

# BULLETIN

## OF THE IV CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

No 24.

Moscow.

December 4, 1922.

### Twenty-Fourth Session.

November 27, 1922.

Chairmen: Comrade Neurath.

#### Contents:

Report on Communist Activity among Women. Adoption of Resolution on the Women's Question.

Speakers: Zetkin, Sturm, Smidovitch, Kasparova.

Session opened 12.40 P. M.

Chairman: Neurath:—The Session is open. The next question before the Congress is Communist activity among women. Comrade Zetkin has the floor as first speaker. (Applause).

Clara Zetkin: Comrades, before I begin my report on the activities of the International Women's Secretariat and the development of Communist activity among the women, allow me a few short remarks. They may seem unnecessary, for they only repeat much that has been said and decided before; nevertheless they are necessary because our work is still misunderstood not only by our opponents but even by our own comrades. They misunderstand the work of the Communist among the women and the tasks of the national sections and of the International in this connection. This is with some the remains of an old view, and with others it is willful prejudice because they do not sympathise with our cause, and even partly oppose it.

The International Womens Secretariat is not as many believe the union of independent organisations of the women's movements, but a branch of the Executive of the Comintern. It conducts the activity not only in constant co-operation with the Executive, but under its immediate leadership. What we usually

designate as the Communist Women's movement is not an independent women's movement and has nothing to do with any feminist tendencies. It exists for systematic Communist propaganda among the women. This has a double purpose: First, to incorporate within the national sections of the Comintern those women who are already filled with the Communist ideal, making them conscious coworkers in the activity of those sections. Second, to win over to the Communist ideals the indifferent women and draw them into the struggles of the proletariat. The masses of working women should be mobilised for these fights. There is no work in the Party, no struggle of the movement in any country in which we women do not regard it as our first duty to participate. Moreover, we have the ambition to take our place in the Communist Parties and the International where the work is hardest and the bullets fly thickest, without shunning the most menial, most modest every-day work.

One thing has become apparent; we require special organs to carry on the Communist work of organisation and education among women and to make it a part of the life of the Party. The Communist agitation among the women is not only a woman's task, it is a task



of the whole Communist Party of each country, of the Communist International. To accomplish our purpose it is necessary to set party organs as Women's Secretariats, Womens Departments, or whatever we may call them, to carry on this work.

Of course, we do not deny the possibility that some strong personality, man or woman, might be able to do the same work in some local or district organisation. But however much we may admit such individual accomplishments in the Party, we must ask ourselves how much greater the benefits for Communist would have been if instead of the work of a single personality, we would have the co-operation of many forces. This is why the co-operation of many towards a common goal must be our slogan in the Party, in the International, and in our work amongst the women. As a matter of expediency, of practical division of labour, women are usually the best-fitted to take parts in the special organs for Communist work among women. The reason for this is very apparent. We cannot escape the fact that the large masses of the women live and work to-day under special social conditions. We cannot escape the fact that the special position of women in society has also created a special feminine psychology. The natural characteristics and the products of social environment must affect the woman's outlook, which we must take into account just as we must take into account the special psychology of the small peasant masses, resulting from their conditions of living. This is why, in general—I repeat, in general—women usually find the best and quickest method of approach to the working woman to begin Communist propaganda. This is why also the women are able to find the best methods and forms of agitation among the exploited women. Of course, this is true only in a general way. Just as we Communist women consider it as our right and duty to take part in every activity in the Party, from the most modest work of distributing leaflets to the final, tremendous decisive fight,—just as we would regard as an insult to be considered unworthy of taking part in the great historical life of the Party and the Communist International, so do we not

exclude any man from taking part in this special Communist work among the women. This applies to our work and our publications, as well as to our activity as a whole.

During the last year, we have had evidence of the good, and bad sides of Communist work among the women. We have seen the good sides in those countries where the Communist sections of the International have created such separate bodies, as in Bulgaria and Germany where the women's Secretariats have carried on the work of organising and educating the working women, and led them into the social struggle. In those countries, the Communist Women's movement has become one of the strong points of the general life of the Party.

In those countries we have many women members and militants in the Party and still larger masses of women as comrades in arms outside the Party. This is also true for the country which for its importance should be mentioned first—Soviet Russia. In Soviet Russia, the Women's Department of the Communist Party, acting with and under the leadership of the Party, have proved how important the co-operation of the women is, especially in this difficult period of economic and social transition to Communism. But what is most important is what our women comrades have done through their women's department and with the help of the Party in order to bring about the co-operation of the large masses of women workers and peasants for the creation of new conditions in all fields of industry and social life, as for instance in combating unemployment and the shortage of food, problems resulting from the revolution under the given historical circumstances. They have also mobilised the women to transform society from Capitalism to Communism. What the special organs of the Communist Party of Russia for work among women have done and are doing in this connection is of the greatest importance. Soviet Russia is the first type of this gigantic transformation of society from Capitalism to Socialism which stands before us. The problems and the tasks which the Communist Party and the proletariat of Russia has to face, will be forced upon the Communist Par-

ties and the proletariat of other countries which are still suffering under the capitalist rule. This is why the report of Comrade Smidovitch on the activity of the Womens Department of the Communist Party of Russia is especially important.

And now, comrades, let me give you a few examples of the bad effect of the lack of special organs for work among women in Communist Parties. Whenever there are no Women's Secretariats or similar bodies, we have observed a falling off in the participation of women in the life of the Communist Party and the withdrawal of the feminine proletariat from the struggle of their class. In Poland, the Party has refused until now to set up special bodies for work among women. The Party was content to allow women to fight in its ranks, and participate in strikes and mass movements. However, we are beginning to realise that this is not sufficient to permeate the feminine proletariat with the Communist ideal. I hope that a Women's Secretariat will soon be created in Poland as a preliminary measure to a methodical agitation among the large masses of the working women. Then will the working women in Poland, where the Communist Party has such a glorious tradition of struggle, play a greater role in the movement than now. The last elections to the Diet have proven that the reaction finds its strongest support among the ignorant masses of women who have not yet been permeated by Communism. This should never happen again.

In England organisation for conducting systematic agitation among the feminine proletariat are altogether lacking. The Communist Party of England excused itself by its weakness and has continually refused or has postponed the setting up of a special body for systematic agitation among the women. All the exhortations of the International Women's Secretariat have been in vain. No Women's Secretariat was established; the only thing that was done is to appoint a woman comrade as general Party agitator. Our women comrades have organised various meetings for the political education of the Communist women and their closer connection with the Party out of their own feeble means.

These institutions have achieved such good results that the establishment of similar educational institutions must be encouraged by the Communist Party. The attitude of the Executive of the Communist Party of Great Britain is, in my opinion, not only an outcome of its financial weakness, but partly also to its youth and the shortcoming resulting from it. I do not want to submit the Party to a severe criticism here, especially as its last Congress has shown it is determined to go forward in close unity with the Communist International, organisationally as well as politically and to develop through steady work into a revolutionary mass party. The success of the British Communist Party at the last general election in Great Britain is proof of its strong determination and its practical success. However, this election victory, as well as the political activity and reorganisation which were decided upon, make incumbent on the British Communist Party at a time when from being a small propagandist party, it goes right into the masses, to strive to organise the proletarian women. The British section of the International cannot remain indifferent to the fact that in its country many millions of proletarian women are organised in women's suffrage societies, in women's trade unions of the old type, in consumers' co-operatives, in the Labour Party and in the Independent Labour Party. It behoves the Communist Party to engage in a struggle with all these organisations for capturing the minds the heart, the will power and the actions of the proletarian women. Therefore, it will in the long run realise the necessity for the organisation of special organs by means of which it will be able to organise, and train, the communist women within the Party and to make the proletarian women outside the Party willing fighters for the interests of their class. The International Women's Secretariat will naturally assist the Party in this work as the representative and the auxiliary organ of the Executive.

