

THE YEAR WHICH HAS PASSED SINCE THE TWELFTH PLENUM OF THE E.C.C.I. AND THE STRUGGLE OF THE C.P.G.B.

By HARRY POLLITT.

“THERE is therefore ground for the argument that the distinct improvement which has occurred in the economic situation of this country over the past twelve months has been due to influences of a transitory character, and that in so far as more permanent progress has been made in certain directions, notably in the greater command of a number of industries over the domestic market, there have been permanent losses in other kinds of trade—our cotton textile exports are a case in point, our financial and shipping services another.

“The fact, however, remains that these adverse influences acting on the international economic situation, are realities, while the favourable factors remain for the time being highly problematical and uncertain forces.”

So wrote the *Statist* of August 19, summing up the situation in the first six months of 1933.

What was the “distinct improvement” which was due to “influences of a transitory character”?

The *Statist* is here basing its statement on the fact that the volume of industrial production in Great Britain had been slightly increasing and there was a tendency for unemployment to fall. In the second quarter of 1933, the physical volume of industrial production was 3.7 per cent. greater than in the corresponding quarter of 1932.

Yet that this was due to “influences of a transitory character” was only too evident. There had been no increase in the volume of foreign trade in the period mentioned. British imports had declined by £35,663,821 and exports had declined by £8,700,081 in the first eight months of 1933, as compared with the similar period last year. In the same way, there had been no increase in constructional activity during the period. The total amount of new capital issues in the first six months of 1933 was £69,328,000 as compared with £74,772,000 in the previous year. Nor was there an increase in the demand for consumption goods. The money value of retail sales in June was 3.6 per cent. less than in the corresponding month of last year.

Such increased production as took place seems to be due to the same factors as are operating in other countries. In the first place, there has been increased expenditure on war orders. Five million pounds more have been budgetted for this year with respect to the army, navy and air force.

Naval construction is being carried on at a considerably increased rate. In addition typical war industries like the chemical industry are increasing their production. Simultaneously there was a certain replenishment of stocks in industries whose production had fallen to a low level owing to the prolonged crisis. This was accompanied by the piling up of stocks on the speculation of a rise in prices produced by inflation. Perhaps the industry which has most clearly revealed these tendencies is the wool textile industry. Here production increased from 77.7 per cent. (1924 = 100) in the second quarter of last year to 85.1 per cent. in the second quarter of this year. In a number of countries the amount of wool clipped has been reduced. This resulted in a likelihood of a steady rise in the price of wool for some months ahead, which stimulated production for stock in this industry, which also benefited to some extent from the replenishment of the stock of wool in the U.S.A. All this increased production was not accompanied by any increased activity in the clothing trades, which continued on a low level. There is no basis for a real “recovery” in a transitory increase of production of this kind, and the capitalist class, which recently began to talk about “recovery,” is now striking a more cautious note.

The great basic industries, such as cotton and coal, stood entirely outside of the slight increase of production. Here are the export figures of cotton for the first six months of 1932 and 1933. The industry, it will be remembered, had in 1933 the advantage of the reduced wages and the “more loom” system imposed in 1932, and yet its decline continues.

COTTON EXPORTS.

<i>Piece Goods</i>	1932	1933
Square yards ...	1,147,949,400	1,083,107,800
Value ...	£23,889,773	£21,158,178
<i>Yarn</i>		
Quantity lbs. ...	80,448,400	66,141,900
Value ...	£5,899,873	£4,893,854

This decline is often attributed to the inroads which have been made into British imperialism’s Eastern market by Japan. The causes of this must be sought deeper, and are not limited to that, as the following facts show:—

The British consumption of cotton for the

twelve months ending July 31 fell from 2,800,000 bales in 1929 to 2,248,000 bales in 1933. The Japanese consumption in the same period increased from 2,766,000 bales to 2,900,000 bales—an increase of 134,000 bales. The Indian consumption of raw cotton increased from 1,997,000 bales to 2,636,000 in the same period—an increase of 639,000 bales. Chinese consumption of raw cotton increased from 1,957,000 bales to 2,584,000—an increase of 627,000 bales. Not Japanese competition alone, but the competition also of the Indian and Chinese mills engaged in cotton textile production is narrowing the market of the Lancashire cotton textile industry.

The trend in the coal industry was equally unmistakably downward, as the following figures showing the amount of coal raised for the first six months of 1931, 1932 and 1933 show:—

1931	1932	1933
111,176,000 tons	108,109,700	104,228,000

In a third basic industry of extreme importance—shipbuilding—the tonnage commenced by the beginning of the present year is only one-fifth of that commenced by the beginning of 1930.

The British capitalist class, faced with those depressing facts, tries to console itself by urging that if its economic position is not improving, Britain is at any rate getting a proportionately larger share of whatever world trade is going.

