DIMITROFF'S LETTERS FROM PRISON

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COMPILED WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES BY ALFRED KURELLA
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EDITOR'S NOTE

In this volume are collected the most important documents which Dimitroff wrote with his own hand, in preparing and conducting his political defence, during his imprisonment before the trial, during the trial itself, and between his acquittal and his deportation from Germany; extracts are also given from certain articles and interviews published after his release. The text is taken from the original notes included among Dimitroff's papers and from the copies made by him of the letters he sent. In order to elucidate the circumstances in which the letters and documents originated, most of them are preceded by a short explanatory note.

A. K.

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APPENDIX

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LEIPZIG TRIAL

By G. DIMITROFF

(In place of a foreword[1]*)*

THE Reichstag Fire was to give the signal for a terrorist campaign conducted by German fascism against the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, and it did in actual fact give that signal. The Fascist provocation of 27th February 1933 was devised as a beacon fire proclaiming the " destruction " of Marxism, and here Marxism is to be taken to mean the revolutionary movement of the German proletariat. It was the intention of the Fascists to rally all forces hostile to the revolutionary movement and to the Soviet Union, and to display the " historic role " of German fascism, the role of the gendarme crushing the proletarian revolution in capitalist Europe. In other words, the role once regarded by Czarist absolutism in Russia as its " historic mission "—to be the bulwark of European reaction and the headsman of the revolutionary movement—was, in the epoch of proletarian revolution, taken over by German " thoroughbred Aryan fascism."

The burning of the Reichstag, devised by the Fascists as an act of provocation—we shall return to this question in greater detail—was the prelude to those innumerable barbarities, to the bloody March days of 1933 in Germany, which roused the whole of labouring humanity against the Fascist dictatorship.

The Leipzig Trial—the greatest trial of recent political history—was framed by the Fascist authorities for the purpose of proving to the whole world that at the end of February 1933 the Fascist headsmen " saved Europe from Bolshevism."

[1] From the article " A Victory for Proletarian Solidarity," *Pravda*, 4th March 1934.

German fascism hoped at Leipzig to win universal recognition as the " saviour." The indictment, kept a strict secret right up to the trial and during the three months' proceedings in court, make it quite plain that the trial was aimed not solely against communism in Germany, but in the main against the Communist International and at the same time against the Soviet Union.

At the beginning of the trial the German Fascist press did not even consider it necessary to make any secret of this. I and my comrades—as was openly stated in the indictment—were accused of being " authorised agents of the Russian Communist Party in Moscow," and of having the task of organising, by setting fire to the Reichstag, an armed uprising in Germany for the purpose of Sovietising the whole of Europe. In complete conformity with the desires of the Fascists, the false witnesses coached by the Public Prosecutor's department then testified during the preliminary investigation that " after this action—after the Reichstag Fire, that is—similar incendiary acts should have taken place in Warsaw, Vienna and Prague, in order to spread the flames throughout Europe."

What concrete tasks did German fascism set itself when it staged the Leipzig Trial ?

First. Rehabilitation of the Fascist incendiaries and headsmen in the public eye at home and abroad ; concealment of the real incendiaries, while shifting the blame on to the Communists.

Second. Justification of the barbarous terror and of the atrocious persecution of the revolutionary proletariat. By means of this trial, the barbarous destruction of tremendous cultural values, the onslaught on science, the ruthless destruction of left-bourgeois " liberal-mindedness," the mass pogroms and mass murders, were to be justified in the eyes of the world.

Third. The trial was to provide food for a fresh anti-Communist campaign. It was to become the basis for a new " *monster trial* " *of the Communist Party of Germany.*

Fourth. The trial was to provide proof of the fact that the Fascist Government was " victoriously " fighting against world communism and had in the nick of time saved capitalist Europe from the Communist menace. To the Fascists the heads of the four accused Communists counted as so much cash in the approaching bargaining with the imperialist countries, in which it was expected that, in return for Hitler's "historic services," he would be met half-way in the matter of " equal rights " as regards rearmament, etc. *In the sphere of foreign politics the German Fascists attached an extraordinary importance to this trial.*

The preparations for the trial were made in an unusually comprehensive manner. The Fascists enlisted every means at their command. They mobilised the entire police and judicial apparatus, the apparatus of the Nazi administration of the Reich, and the colossal apparatus, with all its far-reaching ramifications, of the Propaganda Ministry. And all this served not merely the purpose of manufacturing an indictment : it served above all the purpose of *procuring, no matter what the cost,* " *suitable* " *witnesses.*

About six months were occupied with this feverish and desperate search for witnesses.