There are similar conditions in France which must be mentioned here. In France, the Marseilles Congress did a great deal towards the establishment of a revolutionary, proletarian women's movement. For the first time in France, the revolu-



tionary forces among the women were organised and united within the Communist Party. The Congress, and the First Communist Women's Conference in Marseilles decided on the inclusion of communistically minded women in the Party, the establishment of active organs of the communist women's movement in the form of a Women's Secretariat attached to the Central organ of the Party and on the publication of a women's paper. Unfortunately the Paris Congress has destroyed this good beginning, let us hope not for long. Owing to the Party crisis and its consequences, the Managing Committee of the Party has decided to dissolve the Women's Secretariat and to stop the publication of the women's paper the "Ouvrière." We are convinced that just as the crisis within the French Party must be overcome, so also must the question of the formation of various organs of the Party find a satisfactory solution. An active Communist Party, fully conscious of its aims must have an organ through which it can reach the masses of the proletarian women and to make them fellow workers in all the struggles of our International.

During the last year the inclusion of the women communists into the Party and the formation of the necessary special organ to bring the wide masses of the female proletariat and of all the exploited women under the influence of communist thought and to lead them in the proletarian struggle, has taken place in Italy without any great difficulties. Comrade Hertha Sturm will give you more detailed information on all these questions. She will tell you about the national and international bodies which we must have in order to make the communist and the proletarian women active forces in the class struggle, in the revolutionary movement of the exploited and oppressed classes.

With the assistance of the International Women's Secretariat, it was possible to dissolve the special women's organisations which existed in Holland. In addition to communist women, it also comprised anarchist elements, and elements which were coquetting with anarchism. The communist members of this organisation were enlisted in the ranks of the Dutch Communist Party in which they work

together with the men comrades. It was shown by experience that the inclusion of the Communist women into the party and their systematic collaboration in the propaganda work have been attended with complete success.

In Norway the inclusion of the women communists into the Communist Party is not as yet as complete as the principles and directives of the Communist International demand. This is due to the general character of Party life in Norway. Separate women's organisation is an outcome of the organisational structure of the Norwegian Communist Labour Democratic Party. It is based not on individual membership, but on the affiliation of trade unions. It is to be expected that with the re-organisation all forms of separate women's organisations will disappear and that organisational forms will be found which will allow of an extensive use of the services and the collaboration of the communistically inclined women.

The same, minus the party crisis and subsequent general reorganisation, may be said of the Swedish section of the Communist International. Here too, we have separate communist women organisations. Moreover, in Norway and Sweden these separate organisations are relics of the old and strong women's suffrage movement. They will disappear when the ideological relics of the social-democratic past will have been overcome, and the communist orientation will have firmly established itself.

I should like to deal now with the influence of our communist work on the masses of the exploited working women. I should like to make the principle feature of my report, a fact which has a far reaching historic significance. It is the fact of the awakening of the oppressed and exploited women of the Near and Far East who are beginning to rally around the communist banner. Comrades, this is a fact to which we cannot attach too much importance. How do matters stand there? It is not a matter of enlightening and winning over masses of working women whose century-old prejudices have been partly destroyed already by a prolonged and intensive capitalist development, which does not create any

thing new without destroying the old. In these countries too, capitalism holds sway and has brought large masses of women into its service. Such is the case in Japan, in India, in Trans Caucasia, and even in China. It has not destroyed the old social enslavement of women however, but has only adapted it to its own requirements. In the countries of the East the women still live and work under patriarchal pre-capitalist form of social life, groaning under age-long prejudices and social and religious customs and restrictions. Nevertheless, the women begin to awaken, to adopt the communist ideology, to rebel and to talk about liberation. What does this mean? That capitalism is using its last reserves—the countries of pre-capitalist culture or of incomplete, young capitalist development, countries which are subject to the colonial domination of capitalist States or which are coveted by the capitalist predatory instincts as future colonial possessions. These territories with their rich and comparatively easy possibilities for exploitation, provided the bourgeoisie with the means to throw to the rebellious workers and wage slaves in the old capitalist countries sops in the shape of small concessions and reforms at the expense of the native masses who were exploited in the most brutal and abominable fashion. If the aspiration for freedom and the hatred against capitalism and its domination awakens in those countries if the oppressed of the oppressed—the women, rise, if they rally to the banner of communism, it is a sign that capitalism is making gigantic strides towards its downfall. Therefore, special importance attaches to what comrade Kasparova has told us about the activity of the International Women's Secretariat of the Executive in the East. The fact that in those countries the women rally in ever growing numbers around the banner of communism as the only saviour from exploitation and servitude is a sad portent for capitalism. In some countries, and especially in the Latin countries we are told that it is impossible to carry on any revolutionary work among the women owing to the strong influence of the Church and of the old social and family traditions. All efforts to bring the women masses out of their homes and to make them

fighters in the historic struggle between capital and labour are in vain.

Comrades, that which has been possible in the East is a proof to us in the West that we must not neglect the historical environment, but to refer to the materialistic conception of history, in order to hide weakness and failure, is out of place. The historical circumstances are indeed powerful. Our knowledge and our will can influence and alter them. If we did not have this conviction, we would not be Marxists or revolutionary fighters. What did Marx use as the starting point of his conception of history, in his discussion with Feuerbach? He said, "The philosophers have all interpreted the world differently; we do not want to interpret it, we wish to alter it." When it has been possible, through the influence radiated from the Soviet Republic of the Caucasus through Persia and Turkey, to inspire the women of these nations with the will to work as communists for their emancipation, we cannot then say that the difficulties of communist work among women in the Latin countries are insurmountable. No, where there's a will, there's a way. We have the will to world revolution, therefore we must find the way to reach the masses of the exploited and enslaved women, whether the historical conditions make it easy or difficult.

In the capitalist countries and also in Soviet Russia and other Soviet republics, the winning over of large numbers of women for agitation and propaganda—has made great progress. Wherever the proletariat had taken up the struggle against the capitalist general offensive; wherever the masses have risen against the high cost of living, heavy taxation, the increase in the hours of labour—in short, the general deterioration of the proletarian standard of living; wherever the proletariat has risen against the attempts of the capitalists to burden the masses with the costs of the war and economic reconstruction; women have taken part in this struggle in large masses and with great energy. We can observe everywhere an increase in the number of women who have taken part in the work of the Communist International and its various sections. When they were called in the name of the



Communist International, they responded. This has been shown especially that this was no special work of the women, but was a task of the party as a whole, dictated by the needs of the Communist struggle against capitalism, of the struggle of the millions of the oppressed and exploited to form themselves into an army armed and prepared.

In nearly all places, some more and some less, the Women's Day was carried through as a collective act of the whole Communist Party.

The same was true of the other great international work in which we took part; the International Workers' Famine Relief of Soviet Russia. In all countries this was carried on with the aid of conspicuous initiative and cooperation of the women. From Norway and Finland to Switzerland and Italy, from West to East, it was the women who, together with their Communist Parties, have been the most active propagandists, collectors, and organisers for the International Workers' Famine Relief. They have shown in this work real proletarian solidarity.

One thing must be emphasised, both in the case of the International Women's Day and that of the International Workers' Relief. In both cases there was a definite political activity and political aim. On International Women's Day, we made special reference to the particular needs and demands of the working class women in their positions of housewives and mothers. In the case of the famine aid for Soviet Russia, we emphasised the appeal to working class solidarity. But in both cases we sought to awaken the masses of the women to political thought and political activity. Both the demands of the women for the protection of mothers and infants, and also the acts of solidarity with Soviet Russia, were transferred to the field of political action and political struggle. This is the main object of Communist work among women. The economic and social suffering of women and their demand for a civilised existence, are used as a means to lead them into the most strenuous struggle with bourgeois society.

In the various countries, the communist women, under the leadership of their party, have used every opportunity to awaken the proletarian women and to

lead them into the struggle against the capitalist system. Such was the case for instance in Germany in the fight against the so-called Abortion Law, which was used for a far-reaching and successful campaign against bourgeois and bourgeois State. This campaign secured for us the sympathy and adherence of large masses of women. It was also presented, not as a women's question, but as a political question of the proletariat.

All of our campaigns and work have been carried on from the point of view of the proletarian United Front, in the light of the instructions which the Third Congress of the Communist International recognised fully the necessity of the United Front, we realise the importance of co-operatives. In order to carry on energetic and systematic work in these fields it is necessary that we gain influence over large sections of women and recruit them for the struggle. This we shall do by influencing working women through their trade unions, and proletarian and petty bourgeois housewives through the co-operative movement.