It must not be forgotten, however, that in the years just previous to the outbreak of the crisis, Britain's share of world export trade was falling sharply. Thus it fell from 14 per cent. in 1923 to 11 per cent. in 1928. There can be no doubt that the comparatively large share of the ever-declining world trade, which Britain has been getting, has been the result of the depreciation in the value of British currency in relation to its competitors, who are still on the gold standard. This can be seen clearly in the recently published figures of Indian trade.

British imperialism's percentage in Indian trade increased from 35.2 to 42 per cent., while the share of the U.S.A. fell from 12 per cent. to 5.7 per cent., the share of Germany from 8.3 to 7.2 per cent., the share of Italy from 2.3 to 1.8 per cent. On the other hand, the share of Japan rose from 13.1 per cent. to 15.5 per cent. The effect of the depreciated pound, in comparison with the countries still on gold, can plainly be seen in those figures.

Now British imperialism is faced with the fact that the advantages which its depreciated currency has obtained for it are beginning to be decisively challenged. On top of the powerful inflation of Japan comes the still more menacing inflation on the part of the U.S.A., and the

inevitable inflation on the part of Germany. Hitherto it had congratulated itself that, while getting certain advantages from its depreciated currency, it had managed to keep from raising rapidly the minimum cost of living inside of Britain, with all the consequences of fiercer class battles which that would have brought about. It is now being put up against the alternatives of either losing all its relative gains on the world market since 1931—yes, of being driven down to a lower position than it has ever occupied before—or of itself entering into the path of competitive inflation, with all the social and political consequences which that entails. Already the very slight rise in the cost of living caused by the policy of restricting foreign food imports in the interests of British and Dominion agriculture, has provoked murmurings in the ranks of the workers, murmurings which are not likely to be hushed by the appointment of a special committee to prevent profiteering in food. That, and the wave of strikes such as followed inflation in the U.S.A., and the fact that a considerable portion of its foreign loans are payable in sterling, is not likely to commend competitive inflation to the cautious British bourgeoisie. But the forces of the deepening crisis are dictating that it must tread the path of competitive inflation, whatever consequences may threaten.

THE POSITION OF THE WORKING CLASS.

Wages have continued to be cut steadily in Britain during the period under review. In the first eight months of 1933 the wages of 944,000 workers were reduced by £86,000 per week.

This is in addition to the cuts in the wages of agricultural workers, shop assistants and office employees.

But these statistics are not complete by a long way. The government statistics take into account wage cuts arrived at after negotiations, or strikes, or imposed by the pressure exerted by government trade boards. Its statistics do not take into account the numerous wage cuts imposed upon workers in industries like the Lancashire cotton industry, where the agreement with the textile workers' trade union was openly violated. It does not take into account wage cuts among unorganised workers.

Amongst the unemployed the Means Test has been operating with the most ruinous consequences.

There are no fewer than 1,065,500 unemployed signing on at the exchanges who are subject to the Means Test. No exact figures are available of the numbers who have been totally cut off, but an estimate can be made on the basis of the following facts:—

Out of 751,285 people on transitional benefit who applied for relief between July 3 and August 5, 1933, 299,924 had their scales of relief cut. If this is a fair sample of the 1,065,500 unemployed who are on transitional benefit, then we are justified in assuming that at least 406,200 men and women are having their scales of benefit reduced by the Means Test. 88,003 workers are still signing on at the Labour Exchanges after having been completely cut off under the Means Test. No fewer than 200,000 of those previously cut off have ceased to sign; so it is safe to say that there are at least 800,000 workers who have had their benefit reduced or are cut off entirely under the Means Test.

APPLYING THE LINE OF THE TWELFTH PLENUM.

What progress has been made by the Party in applying the line of the Twelfth Plenum? Undoubtedly the progress has been insufficient, and one cannot rest satisfied with it.

The greatest of this progress has been made in the independent leadership of economic struggles. The Party has participated in some exceedingly important partial strikes, strikes in which the workers gained some very definite concessions. The Ryhope strike, in the mining industry of Durham, was followed by strikes at Ford's and at Briggs body works, then came the strike at Hopes in Smethwick and later the strike in Firestone's factory in London. There was also the bus strike in London, which took place without the official sanction of the union, at the beginning of January, although here the Party influence was not so complete as in the strikes named above.

Never at any previous period of Party history have we participated in the leadership of such a number of partial strikes.

A number of these strikes, notably the London bus strike and the Ryhope strike, were carried out by the union branches acting independently of the head office bureaucracy. The experience gained in these struggles showed that it is possible for the militants, after winning great influence amongst the workers, to get control of the union branches, and so enable the workers to successfully resist encroachment upon their conditions, even when the head office bureaucracy is prepared to grant concessions to the employers without a struggle. The "alternative leadership" displayed in such strikes was not leadership built up outside of the unions; on the contrary, it was a leadership basing itself on the lower organs of the unions.

