moment, Centrism profits by this indefinite current started and exploited by it; but in the long run, it is opportunism, the social democracy, which will profit by it, in the hour when the proletarian Communist vanguard will be obliged to extricate itself from the morass of the Patels and the Monnets, and when the social democrats will exclaim: "There you see how insincere they were; they are now breaking up a bloc which they made without expressing any reservations, without outlining the limitations, without foreseeing the future!" And at that moment, the workers will feel the brutal effects of Centrism confusion. They will see that the Left Opposition was right.

Still another feature of the manifesto should be emphasized. The text reviews the international situation and the war danger spots, but NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT THE GERMAN SITUATION! You do find this enormity, that it is Article 217 of the Versailles Treaty which is responsible for the rise of German Fascism, but not a line can be read which denounces the Hitlerite Fascist reaction as the greatest war menace to the U. S. S. R. The whole manifesto is vague in this respect. In spite of the war which is tearing up the Far East, the decisive threat, the knife which is being wielded over the throat of the German, Russian and International proletariat, is the Fascism of Hitler, the crushing boot of bloody capitalism which is writhing in convulsions. The mute Stalin compels his international apparatus to remain silent about this fact. That is why the Congress directed by Muenzenberg, one of the leaders of the German Communist Party, was able to adopt a manifesto which passes over in silence the critical hour through which the international proletariat are passing in the class struggle in Germany, a struggle which today entirely dominates the problem of peace and war.

Not a minute was granted the Opposition to say this. And yet, we do not want to see socialist deputies, who vote the war budgets of Boncour, who approve the tactic of treachery of Severing and Braun, applaud Muenzenberg when he evokes the sacrifices of the proletarians of Germany—we want positions to be taken on this point, clear engagements, so that everyone knows where he is going and how he will get there.

Such a manifesto we rejected with indignation. We deposited with the president our own declaration demanding that it be put to the vote. They refused. Yet it substituted for the pacifist-Centrist hotch-potch the clear thoughts of Marxism. It concretized the limited, definite program upon which a temporary united front (and not a permanent bloc) could be offered and pressed before the responsible reformist workers' organizations.

Let every party comrade reflect upon it. Let those who greeted the speech of the social democrat, Nicole, with cries of "Unity", who acclaimed Rolland, Barbusse, Fonteny, Patel and Co. as their leaders in the struggle against war, ponder again: the facts will open their eyes. They must demand in the party the repudiation of this manifesto. They must force the apparatus to uncover its double game. They must demand an independent declaration of the party. Let them adopt the position of the Left Opposition, contained in our manifesto. Right now, the best elements will understand us. And tomorrow, it is the whole party that we will succeed in snatching out of the Marxist combinations which ruin the vital question of war and peace.

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—P. NAVILLE.

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THE LEADER OF THE HINDU BOURGEOISIE OPENS AND CLOSSES THE DEBATES

(Continued from page 1)
 Special mention should be made of the speeches of the former president of the Indian National Congress, Patel, chief of the Hindu bourgeoisie, leader of its Right wing. Patel came to this congress for good cause, he knew the political benefit he could gain from it to cover himself before the toiling masses of India, to obtain in Europe points of support for the negotiations of the Hindu bourgeoisie with English imperialism and to stifle the revolutionary class movement of the Indian workers and peasants. He cared very little, about being a spike in the Congress. He played his politics. And this policy should be known to the Communists for whom the tragic experience with the Kuo Min Tang is still alive. In India, the Congress of the Hindu bourgeoisie and, at its head, Patel, have already committed acts of class repression against the proletariat and its revolutionary militants. And Patel himself did not fail to mention it from the tribune of the Congress. Notwithstanding, the Congress answered him with a unanimous chanting of the International!

In his appeal, R. Rolland, apologist for Gandhi, the man who is disarming the Indian workers and peasants, saluted India which "is pursuing with its own weapons of Satyagraha, its silent, its invincible struggle of liberation". In his exposition, Patel, after expressing regret, amidst the applause of the Congress, over Gandhi, "whose place would be so distinguished at this Congress" (that's all that was missing!), declared that as for himself India was the central point of the imperialist war danger and, to the idea that "the end of capitalism is the condition sine qua non of the end of all wars", he opposed the central idea of "the end of the domination of England over India", which he interpreted in the sense of the Hindu bourgeoisie.

Patel indicated that he repudiates Communism and spoke of the attitude of the Indian National Congress towards it.

On the eve of the Congress, during a preparatory meeting, Patel had demanded for himself a speaking time without any limitations whatsoever, else he would quit the Congress with a statement for the press. At no moment during the Congress did he lose sight of his own policy. Patel served up to the Congress the policy of the class he represented.

Pacifist Speakers and Communists

When the Congress had concluded with the vote carried by the whole apparatus for the final manifesto, Patel demanded and again obtained the floor to show that he is in no way altered his position and that he still rejected violence. The English delegation had to rise against his declaration. Neither this final speech nor this protest were translated to the Congress.