The conditions are especially favourable for rallying also non-proletarian women, as well as house wives who are at the same time doing professional work, around the banner of Communism for the struggle against capitalism. The capitalist decay has created in Great Britain, in Germany and other bourgeois states a large class of new rich as well as a large class of new poor. The middle class has been or is being proletarianised. Consequently, the exigencies of life are cruelly pulling at the heart strings as well as at the purse strings of many women who hitherto had a terribly secure and pleasant existence under the capitalist system. Thus many professional women, especially the intellectuals, such as teachers, civil servants and office employees off all kinds are getting rebellious against this "best of all possible Worlds" and are pressed into the struggle against capitalism. Under the pressure of the high prices and the disparity between income and the cost of living, many house wives, including bourgeois house wives, are beginning to realise that the perpetuation of capitalism is incompatible with their most ele-

mentary needs. Comrades, we must take advantage of the ferment in these women's circles in order to fan their resigned hopelessness into a flame of indignation which will lead to revolutionary consciousness and action. Our work, Communist work among the women in the Trade Unions and co-operatives and for these proletarian organisations can contribute considerably to the achievement of this aim. On both these fields the women can be not only collaborators in the United Front, but they can achieve something bigger and higher as the pioneers of the United Front in many movements.

What about the conditions which can make this possible? I have already mentioned what pitiless inroads present day conditions make into the lives of millions of women, causing many of them to awaken from their torpor. All that has hampered us hitherto, the political backwardness and the indifference of the women as a whole, can, under the pressure of unbearable suffering, bring over the adult women into the Communist camp. Politically and socially the mentality and the soul of the women have not received as much attention as the mentality and the soul of the men. Their mentality is less affected by the false and deceptive watchwords of the Social Democratic reformists, the bourgeois reformer and of other elements. Their mentality is frequently like a blank sheet, therefore, we shall subsequently find it easier to bring the hitherto indifferent female masses into our struggle without the preliminary transition through suffrage, pacifist and other reformist organisation. In this respect, I want to sound a note of warning. We must not be too sanguine and expect that the women will join us immediately in the struggle for our final aims, but we may depend on them in our defensive struggle against the general offensive of the bourgeoisie. I am convinced that they will take part in this struggle in a most energetic fashion.

I believe that our women comrades in Bulgaria, to whom we owe much inspiration, as well as energetic activity within the Communist International, have shown us a good way which we can and must follow, to establish, during our defensive struggles, organisational point d'appui among these women for our future struggle

for a higher ultimate aim. Our Bulgarian women comrades have established unions of sympathising women. These Unions are only preparatory training centres for entry into the Communist Party, but also effective organisational rallying points for the attraction of the female masses to all the activities and actions of the party. Our Italian women comrades have begun to follow this example. They have also established groups of sympathising women, comprising women who are still loath to enter into political parties and to attend political meetings, etc. I am convinced that this beginning will bear good fruit. The example which has been set us must not only receive the recognition of all those who do communist work among women in all countries, but also be followed. This will not only strengthen the communist section of our International, but will also have two other good results: the extension of communist influence among the vast proletarian and non-proletarian sections of the population and foment deterioration and disunion in the ranks of the bourgeoisie, viz., weakening our mortal enemy. And every weakening of the bourgeoisie is a strengthening of the proletarian forces in the struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and its class domination.

Comrades, I will not go into details of our communist work of drawing women into the trade union and co-operative movements. I leave this to Comrade Hertha Sturm who will follow me. I merely want to point out that in our work we must not raise false illusions. We must, on the contrary, do our utmost to destroy the illusion that the trade union and co-operative movements within the capitalist system are capable of bringing about legislation for the benefit of the proletariat and of destroying the foundations of capitalism.

However useful and indispensable the work of trade unions and co-operatives may be they cannot undermine and overthrow capitalism. They can only come into their own after the conquest of political power by the proletariat, after the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. Then the trade unions and the co-operatives will become not only means for the destruction of the relics of capitalism, but also build the new, higher



life of a Communist Society. In view of the great significance of proletarian dictatorship for the character and activity of trade unions and co-operatives, we must also in our case emphasise the great differences which exist between the communist work among the women of the Soviet Republics and that of the states which are still under a capitalist regime. In these latter states both these organisations will play an important role as defensive and offensive organs of the wide masses; the trade union movement for the masses as producers, and the co-operative movement for the struggle against the merchant's and usurer's capital. On the other hand, the educational and constructive task of both these forms of proletarian organisation will predominate in the Soviet State.

Comrades, I must call your attention to the fact that our work during the past year has made us realise, in connection with one particular phase of our movement, the importance of drawing women into the ranks of the Communist International. I mean the important role which the communist women and the women who are in sympathy with us are playing in those countries where illegal agitation is the only form of communist activity, or where, side by side with the legal organisations, illegal organisations are working underground. In countries, such as Finland, Poland and others, the self-sacrificing and intelligent work of Communist women is proving invaluable. If we are to be confronted with the blackest reaction, Fascism, and compelled to fight illegally, answering violence with violence and retaliating the lawlessness of the bourgeoisie by ignoring and treating with contempt bourgeois law and order, the comrades will find that they will be able to make no headway unless they have the women working side by side with them. The Turin proletarian women have shown that we can depend upon the self-sacrificing support of the women wherever Fascism has sway. During the recent big proletarian demonstration against Fascism in Turin, armed proletarian women marched behind a Red banner bearing the device: "Rosa Luxemburg". This fact ought to make the bourgeois think furiously, for it has cer-

tainly raised the courage and fighting spirit in the ranks of the workers.

Comrades, if our Communist work among the women is to carry out all the tasks of which I have given you a rough sketch, you together with us will be confronted with the question: Are the Communist women within the sections of the International endowed with the consciousness, the will and energy required for this work among the female masses? And we must not conceal the fact that the women as well as the men Communists (for on the whole we are not worse and more stupid than you are) frequently lack the necessary, fundamental, theoretical and practical training. The backwardness and weakness of the women in the political movement only reflects the backwardness and the weakness in the Communist ranks in general. This is due principally to the fact that our sections are still very young and inexperienced. Earnest work will overcome this weakness which we must take into the bargain with the many advantages of the youthful status of our movement. Comrades, it is of the greatest importance to overcome as quickly as possible the lack of training and the weakness of those who are to carry out the Communist work among the female proletariat. Therefore, I enjoin you all, to take care that the Communist women within your ranks should be individually made responsible for the carrying out of the practical tasks of the Party. See to it that they should have all the educational opportunities and that all the educational institutions which exist for the theoretical and practical training of our members, should also be open for them. See to it that wherever co-education is impossible, the necessary educational organs, such as courses, lectures and suitable articles in the press and literature should be established for the benefit of the women members. Comrades, the fundamental and practical training of the women into valuable Communist workers in the Communist struggle, is part of your own educational work, and is an important and indispensable pre-requisite of your success. I am fully convinced of this.

I am of the opinion that just in the

present period it is absolutely necessary to pay the greatest attention to a clear and fundamental education of the women. From this transition period, the ship of Communism must go, out into the wide ocean of the revolutionary mass struggles for the conquest of political power and of the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. There are two perils of which we must beware. From the Left, there is the peril that the ship might founder on the rocks of adventurous Putsch romanticism, and from the Right there is the peril that the ship might run into the sandbanks of reformism or might get stuck in the stagnant waters of opportunism. There is only one thing which will enable us to overcome the perils from the Left, as well as those from the Right. And that is the will to act with a clear understanding of the historic situation of the present world crisis and of the means to overcome it, which means a clear understanding of the pre-requisites of the revolutionary struggle. At one time, Danton sent forth to the revolutionary pioneers of the French revolution the watchword; audacity, more audacity and always audacity. Comrades, this is the watchword which we will continually put before the women who want to fight for Communism. Hitherto, they were an especially passive element, and everything demands at present that they should be especially active therefore; Audacity, more audacity and always audacity. However, we must add to this watchword, the watchword of the greatest proletarian leader, Comrade Lenin: clarity, more clarity and always clarity; cleverness, more cleverness and always cleverness. Not as the expression of fear, not as an outcome of vacillation and hesitation, but as a pre-requisite of the death blow to capitalism.