The situation was not greatly different in the stubbornly fought strikes at Hopes and Firestones. While those strikes started in factories that were largely unorganised, the strikers not

only set up in the very first days of the strike efficiently functioning strike committees, but joined the unions *en masse*. The union's help was welcomed, when it conduced to building up the strike, but the strike committee kept a firm grip of negotiations.

A characteristic feature of many of the strikes during the period under review was the fairly powerful solidarity actions which were carried out. Apart from strike relief from the unions, and the relief which was received from the public assistance committees, there was over £3,000 collected from sympathetic workers for the Hopes, the Firestones and the Ryhope strikes.

Most of the strikes under review won very definite concessions for the workers. The Hopes strike smashed the Bedaux system, the Ryhope strike succeeded in defending a number of standing customs with which the management intended to do away, the Firestone strike won concessions on all points; concessions of lesser magnitude were won by the London busmen, by the workers in Fords and in Briggs.

All of these strikes left behind them definitely improved organisation amongst the workers. The Hopes strike aided the establishment of a good shop stewards' committee and a powerful trade union branch. The Firestone strike recruited over 400 members into the union. Most of the other strikes resulted in a definite increase of union membership.

The success of these partial strikes showed, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that under militant leadership it is possible to win definite concessions from the capitalists and to develop organisation and class-consciousness in the midst of the deepening crisis, thus refuting the reformist lie that it is impossible to carry on effective economic struggle in a period of economic crisis.

While the leadership in economic struggles has definitely improved, it cannot be said that the development of rank and file movements in the unions is developing according to the necessities of the situation. The most successful of the rank and file movements developed by the workers have been the busmen's rank and file movement and the railwaymen's vigilance movement. Based on the trade union branches, and drawing large numbers of local branch officials into the struggle for the militant policy, both these movements have won a considerable measure of success. The busmen's movement is, however, based very largely on London, although there are many local centres in other parts of the country. It is clear that our Party members working within this movement must impress on the rank and file who are supporting it the necessity of extending the movement to other parts of the country, and of build-

ing groups of adherents of the movement in every garage, tram depot and union branch, at the same time encouraging the development of the rank and file movements in other sections of the transport industry.

It is clear, however, that this movement is faced with powerful opposition on the part of the bureaucracy. The Congress of the Transport Union held in July passed a resolution, without previous discussion amongst the union membership, which declared that participation in the rank and file movement is incompatible with holding office in the union. Already the union bureaucracy is moving to carry out this resolution, and the rank and file movement is faced with the necessity of organising a powerful resistance, rejecting all defeatist counsels without allowing itself to be provoked into a split.

The railway vigilance movement is also faced with the necessity of forming groups of individual supporters in addition to bringing the greatest possible number of union branches into the movement. However, in the opinion of the railway militants who are qualified to judge, this movement has one very definite weakness—it does not seek to organise action on day-to-day issues through the branches and district councils of the union and through organisation on the job. The movement confines itself largely to seeking to change the tactics of the railway unions and to get members of the vigilance movement elected to union posts. This necessary activity must, however, be linked up with action to remedy the day-to-day grievances of the men. The bus branches in London, for example, did not confine themselves to influencing the head office officials. They took the initiative and took organised action against speed-up themselves. The railwaymen, by winning control of the branches, by building up organisations in the depots, must seek to organise partial struggles against de-grading and speeding-up. If this is not done there is a danger that the movement will stagnate.

A disquieting feature of the situation is the slow development of the rank and file movements in the basic industries. In the cotton industry the cotton workers' solidarity movement does not grow. It is true that the problems of working in the cotton unions—which meet only once every three or six months — are different from those existing in unions which meet once a fortnight. We have seen, however, that the militants in the Weavers' Union at Barnoldswick, by applying a correct policy, succeeded in getting a Communist elected to the position of union secretary, and that the union was able under militant influence to help the Clough Mill strikers to victory. Quite a number of local organisations in the Weavers'

Union are beginning to organise an opposition to the bureaucracy, and the solidarity movement has big opportunities of development if it knows how to make a correct approach to the workers.

In no other industries in the country is there such great support for our Party as in mining, engineering and shipbuilding. The votes in the Clay Cross and Rhondda by-elections show the ever greater sympathy for our policy among the miners, as do the votes for the militants to the Trades Union Congress amongst the engineers. Yet in these industries there is only a small nucleus of a rank and file movement.

Work within the unions has definitely improved since the Twelfth Plenum. The presence of the opposition, in which there were Communists, made itself felt very definitely in the National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Annual General Meeting of the National Union of Railwaymen and the Bi-annual Conference of the Transport and General Workers' Union. The resolution condemning the Trade Union Congress's refusal of the united front was only defeated by 49 votes to 31 at the conference of the National Union of Railwaymen, while a resolution calling for the wiping out of an anti-Communist resolution, passed in previous years, was only defeated by 21 votes to 18 at the Engineers' Conference.