As soon as Patel had concluded his remarks, the theater front to whom the chairmanship had been entrusted, Migloli, former Catholic deputy from Cremona, let loose and gave the floor to a new celebrity. From then on the fate of the Congress was sealed. No serious agenda was worked out. The Congress was compelled to confine itself to a succession of general speeches, of greetings indifferently delivered by literati, militants, politicians or by genuine fighters from the proletarian front. Amazing speeches were delivered: the autonomist, Dahlet, demanded that the League of Nations declare it a duty, not to divide in case of war. Echoes of the real struggle of the revolutionary proletariat were nevertheless heard from the tribune in the course of the heterogeneous and sterile procession: the voice of an Invergor-donian sailor, the voice of a striker from the Belgian mines, of a revolutionary seaman, of Balkan revolutionists, of colonial militants. But all these speeches were included in an endless chain of others punctuated by revolutionary songs with which the Congress too frequently greeted irresponsible literati.

A pacifist speaker proposed as against the Sacred Union of War, to constitute a Sacred Union of those who do not want war.

Pressed to explain themselves about this confusion, the militants of the Communist party and the revolutionary trade unions showed their passive skepticism or else replied: "We've got to win them over. We are not here as Communists."

THE COMMUNISTS ON THE TRIBUNE OF THE CONGRESS

Several Communist orators intervened. Among the French, Cachin and Racamond delivered long expostitions, and on the whole these speeches appeared to be of organization and of action, transformation of the Communist party's actions, on the concrete platform which it should have proposed for the mobilization of workers' organizations, Cachin ended his speech with this vague remark: "We proclaim that sectarianism here would be a crime against the proletariat itself." Under these conditions,

with these diplomatic, impersonal and abstract conclusions, what purpose could have been served by Racamond's speech on the necessity of "destroying the nervous system of preparation for war?"

In the Presidium, the "social Fascist" deputies Monnet and Planche fraternized with Barbusse and the organizers. After the categorical declarations of refusal to sit at the same table as the "Social-Fascist murderers of the proletariat", the Centrist representatives showed that at the table of Barbusse and Monnet, they themselves were contributing nothing less sterile, nothing more capable of efficiently serving the interests of the proletariat and of causing its revolutionary vanguard to advance.

THE INTERVENTION OF THE REFORMISTS AND SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS

Among the pennants carried in the Congress hall, one bore the inscription: **Fight the international socialist reaction.** On the second day the word "Socialist" on the banner was obliterated. About three hundred of the delegates belonged to the Second International. They stood up against the cynical boycott of action against imperialist war by the Adlers and Vanderveldes. But they were summoned to speak only on the confused basis of Barbusse's speeches and manifestos.

The director of the Geneva social democratic journal, the Left socialist Nicole, intervened in a more significant way, politically. He used the language of a Left socialist with the borrowed scraps which that language has taken from Communist ideas: On the basis of such a speech he was able to declare himself in perfect accord with Marcel Cachin's speech. At the same time he urged the political unity of the proletariat and the reunion of its parties. Extraordinary as it may seem, these declarations were received with great enthusiasm by the French Communists. Muenzenberg had to make some remarks on this demonstration immediately. But such Congresses are not called to dissipate the confusion in which Centrism throws its good working class elements.

Similarly, an intervention by Rosenfeld, leader of the German Socialist Labor Party, remained unreproached.

MUENZENBERG'S SPEECH

However, Nicole's intervention demanded a reply from Muenzenberg, upon whom, in fact, rested the whole burden of the Congress. Muenzenberg's intervention had the job of bringing the whole discussion to the point. But in such a Congress, the discussion can be brought to the point only at the cost of a radical transformation of the Congress. And it was exactly this which Muenzenberg did not want.

Besides, despite several vigorous passages, Muenzenberg, who was announced as one of the leaders of the 3rd International, did not speak the language of the 3rd International. "Today I do not speak here in the name of the 3rd International, but in the name of the Congress, whose sentiments I am sure I express." Furthermore, the recollection of the socialist leaders' treason in 1914, the ambiguous reference to the French delegation's outburst with reference to Nicole's intervention, the necessity that "the promises given should be followed by actions", remained hollow phrases without class content, without the party conclusions. To Patel, Muenzenberg merely replied that non-violence serves the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie; he refuted it with several literary phrases.

Muenzenberg also replied to the Left Opposition. He said literally: "It is the Trotskyist fraction which is most active in this Congress." He rejected our proposals in a few sentimental phrases about devotion to the party, and the only thing with which he reproached Trotsky was his alleged consideration of himself as higher than the party. In reality he tried to defend this confusionist Congress against our criticisms, and our comrades protested vigorously when he distorted our position.

The Opposition at the Congress

For the balance of the Congress' duration, the six delegates belonging to the International Left Opposition fought energetically. They made themselves heard despite the Bureau's obstruction, they held conversations with the workers, summoning the Communist party to define clearly its line of principle and action, and proposing concrete objectives of common struggle to the responsible workers' organizations.