Comrades, we must endorse this. What is the situation at present? Everything you heard at this Congress has shown us that the Third International put a right interpretation on the world situation at its last Congress. All the signs of the times show us that society is objectively ripe, nay even over-ripe for the elimination, for the overthrow, of capitalism. Hitherto we had no proof that the will of the proletariat, the will of the class destined to be the grave digger of the

capitalist order, was already ripe in the historical sense of the word. But, Comrades, this historic situation is like an alpine landscape in which the gigantic masses of snow repose on the mountain tops which for centuries to come, seem to be impervious to the influence of sun, rain and storm. In spite of the outward appearances they are undermined, they have grown soft and are "ripe" to be hurled down. Perhaps the beating of a little bird's wings will suffice to move this avalanche which will bury the valleys under its weight. We do not know in the present situation how soon we, men and women, will be faced with the world revolution. Therefore, we must not lose a single hour, nay, a single minute pass without working for the world revolution. World revolution does not only mean world destruction and the destruction of capitalism. It also means world construction and the creation of Communism. Let us get our inspiration from the real meaning of the word: Let us be ready, and let us make the masses ready, in order that they might become the world creators of Communism (Loud Applause).

Chairman Neurath: Comrade Hertha Sturm (Germany) now has the floor as the second reporter.

Hertha Sturm: (Germany), Comrades, the task of the Communist Party with regard to the women's movement is that of drawing the broad masses of working women into the proletarian class struggle in order to organise and train them. In our forward march to this end we still have the greater part of the way ahead of us. Just as the Communist Party has not yet won over the majority of the men workers, so is this still more true of the women: who are still unorganised not only because of the general reasons affecting the organisation of the men also, but for special reasons of their own as well. The comparatively undeveloped consciousness of the women accounts for this just as it does for the scarcity of women in all political parties.

If we want to measure the influence which we have on the working class women we have merely to count the number of women members in the Communist Party. We then observe that, while the women workers nowadays constitute more than half of the working



class—in the ages from 20 to 45 years (an age which is of special importance for political activities), instead of having 50 per cent or more in the Communist Party they number only about 10 per cent of the total membership. But, on a closer view we see that there are considerable differences between various parties. The bigger the party becomes numerically the larger is the percentage of women members.

I will give you a single example of this. We have in Czecho-Slovakia for example, 36,000 women members which makes 20 per cent of the total membership; Germany, with 25,000 women members, has 11—12 per cent of the total membership.

In the Norwegian Party there are 15,000—16,000 women members, forming 15 per cent of the total membership. Contrary to this example there is a whole group of parties, including France, Italy, England and Belgium, which shows us quite different results. In France there are only 18,000 women members making 2 per cent of the total membership; in Italy there are from 3500 to 4000 members—a percentage of one and a half. In England the number of women members is not definitely ascertained, but it is undoubtedly very small. In Belgium about 300 women members form 6 per cent of the whole Party.

I can make this even clearer by showing how the proportion of women members, varies not only from party to party, but also in various districts according to the amount of organisation and activity. For example, in the biggest sections in Berlin the women make 20 per cent of the membership as against the national average of 10 per cent. On the other hand, in some districts where organisation is weak, and party policies are not clearly defined, the percentage is below. Similarly in Czecho-Slovakia, of the German speaking district of Aussig, which has for long had a well-organised women's movement, the women formed 50 per cent of the membership, as against the general average of 20 per cent, while in Czech and Slovakian districts there are many party sections with much less than that average.

It is evident then that the more intensive the work of the Communist Party,

the more firm and definite the stand of the Party or of any particular branch, the stronger is the influence of the Party on the women, and consequently the larger the number of women in the Party organisations.

There is yet another tendency to be observed. In those countries where the Communist Party is the strongest working class party, where it has attracted the masses of the old Social-Democratic parties into its ranks—the proportion of women members is the highest.

This is particularly true in the case of Czecho-Slovakia and Norway. Those women who were politically awakened by the Social-Democratic movement have been brought over into the communist organisations, while in the young and weaker communist parties every member must be gained individually, so to speak, from the masses of those women who have not yet been politically organised, from the membership of the reformist parties.

The fact that in France, where the Party is in such an advantageous position with regard to the opportunist workers' parties, the proportion is so low (2½ per cent) is to be accounted for by another cause which holds true for serving as an obstacle for the organisation of the women. I refer to the views of the masses of workers, which penetrate even into the ranks of the communists, and which had its classical expression in 1865 at the International Congress in London, one year after the founding of the First International. At this Congress there was a great dispute as to whether the word "worker", should be taken to include the working woman as well. At that time the representative of the French delegation expressed the following idea: The man is to work and study the social problem; the woman is to care of the children and of the home of the worker. This ideology, which is particularly strong in France and Italy, and which we must fight with all our might, is responsible for the smallness of the women membership in all these countries. Naturally, we understand that this point of view has an economic cause, namely the fact that in France, Italy and Spain large scale industry has not yet brought large numbers of the women out of the petty

bourgeois households, nor from the peasants' cottages, into public life. In these countries women have not yet been employed in great numbers in the large factories; and this naturally influences the point of view regarding the role of women in political life.

It is for obvious reasons impossible to ascertain the numerical proportion of women members in those countries where the Party is illegal. But, it appears that more women are enrolled in the general party work of the illegal parties.

What shall we conclude from these facts? And what lesson shall we draw from them to guide our future work? From the examples of the relative percentage of membership we may see how tremendously difficult it is to win the women for communism, and to bring them into the Party.

It also follows that the organisation of the women of the proletariat has not been considered by the Communist Parties as a task of first importance, on the contrary, one had to fight rather vigorously within the ranks of the party for its recognition.

Still another lesson is to be drawn from the way in which our women members are recruited. They are partly politically unschooled fighters. The great majority of them are not workers but housewives, the wives of our comrades, who have joined the Party less out of conviction than because they were persuaded to do so. By their very nature such elements are passive, they lack the experience and the training for any agitation, and first of all they are out of touch with the mass of the women workers of the factories and of the Trade Unions.

This makes it all the more necessary to make systematic use of these weak forces, to organize them in such rational fashion as to obtain the greatest amount of work from the expenditure of energy. The women's committees of the Communist Party have been created for that very purpose. The first task of the International Women's secretary since the time when its centre was removed to Berlin has been to increase the effectiveness of these organizations on an International scale. We may say that the preliminary conditions have been created to win over

the large masses of the women workers. At least one thing has been accomplished; we have convinced our comrades of the necessity of special women's organs. There is still a long way to the practical activity of these committees and here I must speak on certain points which Comrade Zetkin has already somewhat dwelt upon.

I wish to point out that in England, a country especially important for the International struggle of the proletariat, no Central women's committee has been created by the Executive to conduct the work systematically for the whole country.

I wish to point out that in France today there are only 15 women's committees as against many hundred local organizations of the Party, and that the central women's secretariat in France has been jeopardised and actually dissolved by the crisis in the Party.

I wish further to point to Czecho-Slovakia where the Party is strongly organized, and where in spite of this only one-seventh of the local groups have deemed it necessary to answer a questionnaire sent by the women's secretariat, that only one tenth of the local organizations have women members, and that 47 in all, i. e., only 2%, can boast of a women's committee.

It is no wonder then that when the work of organization among the women is so much neglected in a strong Party like that of Czecho-Slovakia, that in the smaller Parties, like Austria, Holland and Denmark, their activity is confined to the capital of the country, to the seat of the Central Executive.

The coming period of intensified proletarian struggle over all Europe demands that the number of women's committees be increased to extend into the smallest local organizations.

What are the tasks of these committees? The most immediate, the most elementary task is that the few active comrades should do all the necessary work; they must become maids of all work. They must carry on organization and propaganda work throughout the whole country; they must speak they must write, they must issue instructions for definite activity within all branches of the political life. We cannot hope to accomplish the tremendous work before us with the few



active comrades which we have. It must be another task of these comrades to educate the unexperienced women in the Party and prepare them for definite tasks. For this purpose discussion evenings, courses, and circles for women must be organized, in order to prepare them for their work among the masses outside of the Party. It is a sign of strength in the English movement, or at least a positive beginning of the work, when our comrades with true instinct begin their activity by creating the small Party schools for women comrades of which comrade Zetkin spoke. I believe that in Parties such as Czecho-Slovakia, where the women membership are numerically large but whose members, revolutionary by feeling, have not yet been methodically educated, that it will be necessary to organize such educational opportunities under the leadership of the women's secretariat and with the support of the Party Executive all over the country in order to draw the women comrades into active participation in the movement in order to teach them what it means to be a Communist and what tasks and duties fall upon Communist women.