The proportion of Party members working in the unions leaves much to be desired. And yet there is a terrific ferment amongst the trade union rank and file, and work in this sphere would bring tremendous results. What has been done in regard to increasing our activity inside the reformist trade unions since the Twelfth Plenum and the Twelfth Party Congress is only the indication of what could be achieved if the whole party membership were organised for this vital work. At the meeting of the Central Committee of the Party held in September, special attention was again given to this question and instructions sent out to all Party members that wherever they are eligible to join the trade unions they must do so, and that no further excuses can be accepted in this respect. In addition to this, it was also recognised that one of the reasons for weaknesses and mistakes in the conduct of the economic struggle, the work in the trade unions and among the unemployed was precisely the absence of active fraction work, which is necessary to ensure the winning of the organised and unorganised workers for carrying through the lead of the Party, and building up the mass movement of the working class.

Steps have now been taken to deal with this aspect of the situation, and all locals and districts instructed to make monthly reports upon what

they have done to see that the regular work of the Party fractions takes place.

It is interesting to note that those comrades who had doubts as to whether it was necessary to work in the trade unions, and expressed these doubts in the discussions prior to the Party Congress, have since given practical demonstrations that they have learned much and have become convinced of the necessity for that permanent and intimate contact with the masses without which no mass Communist Party can be built up.

In all the Party district organisations a big change in trade union work is to be witnessed, and all that has been done must now be utilised to gain further footholds and influence inside the unions on the basis of mass work in the factories and the trade union branches. The question of how important the winning of the trade union branches is, is best seen in the experiences of all the recent strike struggles the Party has taken part in. It is the actual fact that where we have had a strong foothold in the trade union branches we have had great and lasting influence with the strikers. Where we have openly recruited members into the trade unions, and organised militant trade union branches, there our influence has been of a permanent character, and has not been lost immediately the strike has been terminated.

The power these positions that are won in the trade union branches give the revolutionary workers cannot be over-estimated, and there can be no firm building up of the revolutionary opposition that is not based upon both the factory and the local branch of the trade union.

Further, it has also been seen in practice that where we have recruited for the trade unions and built up strong branches, we are in a stronger position, we are able—with all militant workers—to fight against the splitting policy of the trade union leaders. There is a very important fact to note. At the time when the reformist leaders are continually whining about the workers not wanting to join the trade unions, in every strike of recent times, due to the strong lead of the Communist Party and the militant rank and file movements, a big recruitment has taken place into the trade unions, and, so far as data is available, it has not been a fluctuating recruitment, but a solid type of worker who has consciously joined the trade union to help it fight its battle both inside and outside the factory. For Britain, where, in my opinion, we can make no headway unless it is done in close association with the organised workers, these facts are of enormous importance, and must serve to intensify all our activities on this section of the working class front.

THE FIGHT OF THE UNEMPLOYED.

The period since the Twelfth Plenum was a

period of great unemployed activity led by the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. In the autumn there were a series of powerful unemployed struggles in areas like West Ham, Belfast and Birkenhead, culminating in the great unemployed march to London. The unemployed march was followed throughout the summer by a series of marches and demonstrations on a county scale. There were two marches to the Durham County Council, two marches to the West Riding Council, and an all-Scottish march to Edinburgh, a march to the County Councils in Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Monmouthshire, Fifeshire and the unemployed march to the Trade Union Congress.

Demonstrations and marches on a county scale are rendered necessary by the fact that unemployed relief and the administration of the Means Test is, in many areas, in the hands of the County Councils.

With regard to the demands of the marchers it must be said that altogether insufficient attention was given to the necessity of formulating definite demands for work schemes and placing them before the local authorities. The demands of the unemployed marchers largely concentrated on obtaining increased relief from the County Councils, and on the abolition of the Means Test. At the present time, perhaps one unemployed worker in ten receives relief from the local authorities, in addition to, or as an alternative to, the unemployed relief which he draws from the Labour Exchange. A little over 800,000 unemployed find their conditions directly worsened by the Means Test.

These are very important sections of the unemployed. They are the sections of the unemployed whom the government will direct its attacks against in the new unemployed legislation now being introduced. Nevertheless, these sections represent only one-third of the unemployed, and in carrying out mass actions we must put forward demands which will appeal also to the remaining two-thirds. The struggle for concrete work schemes is the best way of attracting these sections of the unemployed into the struggle. This task was too often neglected. Indeed, one might say that, in some districts the reformists—notably in building workers' unions—were more active in this respect than the revolutionaries.

Another feature of the marches was the entirely insufficient application of the united front policy. We are not unmindful of the fact that most of the marches were led by marchers' councils, on which trade union branches were represented, that the Communist Party, and the Independent Labour Party, participated in the organisation of the

marches and that Trades Congress Unemployed Associations participated in the West Riding march, and in the march of the London unemployed to the Trades Union Congress at Brighton.

