

On the Eve of the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Spain

During the last few months, regional and provincial conferences were held throughout Spain, convened in preparation for the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Spain.

The most outstanding feature of the conferences that have taken place is the unanimity and unity of the entire Party around the Central Committee which, under the leadership of Jose Diaz, is conducting the policy outlined at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern by Comrade Dimitroff. All the conferences were imbued with the will to struggle for the fulfilment of the militant program of the People's Front and, first and foremost, for the establishment of Workers' and Peasants' Alliances as points of support for the People's Front.

The Madrid Party conference, attended by 200 delegates from the city and the surrounding districts, provides a picture of the enormous changes which have taken place in the Party during the last few months. Prior to February 19, 1936, the Madrid Party organization had 1,500 members; in March, 2,947 in Madrid and 512 members in 27 local organizations on the outskirts; by May 1, 5,623 members in Madrid and 2,676 in 46 local organizations on the outskirts. The number of industrial primary organizations increased from 43 to 99 in the period after February. Beginning with May 1, up to the moment when the report was drawn up, 1,300 members, including 500 women, joined the party.

"The new Party members", wrote the central organ of the Spanish Communist Party, the *Mundo Obrero*, "who entered the Party after February 16, are all loyal comrades full of enthusiasm, and have complete confidence in the policy of the Party and its leadership.... What they lack is Communist training and education."

The creation of new forces must be accompanied by decisive improvements in the methods of Party work. Personal contact must be established with the Party members, political discussion must be organized on a wider scale and more meetings arranged, attended by the lower Party functionaries.

The discussions at the conference showed that the Party organizations realized the victorious advance made on the basis of the policy outlined by the Seventh Congress. At the first meeting of the Party conference, besides the Comintern leaders and Comrades Diaz and Dolores Ibarruri (Pasionaria), Francisco Largo Caballero, leader of the Left Socialists in Spain, was elected to the Honorary Presidium. The Secretary of the Madrid provincial committee, Comrade Antonio, made the political report. The principal problems of the report were the need to consolidate the victory won and to strengthen the People's Front. As a counter-balance to the erroneous statements of the Anarchists, and the provocative acts of the Trotskyites, the Communist Party is ably and systematically and step by step fighting for new successes. The Communist Party does not confine itself to general propaganda, but proposes concrete democratic decisions. These decisions include: the interference of the state in the activity of the banks, mining companies and railways, measures against those who sabotage the republic and the introduction of an agrarian law regarding the expropriation of the landowners, etc.

The immediate tasks facing the Madrid organization were shown in the report to be the training of the newly accepted Party members, the consolidation of the People's Front, the establishment of popular alliances, the strengthening of the C.G.T., work among the unemployed, aid to the united youth organizations, and the establishment of a real

people's militia.

The report on the economic struggles was devoted to the experience of the numerous strikes which took place in the course of the last few months in Madrid. The correct tactics consisted in exhausting all existing means before declaring a strike. The example of the struggle of the Madrid bakers, who in this way achieved the satisfaction of their demands, without declaring a strike, also the recent experience of the French proletariat in this regard, are very significant.

The discussion at the Party conference took on the character of reports dealing with achievements in the work done in various spheres. Particularly noteworthy is the growth of the Communist Party in the rural districts where the difficulties are particularly great, for here the Party has only new forces at its disposal, who as yet receive only very insignificant assistance; while in their own regions these comrades are faced with experienced political workers from the republican parties. The conference subjected the sectarian behavior of the previous provincial committee and all the existing shortcomings in trade union work to severe criticism.

The achievements in the field of the organization of Workers' and Peasants' Alliances are also not entirely satisfactory, if they are contrasted with the increase in the Party's influence. The considerable successes of the last few months did not dazzle the delegates to the conference, and they, with Bolshevik exactness, disclosed the shortcomings in their own organizations and indicated the ways and means to overcome them. One of these ways is increased attention to the questions which are of particular interest to the people of Madrid (the higher cost of transport and electric energy), the importance of which for the consolidation of the People's Front was particularly emphasized.

The presence of the leader of the "Socialist Union" (one of the four Catalonian parties) who, together with the Catalonian Communist Party fought for the establishment of a unified proletarian party, made it possible to raise the question of a unified proletarian party on a wide scale.

In his speech the Catalonian Socialist Comorera stated:

"Four parties—the Socialist Union, the Catalonian Proletarian Party, the Communist Party and the Catalonian Federation of the Socialist Party of Spain—are in very close contact, and I can assure you that in a month's time these four parties will merge into one, on the basis of the statutes of the Third International. This is something for which you are fighting under the leadership of Comrade Jose Diaz.* We want our example to be imitated not only in Spain but throughout the rest of the world. We also want a single trade union international, a single international of workers—the Third International—to be formed."

Comrade Jose Diaz particularly emphasized the importance of this statement and called on the conference to struggle for the realization of the political unity of the proletariat on the basis of conditions put forward by Comrade Dimitroff at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.

* A platform was published in June on the basis of which the unification of these four Parties into a single party is being effected.