The third task, however, is the most important. The women's committee must see to it that agitation among the large masses of the women proletariat be included in the general work of the Party; that it does not remain a special task of a small handful of Communist women. They must make all efforts that the agitation among the women become a branch of the whole movement, that it be carried on by all organizational and political means at the disposal of the Party, and be supported by the full authority of the Party and its various organs.

We still have to make the first step in that direction: the attempt to force this principle upon the Party has not always been made in best manner. In the Latin countries, for instance, where the women had to fight against the petty bourgeois prejudices of their own comrades, we have witnessed a certain infiltration of feminism. We all know this prejudice which originated from the very beginning of the women's movement, when the men and women comrades oppose each other. The women comrades complained that

the men did not appreciate their efforts and failed to support them, while the men retorted that the women themselves did too little of the work and did not attend to their business. These are all childhood diseases through which we must all pass. We find in our press, as for instance in the French organ "L'ouvrière," although this paper is, on the whole, well conducted, and also in the Italian women's Organ "Campagna" political articles against our male comrades claiming that the woman is also a human being with rights equal to those of the man and should be allowed participation in the political struggle and defence of her own interests.

Such articles appeared in England on the first women's page of the "Communist", during the International Women's Conference. They have nothing to do with the revolutionising of the masses, they do not refer to the misery of the English working women; they are only the fight for the understanding of the woman problem in the ranks of the Communist Party. Such articles demonstrate weakness, but nevertheless we welcomed them at that time because we saw in them the beginning of the clearing up process which would bring together the men and women comrades and create a unified party.

When we put the question, how far we were able to win the masses of the women and incorporate them into the proletarian party, we must acknowledge that our success has been very slight. Comrade Zetkin mentioned two International actions which had been carried out with comparative success. The International Women's Day and the Relief campaign for Soviet Russia. There was a special reason why we had been able in these cases to mobilise the women and win them over to Communist ideas, or at least awaken their interest in Communism.

The International Women's Day had acquired a certain revolutionary tradition from the Second International; this is why many parties corrupted by social democratic ideology and generally uninterested in the matter participated in this campaign. The Relief campaign for Soviet Russia was successful for two reasons. First, because the women were

represented in the national relief organization and secondly because this campaign appealed to the best instincts of the women, to their motherly instincts which found here opportunity for collective expression, in the form of solidarity, with the vanguard of the world proletariat, Soviet Russia.

But in the Children's Week, which we tried to carry out with the help of the International Communist Youth, we were successful only where the Youth Organizations functioned well; in those countries where this was not the case, as in Czecho-Slovakia, this campaign was a flat failure. From these experiences we come to definite conclusions. At the Conference of the International Women's Correspondents in Berlin there was a good deal of criticism of the activities of the International Women's Secretariat. It was said that we did not understand how to inaugurate international action by women when opportunity presented itself. If that was so, it was caused neither by lack of foresight on our part, nor by a certain passivity. It was not because we had not realized the questions on the International order of the day or because we had not known how to bring this question to public notice by common International action. Our lack of activity is far more attributable to the simple fact that our organization has been too weak to effect international demonstrations on a large scale, if the Communist Party does not stand behind us with all its power. It will be highly necessary to initiate a number of campaigns; such as for woman suffrage in France, Bulgaria, and other countries. We could and should undertake action for the defence and extension of women workers' welfare, against the high cost of living, increasing children's epidemics, against the threatening danger of war and against white terror. We could engage in activities on behalf of men and women, who are suffering political imprisonment. But we know that under present conditions it is most necessary to secure the aid of the women in the general struggle of the Communist Party for those aims which in each country, stand first upon their program. In England, for example, we must specially endeavor to organize the unemployed women together with the great mass of the unemployed, in order

to win them for our ideas. In all countries, we must line up the women in the struggle for the United Front against the offensive of capital. In Germany, particularly, we must interest the women in the Factory Councils Movement. In short, we must endeavor every where to interest the women in the general struggle of the proletariat. If we are able to convince the Communist Parties of the necessity of having the aid of the masses of the women workers in all their struggle, then we shall be able to secure the assistance of the parties in special campaigns affecting women only. Such campaigns would be of the nature of which Comrade Zetkin has informed us; for example the fight against the so-called Abortion Law, which struggle has now assumed large proportions in Germany only, but will probably soon have to be initiated in Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, France and England.

With regard to the unemployed question in England, I would like to state here that the English Party has not assumed the task of bringing the unemployed women into this movement. For months we have been pressing the English Party to take up this matter, and we hope that the Executive will also advise this Party to use special means to gain the support of these women, for example through the distribution of literature. We hear from England that in Dundee, a town with an unusually large number of women in industry—the jute industry, where there are seven women workers to each male worker—there is a great deal of unemployment. Here, for example, it would be necessary to go to the working women and explain to them the connection between their unemployment and the capitalist system and British imperialism; and especially how the development of the jute industry and the exploitation of the colonial workers has affected their conditions.

The most important task which we have to fulfill in order to get the women into general party work, is the work within the factories and unions. It was no accident, but the result of a definite plan of the International Women's Secretariat that we proceeded as soon as the resolutions on the women's movement had been adopted in the International, to



organize, immediately, common action of the Women's International with the Trade Union Section which were entrusted by the Party with the work of agitation and education in the factories and Trade Unions. From this point of view it was really a happy thought on the part of the Italian Party to transfer its Women's Secretariat from Rome to Turin, a couple of weeks ago. A good reason for this move was that in Rome there is not a single woman member of the party as there are practically no women engaged in industry. In Turin, however, in Piedmont, in Northern Italy, in the region of industrial Lombardy with its well developed contact with the masses of the working women in the mills and the labor unions. To return to the question of Norway, we must state that we believe that the Women's Leagues in Norway should be dissolved because we must preserve unity of organisation, namely, the inclusion of the women in the general organisation. But mainly we advocate this on good grounds that special women's organisations through their independence and exclusiveness are set apart from the general party life, and limit the possibilities for agitation among the great numbers of the women workers in the factories and unions who are outside the circle of these special women's organisations.

It is no accident that Bulgaria, which possesses the model party of the International—of course relatively, as Zinoviev has said—is that country where the organisation of the working women in the labor unions and factories has been farthest extended. In Bulgaria there are special organs in the Party and in the Trade Unions which are completely controlled by the Party; the coordination between the Party and Trade Union Committees is definitely defined by rules and statutes; and the greatest care is taken of the special conditions and needs of the working women and the task the Communist Party is to accomplish for the mobilisation of women in the unions and factories.

In the illegal parties the work within the Trade Unions is of special importance. In Finland, Rumania, and Spain, Where the Party is not able to function openly and obtain contact with the working

women, the Trade Unions are practically the only field through which they may influence the women workers from the Communist standpoint.

The difficulties which stand in the way of labor union work among women are closely connected with these difficulties which affect labor union work in general in the various parties. We well realise that the Trade Union work among the women will go ahead when the general Trade Union work is properly organized, and makes more progress. We understand that in England, where the Communist Party, through its numerical weakness, has obtained but a very small influence in the Trade Unions, the question of organising the working women cannot be yet taken up. We see in France, where there is much dissension within the ranks of the Party, as to whether the Communist Party shall work politically within the Trade Unions and, if so, in what form, that this weakness is reflected in the movement of the working woman. Our women comrades in France find it terribly difficult to accomplish any practical work in the unions, when they must struggle with the leadership of the Party for the maintenance of their Women's Secretariat and their women's paper; and when they must fight within the party for the acceptance of the fundamental principle, that it is the duty of the Communist Party to work within the Trade Union in order to secure an influence over the masses.

In Czecho-Slovakia, where we have brought large masses of the workers under the influence of the Red International of Labor Unions, it is simply through the lack of time, or lack of activity, that we have not yet been able to educate the masses to the necessity of work among women. The Czech women comrades on the Executive have quite rightly requested the International Women's Secretariat and the Red International of Labor Unions that the R.I.L.U. sees to it that the demands of the working women be more seriously taken up by the unions affiliated with it, among which, for example, the agricultural workers alone have 30,000 women members.