Nevertheless, there was insufficient united front activity. The demands of the marchers were not drawn up after consultation with the widest circles of the unemployed. They were generally drawn up by the N.U.W.M. branches and perhaps modified at the conferences of N.U.W.M. and trade union branches which elected the marchers' councils.

True, the demands were popular and easily understood, and represented the interests of the unemployed. But not to make every possible effort to call the widest masses of the unemployed into consultation, when the demands were being formulated, was a very considerable mistake on our part.

It was equally a mistake not to have systematic connection with the unemployed frequenting the social service centres (we refer particularly to the marches which took place in the winter and the spring, when the social service centres—which closed down in most cases for the summer—were still open).

To rouse the interest of these unemployed, to get them to participate in the election of the committees which would organise the march, was a task of the utmost importance.

The actual position was that the mass of the unemployed did not hear of the demands until they were formulated, and were called on to enlist in a march led by a March Council—set up by the N.U.W.M. and sympathetic trade union branches—a March Council which they did not participate in electing. That was the situation as far as the majority of marchers were concerned. The result was that the marchers were largely N.U.W.M. members, or as in the case of the London march to the Brighton conference of the T.U.C., definitely Communist sympathisers.

If more definite attempts had been made, however, to bring the unorganised unemployed into the preparations for the marches, the basis of the movement would have been widened and the possibility of electing, around the N.U.W.M., broad unemployed councils after the marches were over, would have been considerably greater.

The fact that the Broad Unemployed Council is mentioned in all resolutions, and is forgotten when mass action is being organised, shows that much has yet to be done in applying united front tactics in the field of unemployed struggle.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the approach of the N.U.W.M. to the unemployed who are organised in the Trades Congress Un-

employed Associations has definitely improved, as has also its approach to the trade union branches. On the other hand, the N.U.W.M. does not sufficiently organise its own members for activity inside the unions. This is a weakness which must be overcome.

We must struggle for sports and recreational facilities for the unemployed. We must fight for the use of halls from the town councils, for the use of sports fields, for free admission to the public baths, for sports and educational facilities, to be organised under the control of the unemployed themselves. By taking up this fight we will prevent the organisation of more social service centres under the control of the churches and of the capitalist class generally.

Where centres are established, however, we should put forward demands such as the election of a committee to control the centre by the unemployed out of their own ranks, the periodical re-election of this committee, the organisation of lectures and discussions for the unemployed. No topics barred, and the fight against all semi-military drilling. These tasks call for immediate attention.

The coming autumn and winter demand that the Communist Party shall do everything in its power to assist the fight of the unemployed workers, and especially in developing the mass unemployed movement, which can draw in those masses of unemployed which so far it has not been possible to draw into its ranks.

There is constant danger to benefits, through the latest attacks on the unemployed workers who are now being deprived of their health benefits, and maternity benefits because they have not enough stamps on their cards; while the banning of meetings by Lord Trenchard at the Labour Exchanges in London and of unemployed demonstrations in other towns is in preparation for the new Unemployment Insurance Act being introduced in Parliament, which will undoubtedly take the attacks on the unemployed farther than they have yet been. In addition to this, attempts are being made to introduce new proposals for the conscription of the unemployed workers, something on the lines of that carried out by Hitler, who concentrates the unemployed in forced labour camps. This is the perspective of the unemployed fight, aggravated by the rising costs of living, placing additional burdens on the unemployed. Our Party can only carry out its work correctly if it now makes a serious effort to organise its fractions inside the unemployed movement, and if the Local, District and Central Committees give detailed and serious attention to the work among the unemployed, to ensure the broadening out of the whole fight; and greater

unity of action between employed and unemployed workers.

The organisation of a great national conference and hunger march can be made the means of giving a fillip to the whole fight against unemployment and to breaking through all bans whose aim it is to prevent effective forms of action. It will only be in this way that the Broad Unemployed Councils can be established, and the N.U.W.M. itself develop into a really powerful mass organisation that leads the daily struggles of all the unemployed workers.

CONCENTRATION EXPERIENCES.

The whole work of the Communist Party of Great Britain since the Twelfth Plenum and the Twelfth Party Congress has been guided by the resolution adopted at the January plenum of our Central Committee that was held in 1932, popularly known in the Party as "The January Resolution." This important and decisive resolution for our Party concentrated attention upon the imperative necessity of a decisive turn towards revolutionary mass work, and laid down the basis for the improvement of our revolutionary work in the trade unions and factories; showed how to overcome sectarian obstacles in regard to mass work; to develop a broad mass movement among the unemployed; and how the differences in principle between the Communist Party and the reformist parties must be brought out and emphasised, and special attention be given to concretely showing what the revolutionary way out of the crisis was for the British working class.