It meant a lot to the Fascists if they could find the witnesses they needed among the workers, among the Communists and leading persons in the Communist movement. These witnesses, according to the plans of the Fascist incendiaries, would have to testify to the effect that the C.P.G. and the Red Front-Fighters' League were preparing for an armed revolt in February and March 1933, that they had issued appropriate directives and that the Reichstag Fire was the signal for this revolt.

The Fascists shrank from nothing for the sake of procuring such witnesses. *In the prisons and concentration camps thousands and thousands of Communists and revolutionary workers were subjected to indescribable moral and physical torture, in order to turn them into tractable witnesses ready to admit anything that the theses of the provocative indictment demanded from them.*

And yet the Fascists met with total fiasco. In spite of every effort, nobody but *National-Socialist Deputies, Fascist journalists, convicted criminals, coiners, thieves, psychopaths and drug-addicts volunteered to testify as witnesses for the prosecution.*

The Fascists were unable to get one single witness of the kind they wanted from the ranks of the *workers, from the active members of the proletarian movement in Germany,* or from among the *responsible Communist functionaries.*

And this was the vulnerable spot of the prosecution. *But, on the other hand, this fact demonstrated splendidly and to the whole world the steadfastness and loyalty, the boundless devotion of the German workers to the cause of the proletarian revolution, to the cause of communism, to the Comintern.*

German fascism made its first appearance as the European gendarme against communism at the Leipzig trial. This début, however, ended in catastrophe for the Fascists. Changing the words of an old Bulgarian proverb, one might say that German fascism entered Leipzig with the proud step of a lion, but slunk away thence spat upon from head to foot.

The trial was a test for the Communist Party and for the revolutionary proletariat, whose best sons were lying in the concentration camps and other Fascist gaols. And the trial became a splendid demonstration of loyalty to their banner, of unreserved devotion to their revolutionary duty and to proletarian discipline.

The fact that the Fascists were able to procure no witnesses of the kind they wanted from among the workers; the fact that those workers who were hounded into court as witnesses showed before the court, despite every kind of threat and torture, a bearing worthy of the proletariat—these facts alone prove that, in their view of the Fascists' seizure of power, the faint-hearted and opportunist pessimists in Germany and other countries were pitifully wide of the mark.

The defeat of fascism at Leipzig and our release constitute an immense victory for the Communist International. *Yet the struggle goes on, and it must be further intensified.* Anti-Fascist opinion cannot rest content with this victory. *The struggle for the release of Thälmann, leader of the German revolutionary working class, the struggle for the release of Torgler, the struggle for the release of thousands of other prisoners in the hands of fascism, is a matter of honour for the international anti-Fascist movement.*

DIARY OF EVENTS

9th Mar. 1933.	Arrest of Dimitroff, Popoff and Taneff; first police interrogation inside the Reichstag building; prisoners lodged in remand prison at Police Headquarters.
12th-18th Mar. 1933.	Police interrogation before the Reichstag Fire Commission.
20th Mar. 1933.	Dimitroff's first written statement.
28th Mar. 1933.	Conclusion of preliminary police investigation. Transfer to Moabit remand prison.
3rd Apr. 1933.	First examination by magistrates.
30th May 1933.	Dimitroff's second written statement.
1st June 1933.	Conclusion of magistrates' preliminary enquiry.

31st July 1933.	Supreme Court announces the appointment of Dr. Teichert as official counsel for defence.
3rd Aug. 1933.	Dimitroff receives the indictment.
31st Aug. 1933.	Removal of handcuffs.
7th Sept. 1933.	Summons to attend Supreme Court proceedings for 21st September.
18th Sept. 1933.	Transfer of prisoners to Leipzig.
21st Sept. 1933.	Trial opens at Leipzig.
23rd Sept. 1933.	Dimitroff's first speech to the court.
6th Oct. 1933.	Dimitroff's first removal from court.
8th Oct. 1933.	Transfer to Berlin. Opening of the second part of the trial (taking of evidence).
11th Oct. 1933.	Dimitroff's second removal from court.
1st Nov. 1933.	Dimitroff's third removal from court.
3rd Nov. 1933.	Dimitroff's fourth removal from court.
4th Nov. 1933.	Göring gives evidence; Dimitroff's fifth removal from court.
24th Nov. 1933.	Transfer to Leipzig. Opening of the third part of the trial ("political part").
13th Dec. 1933.	Opening of counsels' speeches.
16th Dec. 1933.	Dimitroff's concluding speech.
23rd Dec. 1933.	The Verdict. Acquittal: taken into "protective custody."
28th Jan. 1934.	Transfer to the prison of Secret State Police in Berlin.
27th Feb. 1934.	Departure by aeroplane. Arrival in Moscow.