Comrades, the necessity of mobilising

the working women for the struggle forces us to organise the work among the unions systematically. This means that the Communists must absolutely take active part in the most important portion of the general party work. So long as the construction of Communist factions is not accomplished as the foundation of our work within the labor unions and factories, the Communist women, with all their special plans and proposals for the revolutionary education of the working women in the factories and unions, are merely beating the air. It is precisely in this field, where we have had so far but little success, that we see most clearly how strongly the Communist work among women is bound up with the work of the Communist movement in general. If we wish to get a foothold among the working women, we Communist women must work with the greatest energy and care within the Communist Parties on the general tasks of the Parties, and so build up our labor unions' cells systematically from below. The more rapidly and thoroughly we accomplish these tasks, the sooner will the organs of our special work among the working women develop. Together with the building of union nuclei we must link up all communist women in the trade unions and allot to them the duty of becoming the spokesmen of the demands of the working women. The communist trade union women must stand in closest relationship with the women's party committees, in order to secure the mutual exchange of experiences and to discuss how the masses of the working women may be further enlightened and drawn yet further into the proletarian struggle. Just a word on the question of the consumers' co-operatives. The co-operatives differ from the trade unions inasmuch as their members consist not only of working women but of great masses of proletarian housewives. Here we have a field for work which contains large numbers of women whom we could not reach through our work in the factories and unions.

A second factor causes us to undertake work within the co-operatives at the present time. This is the daily increase in the cost of living and the general suffering which may be found in nearly all

countries. The co-operatives are one of the means by which, working together with the proletarian political parties and the unions, the struggle will be made against the deterioration of the standard of living of the working masses.

The work of education, among the women members of the co-operatives, will build up a revolutionary consciousness which will strengthen the United Front of the proletariat among the women of the working class who are not yet engaged in the productive processes.

Comrades, a few words on the question of the press. The press is one of the most important means to win over the unorganised masses and influence them in the Communist sense.

In the International, we have a comparatively large women's press; besides this we can put our problems before the masses through the general Party organs. We must acknowledge that our women's press has not yet succeeded in reaching the widest possible masses of the proletariat. In a great many countries the circulation of women's publications are not as large as the number of women Party members. Bulgaria and Italy are examples of the opposite fact; there the women's press reaches the larger masses and is part of the organisation of the Party. This should be our aim everywhere.

The contents of the press reflect all the weaknesses of the Communist Feminist Movement as well as those of the general Communist Movement. I would like to point out two mistakes which, in a way, represent two extremes.

The one extreme made itself especially manifest in the Dutch women's magazine "De Voorde". In theory and principle this magazine is exceptionally clear and responsible, but it had so little connection with the real needs of the proletarian women, took so little consideration of their special conditions in Holland that it did not correspond to the mentality of these women. Since then, the magazine has been made to correspond much better to the real needs of the masses. The other extreme is presented in the "Zena" (published in Brün, Czecho-Slovakia). In order to gain the greatest popularity, this magazine has sacrificed the basic principle of Communism; it appeals too much to the petty bourgeois prejudices



of the proletarian women and caters to their craving for sensation; it publishes too many things that have nothing to do with Communism.

It might be useful, in this connection to mention the French press. Although the responsible editors of the "Ouvrière" have well fought for their point of view. Since the Marseilles Congress they have had to contend against a tendency in the Communist Party which wanted to conduct this magazine into a fashion magazine and a book of cooking recipes.

We wish to urge upon the International that we cannot afford any such luxuries, that our organs exist to carry on Communist propaganda among the working women, and nothing else.

We are met with a difficulty in the problem of the press which results directly from the financial weakness of our Communist Parties. It is possible that we may have to abandon some of the women's periodicals. The "Ouvrière" will disappear; another magazine must take its place. We must insist upon the carrying out of the decisions of the previous Womens' Conference and World Conference, that every Party must provide space for a women's page; and not only according to the arbitrary will of the editor or secretary, but they must be made a regular feature of the paper.

We must increase the importance of the women's movement so that we secure in the general section of the Party press and in every other organ of the Party, in the Trade Union magazines, in the scientific publications in the agrarian publications, etc. The women's movement will not attain its due importance until it receives the full support of the Party, until all the problems of the women are thoroughly discussed in the Party organs and the importance of agitation among women has been recognised.

In conclusion I would say that the prospects for the women's movement are very favourable; they will improve with the development of the Communist International. The progress of the movement will strengthen and clarify the Communist Parties and increase their participation in the class struggle. We may say that thanks to these difficult times, thanks to the struggle against the capitalist offensive and for the United Front, the

basis has been created to unite all the forces of the Party, all the proletarian outside the Party ranks and to organise them for the coming struggle.

This we know: At the preceding congress, everything still remained to be done in the Communist women's movement; to-day, the foundations have been laid for agitation among women; and at the next World Congress we must be able to declare that the work among women has become an integral part of the general Party work, that we have been able to mobilise the women and lead them into the revolutionary movement to fight in a United Front for the final victory of the proletariat.

Smidovitch: In Russia the propaganda and agitation among the women workers are conducted by special departments under the auspices of the Communist Party which use special methods in their work owing to the backwardness of the female masses. These departments work on equal terms with all the other departments of the party committees.

The methods of the working women's sections consist in directing the activity of the working women in the accomplishment of the practical tasks embodying the aspirations and demands of the working class. This method of attracting the working women into practical activity has greatly contributed towards increasing the influence of the Communist Party among the masses of the working and peasant women. In each communist nucleus there is a comrade whose duty it is to carry on political agitation among the working women, who is in fact the organiser of these women. The women workers of every workshop have elections of delegates at their general meetings two or three times a year. These delegates are subsequently convened to delegates' meetings by the Women's Section of the Party Executive. There are 70,000 such delegates throughout Russia. These delegates' meetings are in the nature of practical and political schools. At these meetings reports are presented on all political economic questions, and it is here that the women are encouraged in their first attempts at social activity. The delegates are sent on practical work in various commissions and organs of soviet construction. All the delegates are ex-

pected to account for their activities to their electors, and thus they form a connecting link between the Communist Party and the wide non-party working class.

At the Soviet elections it became evident that the women delegates were very active, that they were taking part in the elections that they vote for communist candidates and that a considerable number of them were becoming members of the R. C. P.

The Russian Communist Party has 29,773 working women in its ranks. The number is not very considerable, but one must take into consideration the fact that the Russian Communist Party demands regular party activity from all its members.

The number of working women in the trade unions is growing from year to year, and we have at present about a million and a half women trade union members.

A considerable number of working women are members of workshop committees and of Administrative Councils of Trade Unions. The Central Trade Unions. The Central Trade Union Committees have also some women members. The new economic policy imposes upon us the task of preventing the women workers becoming scattered owing to unemployment caused by the reduction of industrial activity. The working women's sections displayed much energy on this field. It is owing to their initiative that artels, i. e. women's cooperatives were formed for the benefit of the unemployed women. By this means thousands of working women have remained under the influence of the party. The women's section are carrying on communist propaganda and agitation among the members of these working women's artels. Delegates of these artels take part in the delegates meetings under the auspices of the women's sections. We have knitting, weaving, lacemaking and dressmaking artels in all our towns and villages, which owe their existence to the initiative of the working women's sections. In view of the present economic situation, the organisation of the working women within the cooperative movement constitutes an important part of the work carried on by our sections, contributing to the co-operation of

the women artisans scattered throughout the country; and exercising party influence over them. Through the co-operative movement we have also brought about cooperation between the urban and rural women workers. Co-operation is also one of the means for the betterment of the working class conditions. In the capitalist states all the attempts at improving conditions by means of the co-operative undertaking are not only doomed to failure, but they also contribute to the propagation of reformist illusions. On the other hand, under the proletarian dictatorship, the co-operative movement can and must be used rationally for the alleviation of the hardships of the working class house-wives.

In the present conditions of the new economic policy when the Soviet State is temporarily being deprived of the means to come to the assistance of the mothers, it is precisely in the field of co-operation that the activity of the working women can find its expression. In Petrograd, 24,000 working mothers are organised within the co-operative society. "The Mother and Child", which is part of the network of the Petrograd Consumers' co-operatives. This co-operative society provides the necessities of life at reasonable prices, and proposes to establish homes for infants.

