

# IN THE INTERNATIONAL

## The Coming Congress of the British Communist Party.

By Albert Inkpin (General Secretary, C.P. of Gt. Britain).

The seventh national congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain opens at Glasgow on May 30th. Glasgow, on the Clyde-side, is known the world over as one of the "red" centres of the British labour movement. It was a storm centre of proletarian opposition to the imperialist war. It sends a Labour contingent to the British parliament that includes some of the most genuine and uncompromising fighters for the working class. Its highly industrialised nature, covering not only heavy industry, but light industry and textiles as well, makes Glasgow a favourable ground for revolutionary activity. No more appropriate place for the holding of a Communist Party Congress could therefore have been chosen.

This Congress will be the most momentous and important congress in the history of the British party. It will meet at a time when the demand is rising from the workers in the four quarters of the country for united action against the ever increasing encroachments of the capitalists and in support of their own wage demands, and when the "yellow" leaders of these workers are conspiring with the employers as to ways and means of countering those demands and keeping the workers' ranks divided. Within three days of the conclusion of the Party Congress, a conference will be held in London at which representatives of the mining, engineering, railway and transport workers' unions will discuss the formation of an industrial alliance — a conference which may decide the fate of the organised working class movement in the struggles which will inevitably take place this year.

The subjects for discussion at the Party Congress will be in keeping with the atmosphere in which the Congress will meet.

They cover the whole range of revolutionary working class politics, national and international. There is hardly a single aspect of the workers' struggle that is not dealt with in the agenda, or in the theses or resolutions arising therefrom, which will confront the Communist workers from the localities when they assemble to review the past year's work and discuss the future tasks of the party. The national and international economic and political situation, the burning question of trade union unity, the war against imperialism and the exploitation of colonial and subject peoples, the bolshevising of the British party and its development into a real mass party of the workers — these as well as many other important matters will all be dealt with.

The report of the central executive committee to the Congress is the most comprehensive and thorough report of its kind that the party has yet issued. On its political side the report reveals a record of activity since the sixth congress that is extremely rich and varied in its range, and in which sustained campaigns against the Dawes slave plan and in support of the full and unqualified recognition of the Russian Workers' Government have occupied a foremost place. The Party's exposure of the treacherous and compromising policy of the Labour Government of MacDonald; the relations of the Party with the Labour Party, arising out of the attempt of the "yellow" leaders of that body to exclude the Communists from its ranks; the Party's work in the development of the minority movement in the labour unions, and the endeavours made to crystallise the left wing movement in the parliamentary labour party and among the masses, are all brought into review.

The organising report is no less comprehensive in its scope. It presents a complete picture of the party organisation, and whilst it emphasises the progress that has been made, it points also with the utmost frankness to the weaknesses and defects that have manifested themselves, and states the steps necessary to be taken to remove them. During the past year the party membership has increased by over 1,100 and now stands at just above 5,000. These figures prove that the British party is still lamentably small. But it can be said, without question, that the Communist Party is relatively the best organised and most effective workers' party there has ever been in Britain. This is because it is steadily building up a party discipline and establishing a party tradition for hard, organised work; and by that process it is weeding out the ineffectives. Its membership could easily be increased three or fourfold if membership involved merely the payment of dues and attendance at an occasional meeting. Nevertheless, the party is still very far from being a mass party of the workers. That is why the question of recruiting new members will occupy a foremost position at the coming party congress.

Equally important in the development towards a mass party is the question of transforming the party organisation on to a factory group basis. When the sixth congress was held there was not a party group in existence in a single factory. But now the orientation of the party towards the factories and workshops is proceeding apace. Factory groups are being formed daily. The party is slowly finding its feet, and is planting them firmly in the industrial fabric. The process is slow but is increasing in momentum. There are hesitations, timid efforts, tentative attempts in the forming of groups. There are still important industrial districts, rich in potentialities to the Communist party, where the drive into the factories and the formation of factory groups has still to be commenced. There are reluctances to change, and organisation, that many comrades have yet to overcome. There are many party members who do not yet comprehend what a factory group is, and many more who do not understand how a factory group should function when it is formed.

But understanding is coming with the doing. The report of the central committee states that there were 70 factory groups in existence when the report was prepared, most of them actively functioning. That number has since considerably increased. There are 28 in the London district alone, embracing 20 per cent of the party membership in London. The hesitation of comrades working singly in a factory or workshop, and the fear of victimisation, are being overcome. Many are now taking steps to gather their active workmates around them, bring them into the party and establish a factory group. And in every case where a factory group has been set going, the membership of the group has been speedily doubled or trebled. The group activity — especially the running of a factory paper — has welded these

workers together and has brought them into the party. The fact is definitely emerging that the best way of getting a mass party is by forming factory groups and keeping them active with the content of the class struggle.

Factory group papers are now springing up all round. In the early days these were confined to London; but Glasgow has now more than twelve, and other districts and locals have made a start. In London there are now 18 factory group papers, some of which have a regular circulation of several hundred copies. These factory papers are becoming the literary voices of the factory. The matter appearing in them relates to actualities — workshop conditions and grievances, wrongful dismissals, hours, wages and overtime, etc. They do not attempt long or involved articles on policy or theory; they are natural growths from within the factories.

Other matters of an organisational character that will come before the Party Congress include party training, especially of factory group leaders and the development of qualities of leadership, fraction work in the trade unions, co-operatives, and political labour organisations, and the extension and development of the party press.

With the example of our Russian comrades before us, with the development of our continental brother parties towards becoming real mass parties of the workers, the coming Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain will strain every nerve to set its feet on the path to victory and to conquer power in this citadel of international capitalism.

## FOR THE UNITY OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

### Report of Comrade Tomskey on the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Conference at the Plenary Session of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions.

#### The Antecedents of the Conference.

The campaign for unity was begun by the Red International of Labour Unions. After long correspondence with the Amsterdam International, the latter declared that it was prepared to enter into negotiations with the All-Russian Central Trade Union Council on condition that the R.I.L.U. should be excluded from these negotiations. This ended the first stage of the negotiations.

We saw that the offensive of capital continued and that the post-war achievements of the working class were in danger of destruction. Everywhere political reaction is following close on the heels of economic reaction. And we believed that we had no right to seclude ourselves within our comparatively favourable position. We have never regarded our revolution as, in the narrowest sense, a national revolution. When, in Oct. 1917 we carried out our insurrection, we knew that our revolution was doomed to defeat unless we had the support of the workers of Western Europe. And we were right. The English intervention in Archangel failed because the English soldiers, amongst whom were English workers, refused to fight against us any longer. The French intervention in Odessa was a failure, because on the French iron-clads, the workers, stuck into naval uniforms, mutinied, and also because the English workers declared with sufficient emphasis: "Hands off Soviet Russia!". Since the West European proletariat has given us such support, we cannot remain passive with regard to them.

When the black flood of reaction will have inundated the whole of Western Europe, and we find ourselves in a Fascist environment, that will not be a matter of indifference for the fate of the Soviet Republic. It is this circumstance which compels us to pursue, not a national but an international Labour policy, under the banner under which our revolution gained the victory. On the other hand, we take into consideration and grasp the fact that the interests of the West European working class demand the utmost concentration of forces.

After the well-known resolution of the Vienna Congress, our relations to the Amsterdam International entered on a new phase. I have said repeatedly that the correspondence which took place in this period resembles a petty bourgeois penny-