I. ON REMAND

On the strength of a denunciation by a National-Socialist waiter called Helmer, G. Dimitroff, B. Popoff and W. Taneff were arrested on 9th March in the "Bayernhof" restaurant in Berlin. On the same day Dimitroff underwent a preliminary interrogation by the Police Investigating Commission sitting in the Reichstag building. This was followed by further police interrogations between 12th and 18th March. During this period Dimitroff was kept in prison at Police Headquarters in Berlin. At each of these interrogations he refused, on principle, to sign the deposition prepared by the investigating officials. All that he had to say concerning his arrest and the accusation made against him he summed up in a statement written in his own hand in Bulgarian. The most noteworthy thing about this statement is the political characterisation of the burning of the Reichstag, a characterisation that during the course of the trial proved to be completely accurate.

No. 1

WRITTEN STATEMENT TO THE INVESTIGATING POLICE AUTHORITIES

In connection with my arrest I wish to state the following:

I, Georgi Dimitroff, formerly Bulgarian Deputy, formerly Secretary of the Bulgarian Trade Union Federation and Member of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Bulgaria since 1920, have been a political refugee since October 1923, and in my

absence was sentenced to death in Bulgaria in connection with events that took place in September 1923. My political opponents threatened me with murder even abroad, so that I could not live under my real name in Europe and was compelled to live under another name. It thus happened that I was arrested under the name of Dr. Rudolf Hediger.

When, in the spring of 1932, the question was again raised in Bulgaria of an amnesty for those still living who had been sentenced in connection with the events of 1923, and when, in conjunction with this, a political struggle broke out, I decided to leave the Soviet Union, where I was then living, and to return to Europe, in order to take part directly, from abroad, in the campaign for a complete political amnesty. At the end of June 1932 I arrived in Berlin, and from here I travelled to Vienna, Prague, Amsterdam, Paris and Brussels, where I attempted to enlist the moral and political support of influential persons, various newspapers and periodicals, associations—cultural and scientific—etc., on behalf of the demand for an amnesty. For this purpose I prepared a quantity of informative matter relating to this question, published letters to influential persons, to editors and organisations, and wrote a series of articles on the economic and political situation in Bulgaria, on her policy at home and abroad, etc., for the foreign press, as well as for *International Press Correspondence*, which appears in French in

Paris, in English in London, and in German in Berlin. For this purpose I followed the Bulgarian press and literature and reports in the foreign press concerning Bulgaria, and collected statistical and other data in the Prussian Library and other institutions, as may be seen from the Bulgarian and other newspapers, periodicals and books, press cuttings and other printed matter found at my home.

My personal expenses, as well as my travelling expenses, I covered with the sums I received for my articles and for translations from German and Russian. The 350 marks and 10 dollars found on me at the time of my arrest represent the entire fortune I had acquired in ten years of exile.

During my stay in Germany I have not meddled in internal German affairs. The documents found in my possession—Manifesto of the Communist International on the United Front and Manifesto on the summoning of an International Anti-Fascist Congress—had value for me as information material.

I learnt of the Reichstag Fire in the Munich-Berlin train, on the morning of 28th February, from the newspapers, like all the other passengers. The name and the photograph of the "incendiary" I saw for the first time after they had been made public in the German newspapers. I have never in my life either seen or spoken to the man himself. As a Communist, as a Member of the Communist International, I am, on principle,

against individual terror, against every kind of such senseless incendiarism, because such acts are incompatible with Communist principles and methods of mass work and with economic and political mass struggle, and because such acts only damage the proletarian movement for emancipation, the cause of communism. The Programme and Constitution of every Communist Party and of the Communist International forbid individual terror, on pain of expulsion of any member who adopts the methods of individual terror. All terrorist acts carried out in Bulgaria, including also the blowing up of the cathedral at Sofia in April 1923, have been publicly and severely condemned by me personally as well as by the Party to which I belong and by the Communist International. We are Communists and not anarchists. It is my profound conviction that the burning of the Reichstag can be the work only of demented people or else of the most bitter enemies of communism; enemies who by this act hoped to create an atmosphere favourable to the utter destruction of the Communist Party of Germany. But, happily, I am neither demented nor an enemy of communism.