Such co-operatives exist also in some of the towns and countries of the Pskov Province, and also in one of the communes. Since the International "Women's Day" in 1922, the working women's sections were given the right to send working women as apprentices to the co-operative sections. A certain number of these working women are already in the co-operative societies. In many instances the working and peasant women are members of the administrative councils in the workshop and village co-operatives.

Moreover, a considerable number of working women are attending courses on co-operation. We consider our work on the co-operative field as a means of bringing together the urban and the rural workers, and to bring them under the Party's sphere of influence. The agitation and the political propaganda among the peasant women is based on their interest in agriculture and co-operative structure. Therefore, we convene our pea-



and women conferences by village or by colony, and do house to house canvassing, getting the more advanced among the women to attend lecture courses and agricultural colleges.

I will give you one example of this much of our work. In the Razan Province, twenty peasant women out of fifty have gone through the course at the agricultural college, have joined the Party and have become first rate militant workers. In the Samara Province, 50% of the students in the agricultural colleges are peasant women. They are instructed on various questions of the protection of childhood and motherhood, and even in remote provinces, the peasant women take an active part in the organisation of crèches. A considerable number of peasant women are attending courses on the protection of motherhood and childhood. According to latest data, which is not yet all complete, 2,000 peasants women were elected to the Soviets during the last elections. Some of them were elected presidents of communal Soviets.

There are 9 women members on the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. The campaign of famine relief has enlisted the sympathy of great numbers of urban and rural working women, whom the working women's sections used in order to draw new strata of women workers into party and Soviet work. They came to the rescue of the famine stricken population in a most energetic fashion, which greatly contributed to our success in combatting this dreadful calamity.

They received into their families the children of the famine stricken districts; they took part in the organisation of children's homes in the famine stricken provinces and became mothers to many of the orphans of those districts. These working women worked with incomparable zeal at the „Subotniki“ at which clothes and under clothes were made for these children. Moreover, they were always ready to share their meagre earnings with the unfortunate famine stricken people.

The working women's sections do their utmost to attract the working and peasant women into the schools for adults. Preparatory courses are organised for them. There are 3683 working women at the working women's faculty (Rabfak), and

a considerable number is sent to the Communist Universities where they receive their education. The Central Committee of the Communist Party publishes two periodicals for women: one for the peasant women and the other for the working women. There are also several provincial magazines and about 60 working women's papers. These publications have several hundreds of working and peasant women correspondents.

Such extensive work among the working masses is only possible under a proletarian dictatorship. But the Communist Party has recognised the importance of special methods of political propaganda and agitation among the working women, greatly facilitating the enrolment of these masses into the ranks of the militant proletariat. The first steps in the work among working women were already made in 1905—1906. The bourgeois feminist endeavoured to bring the Russian working women under their influence. But the class instinct of the working women guided by the party, contributed to giving them a clear conception of the bourgeois nature of the feminist propaganda, and to make them throw in their lot unhesitatingly with the Communist Party. At that time the first Working Women's Club was established in Petrograd which was soon destroyed by the police. Reaction compelled the working women to continue their struggle illegally. But in 1914 our Party renewed its agitation and propaganda among the working women in a semi-legal way. The Party published „The Working Women“ which served as a rallying ground for the militant women workers of that period. The Comrades Samolova, Kudella, Ielizarova, Manjinskaja, Rosmirovitch, Armand, Krupskaya and Staal who were emigrees at that time, were on the editorial staff and did their work from abroad. But the persecutions brought these attempts also to nought.

The militants were arrested, and the paper was prohibited. During the Kerensky regime, the Communist Party, compelled to carry on its struggle semi-legally, renewed its agitation among the working women. The Party recognised the importance of the participation of the working women in the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. In 1917, reappeared in

Petrograd „The Working Women“. At the same time, the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party organized a Commission for political propaganda among the working and peasant women. The working women grouped around this Commission became militant members of the Party, and many of them played an important part in the October Revolution.

The October Revolution brought a radical change into the position of the working women and opened before them, and subsequently before the peasant women a vista of great possibilities.

At present there is not a single field of Soviet construction on which the Russian working women do not display their remarkable capacities and activity. Neither is there a front at which the working and peasant women did not prove themselves excellent comrades. Thousand of working women fell in our struggle whose names have remained unknown to history.

The thoroughly awakened working women are animated by an entirely communist spirit of the aspirations of the working class, and the energy which they have displayed in communist and Soviet construction knows no bounds.

The Communist Party has appreciated to the full these qualities of the working women and by ingenuous methods it has established within the ranks of the working class a solid basis for the new order of society.

Being convinced of the importance of this work, I call upon all Communist Parties to pay the greatest attention to the agitation and propaganda among the working women. Their participation in the united proletarian front is indispensable for its success in the final victorious struggle.

Kasparova. Comrades, in the great struggle for the proletarian revolution, the Third Communist International has always devoted particular attention to the national-revolutionary movement against imperialism, which in recent years has drawn into it the masses of workingmen and women, and men and women of the peasant class in all the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East. Inasmuch as the Third International supported this movement, inasmuch as it protected the interests of the large masses of workers

in the East, it could not fail to take part in the women's revolutionary movement in these countries, for, as Karl Marx has already pointed out, no social revolution is possible without the aid of the women.

But since the Second World Congress of the Communist International laid down the guiding principles of the colonial-national question for the period of the struggle between imperialism and the proletarian dictatorship, the following events have taken place in the East:

- 1) The development of the struggle against imperialism in all the colonial and semi-colonial countries such as Korea, British India, Dutch East Indies, Egypt, and Syria, China and Persia, with the extension of the independence of Turkey.

- 2) The beginning of a proletarian class movement in nearly all the countries of the East, starting in the capitalist country of Japan, and the simultaneous formation of Communist Parties in nearly all these countries.

At the same time we observe an ever increasing participation in the movement by the women who have been languishing under the oppression of slavery, particularly in those Eastern countries where the industries are beginning to develop. As far as Japan is concerned, the following figures may be taken as an illustration: 3,047,902 male workers and 3,225,363 female workers, out of a population of 28,012,395 men and 27,918,145 women.

The working population of British India in 1911 was approximately 101,825,424 men and 47,359,582 women, out of a total population of 320,000,000. Out of that number there were 11,500,000 men and 6,000,000 women engaged in industry. The weaving trade alone employed 1,764,193 women, the spinning trade 1,215,714; the food preparing industries, 2,200,000; the women working on the land were 12,000,000 as against 13,000,000 men employed in the same industry.

In Egypt as well as in Syria the number of women employed in the cotton factories and in silk spinning as well as in tobacco industries, has been continuously on the increase. Even in China, where there has been a weaker development of industries, there are already over 200,000 women in the factories. The ever growing participation of women in industrial pursuits has resulted in a correspondingly increasing



ing participation of women in the general labour movement. This is shown by the strikes in Japan in 1918 and 1920, in the great weavers' strike in China in 1921.

In India, after the weavers' strike at Bombay and at Achmedabhad in 1916, we had the strike of the Madura Factory at Madras in 1920 (700 working women), then the strike at the pottery works at Bombay in 1922. An All Indian Union of working women was organised at Bombay in 1922. Many more similar instances could be quoted.

At the same time, even in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East, which have as yet no big industries, as for instance in Persia and in Turkey, owing to the economic conditions of the post-war period, the women are becoming an ever more indispensable factor in industrial production. In all the Eastern countries where a strong national-revolutionary movement exists, as in Korea, India, Egypt and even in Turkey, the woman takes an active part.

In almost all these countries there are illegal or legal revolutionary women's organisations, which are under the influence of the national bourgeoisie, although they embrace large masses of working women and peasant women. The economic condition of working women and peasant women is very bad in all the countries of the East. They form a cheap labour force for European and Japanese capitalists and a defenceless object of exploitation.