From the opening of the session, when it became obvious that the Congress was engaged in an endless stream of greetings, one of our comrades, after having vainly asked the Presidium for the right to speak on the agenda, demanded from his seat the privilege of intervening so that the Congress might determine its proceedings in a fruitful manner, consider the various doctrinal positions, and conclude with serious results. But when he had gained the tribune, he was brutally driven off it by the strong-arm squad, while Migloli and Gibarti tried to lecture the Congress against these "anarchistic methods."

Starting with that moment, and during the entire Congress, the united apparatus defended the proceedings of the Congress from our persistent efforts, straining ceaselessly and in every way possible way to gag us. The Migloli-Gibarti-Muenzenberg trinity redoubled false promises, alternating with threats, to oppose the constant interventions of our comrades, and to try to keep the Left Opposition from uttering the opinions of the Opposition to this Congress.

Literature of all tendencies and from all organizations was distributed to all delegates at the Congress. The Daughters of Peace and the Women's Peace League distributed their pamphlets. The anarchists distributed a leaflet against the Congress.

But the distribution actively undertaken by our comrades of the "Declaration of the Bolshevik-Leninists" in German, English and French, twice caused incidents of such great violence from the functionaries of the Dutch, French and German parties, that they necessitated the intervention of the Congress apparatus which, finally, refused us and us alone, the opportunity to distribute the writings of the Left Opposition.

Our Indo-Chinese Comrade Speaks

On the first day, the floor was given to comrade Ra, delegate of a group of colonial workers; we here reproduce the essence of his speech:

"In the imperialist epoch capitalism cannot avoid conquering and fighting with guns over the colonial countries, which are tremendous sources of raw material and markets for the capitalist states.

"In the colonies capital creates a proletariat and a peasantry which it exploits harshly. The exploited colonials organize and struggle. Their desperate struggle in China, Indo-China, India, Africa, already honors the names of Shanghai, Canton, Yen Bay, Vinh, Chauri-Chaura. To the raising of the Indo-Chinese workers' standard the imperialists oppose machine-guns, airplanes and the guillotine, and unite to crush the vanguard, the colonial Communist parties. Of this type are the decapitations at Yen Bay, the repression at Vinh, the arrest, followed by their death, of N'Guyan Ai Quoc.

"These bloody colonial wars are inevitably accompanied by class war in the colonies themselves. In this class conflict imperialism guarantees itself, by means of the 2nd International's fakers, the aid of the native bourgeoisie and part of the petty bourgeoisie. The Tonkin socialist section demands bloody measures of repression against the Indo-Chinese revolutionists, at the same time that the Sararuts and Leon Blums are urging the French government to rationalize the exploitation of the colonials.

"Among the reformist tendencies of the native bourgeoisie, those which the workers have bitterly experienced are Sun Yat Senism and Gandhism. Sun Yat Sen states in his Memoires that in his suppression of revolts he assured himself the aid of French and American bankers. After him the Kuo Min Tang, with its leaders, Chiang Kai-Shek, Wang Chin Wei and even Sun Yat Sen, fulfilled its mission as imperialism's valet in the massacre of the workers in Shanghai and Canton as well as in the coups d'Etat of March 26 and January 27. In India, Gandhi, by his concept of non-resistance, takes his share of responsibility for the peasant massacre at Chauri-Chaura. The colonial bourgeoisie, linked to imperialism in the exploitation of workers, in spite of their antagonisms, have interests which ally them to imperialism in the wars of conquest and the wars of liberation.

"The struggle against war can only be led by the working class with its vanguard, the Communist International, in the direction of the dictatorship of the proletariat allied to the peasantry. The struggle against war has no meaning outside of the fierce battle for the overthrow of the imperialist regime. This struggle can be led only in opposition to the ideology and influence of the imperialist valets and supporters—the 2nd International, the native bourgeoisie, and (I hope I don't hurt R. Rolland's and Barbusse's feelings); all the petty bourgeois pacifist ideologies.

"In this fight for liberation the colonial workers are assured the active aid of the world proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat in the U. S. S. R. is a vital source of help for them. A victory of the workers in the metropolis will give them inestimable support and vice versa. Here too the Comintern leadership's national reformist conception of 'socialism in one country' is revealed as anti-Communist. The colonial workers will fight this wretched tendency and will set their sole vanguard, the C. I., on the road of the world revolution, without which the realization of socialism is impossible and peace is Utopian.

"At this period, when the crisis of the bourgeoisie and its class contradictions force the German bourgeoisie to unleash Hitler's Fascism against the German proletariat, the struggle against war remains a dead letter if the C. I. does not realize a fighting united front of workers' organizations to crush Hitler's Fascism and defend the U. S. S. R. on a class basis."

In concluding, Ra hailed the fight undertaken by the International Left Opposition and its leader, Leon Trotsky. The applause which first greeted our comrade, whose tendencies were still unknown to any one, gave place to the booing of the Communist functionaries. The speech was not translated for the other delegates who came in numbers to ask why the end of the speech had been hissed. Its appearance in the "honest" Congress Bulletin is carefully expurgated and completely distorted.

On the second day, the efforts of our comrades caused the apparatus to grant several minutes to comrade Molnier, who had credentials from the Greek organizations. He said, in substance:

(Continued on page 3)