Apart from this, at the time the Reichstag Fire took place, I was not even in Berlin, but in Munich, where I arrived on the morning of 26th February, and which I left again on the evening of 27th February in a third-class sleeper on the express train to Berlin.

With profound indignation I reject every suspicion of direct or indirect participation in this anti-Communist deed, in this act which from every point of view is reprehensible; and I protest vigorously against the unexampled injustice that has been done me through my arrest on the occasion of and in connection with this crime.

My sole violation of the German law consists in the fact that I, as a political refugee threatened with murder, have lived in Germany illegally; but I could not live otherwise.

I likewise protest against the fact that I am treated like a prisoner of war, who has been allowed not one penny of his own money for the barest necessities and who has been robbed even of the most elementary legal aid.

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

Berlin, 20th March 1933.

P.S.—As regards the books found on me and at my home, I recognise as indisputably mine only those identified in my own presence. My home was searched in my absence.

No. 2

On 28th March 1933 the police investigation was concluded and Dimitroff was taken to the Moabit remand prison. There, on 4th April, he was handed a magistrate's warrant, in which for the first time the charge of participation in the burning of the Reichstag was formally made. Dimitroff informed various friends of this fact

by letter. The transmission of most of these letters was refused. Only the letter to Henri Barbusse was not returned to Dimitroff, but at the time it did not reach its destination. This letter gives a glimpse of the conditions to which the prisoner was subjected.

M. Henri Barbusse,
Paris.
c/o *l'Humanité.*

Berlin,
5th April 1933.

MY DEAR FRIEND BARBUSSE,

I have sad news for you :

Since 9th March I've been in custody. Although, as you very well know, I only worry myself with Bulgarian affairs (the question of the political amnesty), I have had the bad luck to be charged with a political crime in Germany.

As I was officially informed yesterday by the responsible legal authorities, I was taken into custody on the charge of having

" in Berlin, within a period not legally established, particularly on 27th February 1933, jointly with Marinus van der Lubbe, builder, by one and the same continuous action

(*a*) undertaken to change by force the Constitution of the German Reich ;

(*b*) intentionally set fire to the Reichstag building, which serves as a residence for human beings, and, specifically, he committed the incendiary act with the intention of provoking a rising in the favourable atmosphere thus created."

I hope that this terrible mistake will be cleared up, but, as is usual in such complicated cases, the thing is going to take a long time.

The worst of it is that, apart from this, my health is very severely shaken, and, moreover, at the moment I have no means for the necessary supplementary food and the satisfaction of other personal needs in prison.

I shall be glad if you will let Romain Rolland know of my position, as I have not got his present address.

With best comradely greetings,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

(Former Bulgarian Communist Deputy.)

P.S.—The way I am treated can be seen from the following facts :

(*a*) My own money has been confiscated, and I'm here with hardly a penny, sometimes without even being able to pay the postage for my letters ;

(*b*) I get no newspapers ;

(*c*) One month is already gone, and as yet I've been unable to get a lawyer ;

(*d*) Nobody is allowed in to see me ;

(*e*) Even my *spectacles* have been taken away from me.

No. 3

In April Dimitroff received by chance a few " gleichgeschaltete "[1] German newspapers. Among other things he found in them an announcement made by Vogt, the Examining Magistrate, that the association of the arrested Bulgarians with the incendiary Lubbe had been *proved*. In order to counter this assertion, which was based on nothing, Dimitroff wrote a number of letters to political friends abroad, with the request that a counter-declaration should be published. He was not allowed to send these letters. The letter drafted to Marcel Cachin is given below.

22nd April 1933.

To M. Marcel Cachin, Député,
Paris.

DEAR MARCEL CACHIN,

However unbelievable it may be, it is unfortunately a fact that since 9th March 1933 I have been in custody, charged with having had something to do with the Reichstag Fire. . . .[2]

Since the German and foreign press has spread the inaccurate report that I have been associated with the Reichstag incendiary—an assertion that is profoundly damaging to my political and personal honour as Communist writer, member of the C.C. of the C.P. of Bulgaria, and of the Executive of the Communist International—I beg you to make it known publicly, and particularly

[1] Term meaning " co-ordinated "—i.e. compulsorily adapted to Fascist requirements.