This resolution showed the way to bind up the daily activity with the fundamental question of the revolutionary struggle for socialism. It showed that only when the Party is firmly rooted in the trade unions and factories will it be able to lead the workers forward in revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

And it has been on this basis that the Party has tried to carry out all its work. It adopted four main concentration districts: South Wales, Lancashire, Scotland and London, and in all other districts the same methods were applied. The main factories, trade unions, labour exchanges and streets were chosen for this concentration work and a drive made to get the new methods of work carried out. In the course of the last eighteen months, the Political Bureau of the Party has adopted the system of receiving regular reports from leading comrades from these districts who attend the Political Bureau, in order that the Party should be able to check up on the work, to correct mistakes and to advise how the problems of the various districts should

be solved. This experiment, although far from achieving perfection, has provided a means of keeping the Party leadership in the closest touch with every phase of Party life, as many of the leading comrades in the districts are also members of the Political Bureau, which results in a closer working contact and better collective leadership in all phases of the work of the Party.

It is already possible to give the main gains from these concentration experiences, so far as every Party district is concerned. There is now a better knowledge of the actual conditions and problems in the factories and trade unions; a better understanding of many local issues that arise at the labour exchanges and in the working class streets. The work of the factory and street cells has been improved, and also the content of the factory papers, which now come much closer to the life and requirements of the workers in the various industries. Valuable contacts have been made and a break through can be registered in the dangerous isolation of the Party from the masses. There has also been a steady increase in the number of excellent types of workers entering the Party.

But there are still serious weaknesses to be recorded. There has been lately a tendency to ease up on the concentration work; elaborate plans have been made, but many times they have remained on paper. There is insufficient realisation amongst the membership as a whole of the valuable work that has been done, since the line of the January resolution was applied to the tasks set the Party by the Twelfth Plenum and the Twelfth Party Congress. If the good results achieved had been better popularised, we would no doubt have been able to mobilise the whole membership more effectively. Now new efforts are being made to overcome the main weakness in our work, which can be stated as follows:

First and most important—the failure to bind up recruiting for the Party with every phase of our daily activity, and, secondly, the failure to bring forward new leaders in the local, district and central organs of the Party from amongst those who have come forward in the course of the mass struggles and strikes. There is insufficient activity in regard to the united front work, and in the defence of the workers' everyday interests, and particularly in the struggle against reformism; the work on the day-to-day problems is too sharply divided from activity connected with the main political events. The content of the daily mass work needs to be changed so that out of it we can direct into the Party a steady stream of class-conscious recruits, for they will not only be a powerful aid in the development of a mass Communist Party, but will in the fac-

tories and trade unions help forward the rank and file movements, and the building up of a revolutionary trade union opposition. Also, there is still a failure to raise the political level of the whole Party, and this is one of the reasons why we do not bring forward the new leaders and do not recruit enough new members.

Now there is greater attention being paid to overcome these weaknesses. The London District Party Committee have, for example, decided to give practically their whole attention to the East End of London—the district of decisive importance—realising that unless we can win the East End of London with its docks, its munitions factories, shipyards and chemical and engineering works, there can be no successful advance of the revolutionary movement in London. The D.P.C. are therefore instituting a special system of instructors, to lead the work not from above, but coming out of the basic units; and in this way they will take area by area until the whole of the decisive areas have been covered, and powerful locals established. This experiment is being imitated by other districts of the Party too. We can declare that in the coming months the Party will make resolute efforts to overcome the main weakness that the concentration experiences have revealed.

THE UNITED FRONT CAMPAIGN.

There has been a great deal of work put in, in connection with the united front campaign, but so far it cannot be stated that we have been able to bring large sections of the organised working class into this united front. This is caused by the reformist leaders, who in spite of the desire of the masses for united action, are still able to prevent the various working class organisations from taking part in their official capacity in the united front campaign.

On the publication of the Communist International's Manifesto in March, our Party addressed letters stating its willingness to participate in common discussions with a view to formulating a programme of issues, upon which the united front of every section of the movement could be established, to the Labour Party, Trades Union Congress, Co-operative Party and the Independent Labour Party.

These letters gave our practical suggestions, but only the I.L.P. responded to our invitation to a joint conference, the rest of the organisations confined themselves to polite replies, and indicated that, later on, they would give the considered views of their various executive committees. These final views are now known to all; they took the form of a sermon on the merits of Democracy and demerits of Dictatorship, and

evaded the main question at issue, namely, whether they were willing to take part in united action to defend the workers from the attacks of capital, the menace of fascism and war.