Thus the development of the women's movement in the Eastern countries has furnished us with fruitful soil for communist propaganda and agitation. Then experiences of communist propaganda activities in the regions of Soviet Trans-Caucasia and Turkestan may be made use of in the other Eastern countries in a majority of cases, in as far as Mahomedan women are concerned. We draw the attention of the Communist Parties and groups of the Eastern countries, as well as of the Communist Parties of England, France and other colonising countries, to the extraordinary importance of the work among women during this revolutionary period. In this work the diverse objective conditions in every country are to be taken into consideration. Where there are

already organised Communist Parties a labour movement, as for instance in Japan and partly also in China and India, the Communist Parties may create special organs for work among the women. Where there is chiefly a national-revolutionary movement embracing large masses of working women, the Parties should take advantage of this movement to get into closer contact with the masses, to emancipate them from the influence of the bourgeoisie and to lead them into the fight against alien imperialism and for the proletarian revolution under revolutionary and democratic slogans.

In the East, where it is the task of the Communist Parties to deepen and broaden the popular national-revolutionary fight by establishing close contact with the national liberation movement, the communist women's groups, by taking part in this struggle and attracting the other women's organisations (cultural and educational associations as well as suffragist) should make this the basis of their activity and train cadres of intellectual revolutionary women.

The United Front against imperialism like the United Front of the workers, can be realised only by the attraction of the largest masses of women.

(Prolonged Cheers.)

Chairman Neurath: Comrade—I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the Presidium went a long way to meet the wishes of the women by resolving to devote a whole day to the discussion of this question. The Presidium cannot go beyond that. You must take into consideration that we have hardly had time to dispose of the business in hand. I take it that you do not intend to stay in Moscow to the end of the year. But if we go on at this rate I see no possibility of coming to an end any sooner. On these grounds the Presidium has resolved that sufficient latitude was given the women by allowing them four reporters, but any further discussion should be barred. We have just received a request from an English woman comrade desiring to speak. I asked her to withdraw, but she refused. I will, therefore, ask the English Delegation again, or rather Comrade Birch whether she will withdraw, as otherwise

I will have to put the matter to the decision of the Congress.

Murphy: The English Delegation consents to withdraw the demand for the floor. But we would draw the attention of the Presidium to the necessity of instructing the reporters in the future to confine themselves exclusively to verified facts, so as to avoid unnecessary debate.

Chairman Neurath: I wish to point out that we would naturally be quite willing to allow our woman comrade to speak. But it is quite obvious that a further reply would be called for, and we would have to allow some more women comrades to speak.

We now come to the vote on the resolution which I am going to read to you:

#### Resolution.

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International expresses its approval of the activity of the International Communist Women's Secretariat in Berlin, as an auxiliary organ of the Executive during the period covered by the report. The International Communist Women's Secretariat has concentrated its activity on bringing the women communists as members into the sections of the Communist International in all the countries with a revolutionary movement, and to train them for Party work and struggles. It has also contributed a great deal towards spreading the communist propaganda and organisation work among the widest possible female masses, in order to draw them into the movement and struggle for the interests of the working class and for communism.

The International Communist Women's Secretariat has made it its business to co-ordinate the work of the organised communist women on an international scale, viz., to establish connection between their work and that of the Communist Parties and of the Communist International. In the International Women's Secretariat we have succeeded in conjunction with the Communist Parties of the various countries, in extending and consolidating the international relations between the communist women organised within these Parties. Its entire activity has been carried on in complete harmony with the Executive and under the

guidance of the latter according to the fundamental and technical directives and decisions of the World Congress of the Communist International and of the Second International Communist Women's Conference in Moscow.

The special bodies (Women's Secretariats, Women's Sections, etc.) established in accordance with these directives and decisions, and the special methods applied in Communist Party work among women, have not only proved useful, but indispensable for the task of permeating the masses of working women with communist ideas and watchwords.

In the countries with a bourgeois class regime, the chief task of systematic communist activity among the female proletariat, the women in industry, consists in the struggle for the defence of the most pressing needs of life against the exploiting capitalists, in the struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and for the establishment of proletarian dictatorship. On the other hand, in the Soviet States, the chief task of the Women's Secretariat consisted in drawing the working and peasant women into active participation on all the fields of the economic and social life of their respective countries, and in training them for the constructive work of the proletarian State and the tasks which the latter has to fulfil. The international significance of Soviet Russia as the first workers' State produced by the world revolution, gives a special meaning to the Communist activity of the working women of these countries, as it serves as an example to all the sections of the Communist International in the countries where the proletariat has not yet acquired power, the indispensable pre-requisite for the reconstruction of society on a communist basis. That it is indispensable to have special organisations for the conducting of Communist work among women, has also been shown by the activity of the Women's Secretariat for the East, which has done valuable and successful work on a perfectly new and rather difficult field.

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International is, however, compelled to admit that some sections have either not carried out their tasks at all, or have done so in a very unsatisfactory manner. Up to the present they have either failed



to take the necessary measures for the organisation of the women communists within the party, or to establish party organs which are indispensable for working and keeping in contact with the masses of working women.

The Fourth Congress enjoins these sections with the least possible delay to make good their failure to comply with the decisions of the last Congress. At the same time, it reminds all sections of the Communist International to concentrate their attention on work among women in view of the great importance of women's collaboration for the movement as a whole. The proletarian united front can only be realised if the woman take a rational and energetic part in it in perfect equality with men. Given a proper and close alliance between the communist parties and the working women: the latter can become under certain circumstances the pioneers of the proletarian united front and of the revolutionary mass movements.

The Communist International must unite, without any differentiation, all the forces of the proletariat and of the working masses for a class conscious revolutionary struggle for the establishment of Communism and for the overthrow of the bourgeois class regime.

Does anybody wish to speak to the resolution? No one. We will now take the vote. Carried unanimously. (Cheers).

I wish to announce the receipt of a resolution submitted by several French women comrades. It will have to be submitted to the Presidium for revision. There being no objections, this will be done.

To-night the following Commissions will meet:

At 5.30 p.m.—The American Commission.

At 5.30 p.m.—The Educational Commission.

At 7 p.m.—The Small Commission on Italy.

At 9 p.m.—The Small French Commission.

At 6 p.m.—The Presidium meets, and to-morrow at 12 the Session of the Organisation Commission.

The next session will be opened at 11 a.m. tomorrow, when we will discuss the educational question. The reporter will be Comrade Hörnle of Germany.

The Presidium at its meeting this afternoon will decide as to the further agenda.

(The session adjourned at 1.20 p.m.)

# BULLETIN

## OF THE IV CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

№ 25.

Moscow.

December 5th, 1922.

### Twenty Fifth Session.

November 28th, 1922.

Chairmen: Comrades Neurath, Zetkin, Markhlevski.

#### Contents:

Report on Education. Report on the Versailles Treaty. Appearance of Comrade Gennari. Telegram to the All-Indian Trade Union Congress.

Speakers: Hörnle, Krupskaya, Cachin, Gennari, Smeral, Raditch.

Session was opened at 12:33 p.m.

Chairman-Neurath: I declare the session open. Before proceeding with our business, I should like to draw your attention to the following: It has come to my notice that several comrades have borrowed books from the book exhibition without asking leave. These comrades are requested to return the books, and to observe in future the rule that no books are to be taken from the exhibition room.

The next item on the agenda is the Education Question. I call on Comrade Hörnle (Germany) to present his report.

Hörnle (Germany). Comrades, the education Commission arrived at the unanimous conclusion that the question before the Congress should not be the entire scheme of the Communist education policy, but only the question of communist educational work done by the Party itself, namely, the question of the political education of the members and functionaries of the Party, and of the political education which is carried on by the members and functionaries of the Party among the masses outside the Party.

The communist policy differs from the bourgeois and reformist policy not only by its aim but also by the fact that it has a strictly scientific basis that it rests

on a careful analysis of the historic situation and on a thorough knowledge of the social forces which are at work within the capitalist system. Its methods are the methods of Marxist research and of historic materialism. Thus, the Communist International can only fulfil its task as leader of the revolutionary proletariat and as the defender of the masses of the oppressed and exploited if it puts its policies on a strictly Marxist basis. For this reason, it is essential that the communist parties should give their members and functionaries a careful theoretical training.

Another reason for the need for political educational work of the communist party is the fact, that all the communist parties are young parties, not only in that the parties have been only a few years in existence, but also in that the age, or at least the political age, of the majority of their members. The majority of the communist party members are still suffering from the after effects and survivals of the old petty bourgeois and reformist orientation and ideology. The environment of our struggle today, and especially at the present moment, sets before these young, and in some cases rapidly growing parties, new tasks of an increasingly difficult nature. The tactics