[2] Dimitroff here quotes the official charge given in Document No. 2.

through *International Press Correspondence*, that :

I have never in my life seen, met or spoken to the Reichstag incendiary Lubbe, and that naturally I have had no connection, either direct or indirect, with the burning of the Reichstag—this lunatic, criminal, anti-social, utterly anti-Communist undertaking.

It is especially important for me that this categorical statement of mine should be made known in Bulgaria itself and that my Bulgarian compatriots and friends abroad should know of it.

With best greetings,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

P.S.—As my own money has been confiscated, I am in great material difficulty and await the earliest possible assistance from my friends. If my Bulgarian friends are in a position to send a little money, please ask them to send it to Werner Wille, the lawyer (for me), or direct to the Untersuchungsgefängnis [remand prison] Moabit.

No. 4

Vogt, the Examining Magistrate, considered it his duty to make Dimitroff's time in prison more difficult through innumerable petty annoyances. In his fight against these annoyances Dimitroff wrote almost daily to the Examining Magistrate and to his counsel letters containing protests and demands, two of which are reproduced here. The second letter (dated 4th May) still rings with the indignation felt by Dimitroff on the First of May, when, on this historic day of the revolutionary

workers, the sound of National-Socialist songs and of factory-workers being led by force to the demonstration came up from the street into his cell.

26th April, 1933.

To the Examining Magistrate.

Allow me, Sir, to remind you that I am still waiting for news concerning:

1. An interview with my advocate;
2. The transfer to the remand prison of the five marks released from my confiscated money;
3. The letter to Miss K. that was not sent;
4. The German grammar.[1]

In addition I have already found that there is often considerable delay in receiving correspondence addressed to me. Again yesterday I received a letter dated 19th April, that is, six days late.

I well understand that a certain delay is necessary for purposes of control, but a delay of almost a week can surely not be explained on these grounds, and still less be justified.

I beg you to give instructions that where possible my correspondence shall be delivered regularly.

Finally, I would remind you that my hands are still fettered day and night. Fettered, I have to read and write, sit and sleep. Is it not enough for

[1] Dimitroff had repeatedly applied for a German textbook to be bought out of his confiscated money.

you that I have borne this moral and physical torment for nearly one month? Is it not nearly time for this barbarous measure to be withdrawn?

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 5

4th May 1933.

To the Examining Magistrate.

Naturally I cannot thank you for your notification that you refuse to release the money confiscated from me.

And yet you have freed me from one illusion. For one moment I assumed that, at least in this connection, I, as a political prisoner, innocently here on account of the burning of the Reichstag and suffering only on account of fulfilling my Communist duty, would be treated no worse than robbers and murderers, and might count on a few marks of my money for newspapers, postage and a German textbook.

Now I see that this was an illusion. I am not to get any of my money back. I am not to have any visitors, and moreover I have to be handcuffed day and night.

So far as I know, even accused murderers are not in a similar position.

And for this I have to thank you!

Yes, and that is proper and consistent. I am in the hands of the class enemy, who endeavours to use even justice as a weapon for exterminating communism, that is to say, in practice, for the destruction of its convinced, consistent and inflexible supporters.

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 6

At the first opportunity Dimitroff wrote to his relatives in Bulgaria. His mother, Paraskeva, lives there with her elder married daughter, Magdalina Baramoff, and the latter's husband and children. His correspondence with his family in Bulgaria was the only correspondence allowed to him with any regularity. For this reason he used it for co-operating, where possible, by means of hints and allusions, in the steps being taken for his release.

In these letters the figure of Dimitroff's mother becomes visible. This extraordinary woman, who had already lost three sons in the struggle for the revolution, now found her last son in danger—she had not seen him for ten years—and in her own way she gave him encouragement.

For some time Dimitroff's second, younger, sister Elena, had been living in Moscow. There, too, was Dimitroff's wife and comrade-in-arms, Lyubova Ivoshevitch. Just at the time of her husband's arrest this highly talented Yugoslavian poet and revolutionary fell ill, and she died while Dimitroff was still on remand.

All the letters to relatives were written in German, so as to simplify their censorship by the prison authorities.

Berlin-Moabit,
10th May 1933.