The net effect of the reformist refusal to take part in the united front has been, naturally, for them to intensify their efforts to make one with the capitalists, and this they have done more completely than ever before, as seen in the decisions of the Brighton Conference of the Trades Union Congress and the Hastings Labour Party Conference, where all things associated with the name of socialism have been betrayed, and the gospel of Roosevelt has been proclaimed. At the same time, the rank and file of the reformist organisations are taking part in united front activity both in connection with the British Anti-War Movement and the German Relief Committee, and also the International Labour Defence. All such united front work on the part of the rank and file is banned and barred by the officials, but in spite of all their power they are unable to completely smash these efforts, and now the rank and file are to be finally frightened off united action, by the latest Labour Party pamphlet, *The Communist Solar System*, in which, like the Popes of old, they have compiled an "index" of working class united front organisations that have to be placed beyond the pale for the members of the Labour Party. But there is strong opposition to these tactics, as was seen in the last conference of the National Union of Railwaymen, the National Committee Meeting of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and various important local trade councils, like those of Newcastle-on-Tyne and Bradford, where recent discussions have revealed a significant backing of all sections of the working class movement for united front action.

With the I.L.P. it was possible to come to an agreement in March, and after their annual conference at Derby a much wider and more important agreement was reached regarding the basis upon which the united front should be conducted with the aim of winning other sections of the workers' movement for their participation in it. But it must be openly said that while the attempts to establish a united front between the Communist Party and the I.L.P. have been warmly welcomed by large sections of the workers, while there has been a serious indication of what could be achieved in the struggle against capitalist attacks, fascism and war, if all sections of the workers took part, the united front activity has largely been confined to meetings; the I.L.P. leadership tried in every way to avoid carrying the struggle for the united front into the factories and the trade unions.

There can be no real, effective united front that

is not based upon day-to-day activity in the factories and the trade unions; the object of the meetings, at which the leaders make speeches, is only meant to be the step towards the achievement of this other aim, which alone can give life and meaning to the united front, which is built on the basis of mass action. But the May 5 united front agreement has remained a paper agreement, because amongst the I.L.P. there are two different tendencies, so that the net result is not merely the non-application of the Derby conference decisions, but a definite grouping of those leaders who are against any further collaboration with the Communist Party. It is this which, in such districts of the I.L.P. as Lancashire and South Wales, gives rise to resolutions calling for the withdrawal of the I.L.P. from the united front with the Communist Party. I doubt whether any decisions of such importance to the revolutionary workers, adopted by the conference of a political party, which spoke in the name of the working class, have ever been so consistently sabotaged by the leadership, as in the case of the Derby conference decisions of the I.L.P.

However, the attraction of the rank and file to the united front is so strong that so far the leaders have not risked any attempt to make a direct break, although it is significant that, as a result of the last meeting with the I.L.P. delegation, they could not come to any agreement until they had reported back to their National Administrative Council; and now the Council have sent a letter to the Communist Party, in which, while verbally agreeing with a number of our concrete proposals, it in fact tries to undermine the whole basis of united front activity so far as building it up in the factories and trade unions is concerned. We shall be prepared to wholeheartedly work together, at the same time deepening our work amongst the I.L.P. membership as a whole, to win them for the line of policy laid down in the letters of the Communist International, which would also mean an immediate strengthening of every phase of united front activity.

Wherever there has been any real mass work carried out by the C.P. and the I.L.P. under the slogan of the united front there have been good and immediate results; as in the Hunger March on Edinburgh, the Firestone strike, the May First demonstrations, and also the collaboration in such bodies as the Anti-War Movement. But all this is nothing to what could be done if many of the I.L.P. leaders did not sabotage carrying out the united front work on the basis of the May 5 agreement, for this would help in organising a real, effective mass movement especially in the trade unions, and we could win a much greater influence at the Trades Union Congress and the Labour

Party Conference. But it has to be recognised that the I.L.P. is a Party based upon a parliamentary basis, whose organisation is absolutely unfit for carrying on revolutionary mass work in the factories and the trade unions. And if the present situation exists, where the leadership is a leadership of varying tactics, but at least united in their policy of not carrying out in practice the decisions of their own annual conference, that means that the revolutionary rank and file will have to find their own ways and means of seeing that what they want is carried out in practice.

The Communist Party has also shown many weaknesses in its united front work, which we will not attempt to gloss over. We have not been energetic enough in our work in the factories and the trade unions, we have not got deep enough down to the masses with our united front propaganda, or explained sufficiently the meaning of the refusals of the reformists to take part in it. Further, during the course of the united front campaign there has been a tendency to slow down on other aspects of Party work. The fight against reformism has not been as strong and as sustained as the situation demands. The differences between the Communist Party and the other political parties have not been sufficiently dealt with, and there have been tendencies to think that there is no need for Party independent activity and recruiting during the period of the united front campaign. These defects have been corrected, and an improvement can be expected in the course of the winter campaign that the Party is about to embark upon. One thing is clear: that there is such a strong desire for united action on the part of the working class, that in spite of all the barriers that are put in the way by the reformist leaders, we can win these masses for common action if the right approach is made, on the basis of the living issues of the immediate situation.

THE NEXT TASKS.