Paraskeva Dimitroff and
Magdalina Baramoff
Samakoff, Bulgaria.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,

I got your letters only on 5th May. The money, unfortunately, not at all as yet. I was especially glad to get the letter from our unforgettable Mama. The fact that in spite of everything she is so brave, courageous and full of hope is for me a great moral relief and a considerable consolation.

I have always been proud of our mother—and am even more so now—on account of her noble character, on account of her constancy and her sacrificing love. I wish her for many years to come the best of health and vigour, and the courage and confidence she has had up till now. I am certain, too, that we shall see each other again and be happy together.

Concerning my position you may perhaps be able to get news from time to time through my lawyer, Herr Werner Wille. He knows better than I myself what is going on around me. It is important to send him something, for the time being at least 50 marks, on account of his fee. Up till now, unfortunately, I've been able to give him nothing.

You can take it from me that I—" like the Apostle Paul," as Mama writes!—will bear my

c

cross with the necessary courage, patience and resolution. If only my health doesn't give out—everything else will be all right!

I am doing my best to make the most of my imprisonment within the bounds of possibility. At the moment I am occupied in the thorough study of German history, an extremely instructive subject. Luckily for me, there are a few books on this question in the prison library. This study is providing me with much material for the correct understanding of present events in Germany and for the recognition of their international significance.

It depresses me a lot that I can't learn anything about the situation in my own country. Obviously, I don't get a glimpse of any Bulgarian papers. I read German papers only now and then, and generally they have no news about Bulgaria.

Since in all probability I shall have to stay here for some little time yet—unfortunately political trials like this generally last a very long time!—I shall be very grateful if you could send me some Bulgarian books that have appeared recently on Bulgarian history; on Bulgaria in the Balkan and world wars, and on Bulgaria's economic and political situation. Some books have appeared by Dr. Michaltsheff, Dr. Sakaroff, Prof. Zlatarski, Prof. Zankoff and others. Try, too, to send me the "Economic Union" periodical as well as *Zvesda*. Perhaps other things, too, that would interest me. Dr. Dukmedyeff, the lawyer, will

certainly know what would suit me in this connection. I hope that they will allow me to receive these historical, scientific and economic books in the Bulgarian language, and that they will hand them over to me.

As yet I've no answer from Lena to my letter. Nor do I know what's happened to Lyuba. According to one report which I got just before my arrest, she is said to be on her deathbed. You know very well what this loss would mean to me. That is, the greatest loss and the severest blow that I have had in my whole life.

Please write to me often!

Heartiest greetings to Stefan, Luba, Boris and the children.

With greetings and kisses,

Your son and brother, GEORGI.

No. 7.

At subsequent interrogations Dimitroff continued to refuse to sign the official deposition. On the completion of the examination he again handed in a written statement.

WRITTEN STATEMENT ADDRESSED TO THE EXAMINING JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES.[1]

30th May 1933 — In connection with the judicial examination of 12th, 13th, 19th and 20th May 1933.

[1] Certain unessential details in this statement have been abbreviated.

Concerning my residence in Germany. I was in Germany (Berlin) for the first time in 1921 with my wife, under my real name and as Bulgarian Sobranye Deputy [member of Parliament]. In 1927 and 1928 I broke my journey in Berlin for a short time on my way back from Vienna. Since 1929 I have lived in Berlin as a political refugee, without registering with the police, being frequently away for short periods or for months at a time. Thus from December 1929 until May 1930 and from November 1931 until the middle of June 1932 I was not in Germany.

Concerning my name. As I have already stated in my statement dated 20th March, being concerned with politics and under sentence of death in Bulgaria, and as one who was constantly sought and who even abroad was threatened with death by his Bulgarian opponents, I had to live *under a different name* and *unregistered.* Up to the end of 1930 I lived under the name of Dr. Schaafma and afterwards under that of Dr. Hediger. For the people, however, who knew me earlier as Schaafma I continued to go under this name.

Concerning my activities in Germany. I repeat my testimony of 20th March to the effect that I was occupied in Germany with my Bulgarian questions and my work as a Bulgarian writer (chiefly with the position of political exiles, the campaign for the political amnesty in Bulgaria, etc.).

The Manifesto of the Communist International and the Manifesto for the calling of an International Anti-Fascist Congress found in my possession had been published in *International Press Correspondence,* as well as in the Communist press throughout the world, and I received them from the editorial offices of *Inprecorr* for my information.

I saw the *Press-News* of the Communist Party of Germany on the burning of the Reichstag, shown me by the Examining Magistrate, for the first time on that occasion. I had never had such a document in my hands nor had I read it.

Concerning my political connections in Germany. I was in touch with the editors of *International Press Correspondence,* in which I published my articles. From time to time, too, I was in touch with the Workers' International Relief or with its General Secretary, Münzenberg, in connection with various questions affecting the Bulgarian section of the W.I.R. On the question of Bulgarian political refugees I had the necessary contacts with the International Secretariat of the International Red Aid. (My work did not require me to have other contacts in Germany.)

I know personally those leading German Communists who, during my stay in Moscow, took part in the various sessions of the Communist International and made a public appearance there —for instance, Thälmann, Remmele, Heckert, Neumann, Münzenberg, Pieck, Eberlein.

I have never either seen or spoken to Neubauer. I have only read his articles on Germany sometimes in *International Press Correspondence.*

Torgler I do not know personally either. I know only that he often spoke in the Reichstag in the name of the Communist fraction.

I must explicitly emphasise the fact that at the conclusion of the police examination an officer of the Criminal Police showed me all the documents and notes found in my possession, and in my presence specially noted them down and numbered them. The letter to Helmut, the envelope with the name Ferdi, the receipt for a telegram to Inner, the *Press-News* of the C.P.G.—all these were not there at the time, were not among my things.

Although I should consider it a great honour to be a Soviet Russian employee or functionary, I have, nevertheless, not been one.

I have never specially marked *Reichstag* and *Castle* on my map. I had no need to do that at all. In 1921, as a Bulgarian Deputy, I was in the Reichstag and knew perfectly well where the Reichstag was situated.

I repeat my categorial statement of 20th March, which I have already stressed with all emphasis at every opportunity, that I, as a disciplined Party Member, as a responsible and leading Bulgarian Communist, could not have had, and have, in fact, not had either directly or indirectly, any connection with the Reichstag Fire. I have never

in my life seen the incendiary himself, never met him, never spoken to him.

A deed like the burning of the Reichstag can be committed only by mentally or politically insane people or by provocateurs, in order to injure communism.

I have naturally also had nothing to do with any sort of plan relating to the organisation of an insurrection in February for the changing by force of the Constitution in Germany. The first I heard of these alleged Communist plans was at the interrogation. It is, however, universally known that on the basis of the decisions of the Communist International and of the Communist Party of Germany itself, the entire Communist policy and activity at this period developed along the line of the political mobilisation of the masses against fascism, the establishment of the United Front of the German proletariat, the economic and political mass struggle in defence of the vital interests and rights of all workers, and was consequently focused on carrying out the task of winning over the majority of the working class for communism. This political line and this concrete orientation of Communist policy in Germany, laid down in the decisions which are obligatory for all Communist Party Members, completely rules out every terrorist action and any kind of adventurous plan for a rising on the part of the Communists. These have been explicitly and decisively condemned by the

Communist International and the Communist Party of Germany, and declared to be inadmissible, senseless, and injurious to communism and the proletariat.

The assertion that someone saw me with the Reichstag incendiary can rest only on an illusion, as has been the case with one woman witness. As is known, she asserted at the police interrogation quite categorically that she had seen me with van der Lubbe on 26th February at 3 o'clock in the afternoon in a restaurant in the Düsseldorferstrasse. But after it was established that at that time I was not in Berlin at all, this witness disappeared, with her unshakable evidence, from the scene of the interrogation.

It will be appreciated that I can give no further information concerning my connections with Bulgarian political refugees abroad or with my friends in Bulgaria, because they are wanted on account of their political activities. For this reason, too, I cannot give the name of the *Bulgarian friend* with whom I had an interview on 26th and 27th February in Munich—an interview that was arranged between us in Paris in December 1932.

During my entire stay in Germany, my *guilt* in relation to German law consists solely in the fact that, as a Bulgarian political refugee, *I lived under a different name, with a false passport and unregistered.* I could not live otherwise!

In connection with all police and judicial examinations I must explicitly emphasise that *I bear the full responsibility for the accuracy of my assertions and declarations contained in my own written statements of 20th March and 30th May* 1933. I refuse, however, such responsibility as regards the official deposition.

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

30th May 1933.