The last meeting of the Central Committee was devoted to making an analysis of the present situation and the definition of the next tasks of the Party. The C.C. stressed the fact that the general line laid down at the Twelfth Plenum regarding the economic situation and the near beginning of a new round of wars and revolutions was more than confirmed by everything that has taken place since then. The economic situation in Britain has been outlined in the beginning of this article, and, basing its decision on the analysis made at the meeting, the Central Committee endorsed a Manifesto drawn up by the political bureau and giving the line and tasks of the Party in the period immediately ahead.

This Manifesto deals with the international situation, and gives detailed attention to the situation, particularly in America, Germany and Britain, and then makes the contrast with what obtains in the Soviet Union. It then goes on to analyse the situation in the working-class movement, the strike struggles, unemployed marches, and the new developments in trade unions, showing how the reformist leaders split the workers' ranks and prevent unity of action. It gives the political reasons why the Labour Party and trade union leaders refuse to adopt the united front; the C.C. then takes up the question of what is to be done. It may be of interest to quote from the Manifesto itself from this point on, because it is on the basis of the following that all the current Party campaigns are now being carried through.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE.

In this situation the whole aim of every serious worker, whatever his political party and organisation, must be to use every ounce of energy and influence to develop the mass united front for the coming critical battles of next winter.

Already a tremendous response is being made to the growing united front movement which is being developed by the Communist Party, Independent Labour Party, and many local Labour, Trade Union and Co-operative organisations up and down the country.

This raises sharply before the rank and file of the Labour Party and Trade Union movement who are imbued with a passionate desire for unity, the necessity of fighting inside their organisations to smash the barriers erected by the reformist leadership against working class unity and struggle.

We should be proud to take inspiration from the magnificent example shown by our German comrades of fighting back in face of the most bestial and bloody terror the world has yet known, and the rising wave of struggle developing in Britain.

WORKING MEN AND WOMEN !

Time presses! There is not another moment to be lost in building up the united front of the working class—not a united front of fine platform speeches, of waiting for action until the co-operation of the Labour Party and trade union leaders is secured, but a united front for mass action, for mass demonstrations, strikes, hunger marches, and every phase of militant activity, around a common programme such as :—

Ten per cent. increase in wages.

Ten per cent. increase in all unemployed benefits.

Seven-hour day for miners and the 40-hour week without wage reductions.

Abolition of the Means Test.

No industrial conscription of the unemployed in test and task work centres.

The inauguration of work schemes at trade union rates.

Defence of every existing right of free speech and organisations, and removal of all bans upon working class demonstrations.

The organisation of material aid for and solidarity action in support of the German working class.

A fight against the war policy of the national government and for the defence of the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party believes that it is possible to win every trade union branch, Trades Councils, the workers in every factory and at the Labour Exchanges to achieve these aims, and pledges itself to co-operate wholeheartedly with every employed and unemployed worker and their organisations in order to build up the united fighting front of the working class around the fighting programme of action.

We believe that such a united front can give a new hope, a new aim to the millions of our class, that the experiences gained in this common struggle will close the ranks, will force back the ruling class and will hasten the end of capitalist exploitation, fascism and war.

If we workers who weave the cloth, hew the coal, build the ships, build the great engines and machinery, plow the land and till the soil, if we who have been thrown on the scrap-heap of starvation for so long now unite our forces in the factories, mills, mines, shipyards, the trade unions and streets, there is no power in Britain that can prevent us from achieving our aims.

THE WAY TO SOCIALISM.

For years the workers have seen in this and other countries Labour governments, National governments, Fascist governments, all trying to rescue capitalism from the crisis. All of them have robbed and oppressed the workers, but the crisis deepens.

All policies which maintain capitalist ownership can only make the crisis worse, can only result in worsening conditions for the workers. There is only one way to solve the crisis and bring better conditions.

The workers must rule—that is, definitely take power into their own hands. This means that the mass movement of the workers now spreading throughout the country must be

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

developed to the point when it will smash the capitalist state, take over control of the factories, mills, mines, land and banks, and on this basis establish the revolutionary workers' government.

The revolutionary workers' government will be based on workers' councils elected by the workers in field, factory and workshop, on the basis of the widest workers' democracy, and will maintain an iron dictatorship against the capitalist class in order to completely break all resistance to the establishment of socialism.

The workers' dictatorship in control of the mines, land, factories, shipyards, textile mills, railroads, banks and all transport communications, will organise planned production to satisfy the needs of the workers.

It will withdraw all the armed forces from the colonial countries and give complete independence to all colonial peoples.

In fraternal alliance with the Soviet Union and with the freed colonial peoples, it will exchange its socialist products for the raw materials and foodstuffs of its socialist neighbours.

It will help and assist great countries, like India, China, Africa and Ireland, to open up their territories for socialist industrialisation, to reorganise agriculture and in this way make prosperous their toiling millions. It will set every factory going at full capacity, it will employ every worker to meet the growing needs of the workers in the advancing socialist society.