No. 8

Dimitroff's relatives living in Bulgaria immediately took steps to relieve his situation. In the first place they sent money to the addresses given by him, especially to the lawyer Wille, from whom at that time Dimitroff still hoped to receive help. His sister, Elena, accompanied by Taneff's wife (with the mother, both were present later at the trial), left for Germany, in order to secure on the spot admission for defending counsel chosen by himself.

Berlin-Moabit,
22nd June 1933.

Paraskeva Dimitroff,
Samakoff.

MY DEAR, BELOVED MOTHER,

I was overjoyed to get your letter of 12th June, which I had waited for with such longing. I had already become very disturbed. As yet I've had no news from the lawyer as to whether he has received the money. Since, however, Frau Kr. has had the money you sent, I assume that meantime the lawyer has also received it and will soon let me know or visit me.

The report in the Bulgarian newspapers that Lena and Lisa have been in Germany on my behalf surprised me very much. I had no notion of it. In such cases the papers are apt to publish sensational and misleading news.

I was unable to receive the last two parcels (Kaschkaval cheese) because, as I wrote to you, the delivery of foodstuffs from abroad is not allowed in prison.

My preliminary investigation will be officially concluded on 1st June. Now I'm waiting for the charge. We'll soon see what kind of a charge it'll be.

For the moment my situation is naturally not easy, but one can bear everything.

It is very important for me to have enough money for my lawyer, for additional food and for other needs in prison. For the time being I need a sum of up to 300 marks at least. I am firmly counting on your help in this connection.

Please write to me often! Many greetings to all at home, especially to Lina, Stefan, Luba and Lubtcho. And for you, mother dear, a thousand kisses,

Your son, GEORGI.

No. 9

In June, Dimitroff's younger sister, Elena, who is married to the Bulgarian revolutionary, Vladimiroff, set out on a European tour, in order to enlist support for her brother's release. Her appearance at great public meetings in Paris, London and other cities contributed largely to the mobilisation of public opinion.

Berlin-Moabit,
1st August 1933.

Elena Dimitroff-Vladimiroff,
Paris.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I was indescribably glad to get your letter of 26th July.

Let us hope that the foreign advocates will be allowed to take part in my defence. At any rate I am extremely grateful to Messrs. Moro Giafferi, Campinchi and Torrès, as well as to Detcheff, for their readiness to take up my defence.

Since I have had *absolutely* nothing, either directly or indirectly, to do with the burning of the Reichstag, I still cannot believe that they will charge me in connection with this crazy and provocative crime.

I have not yet received the charge. I'm waiting for it daily!

I wish you everything good, and, above all, that we meet again soon.

Hearty greetings,

Your brother, GEORGI.

No. 10

On 31st July Dimitroff was informed that Dr. Teichert had been appointed official counsel for the defence of the Bulgarians. Without withdrawing his constant demand for the admission of advocates chosen and nominated by himself, Dimitroff tried as far as possible to make use of the official advocate in the preparation of his defence. The correspondence with this official defending counsel

proved to be a constant struggle against Dr. Teichert's efforts to hinder Dimitroff in the preparation of his political defence, instead of helping him. In his first letter, dated 27th July, Dr. Teichert wrote : " I recommend you to consider whether you still have any evidence to submit, and what it is, and to let me know this. . . ."

1st August 1933.

To Dr. Paul Teichert, Advocate,
Leipzig.

SIR,

I have to-day received your letter of 27th July, and I note that you have been appointed by the Supreme Court to conduct my defence.

I beg to inform you that on 20th July I entrusted Herr Stephan Detcheff (at present in Paris, Palace Hotel), with my defence ; further that, through my sister, on my behalf, the French advocates, Messrs. Giafferi, Campinchi and Torrès have been engaged for my defence. These gentlemen will probably get into touch with you.

As far as my case is concerned, I am extremely astonished to be charged by the Supreme Court in connection with the burning of the Reichstag. In view of the circumstances, the preliminary investigation should have led unconditionally to the conclusion that I have had absolutely nothing to do with this crazy and provocative crime. It appears, however, that we three Bulgarian political refugees are destined to fill the places of the real culprits who are not to be found. It is

political trials that best express how justice is employed as a political instrument.

In my *written statements* of 20th March and 30th May, which I handed in to the Examining Magistrate of the Supreme Court, Supreme Court Councillor Vogt, I have said everything that is essential to my case. I request you to make yourself more closely acquainted with these documents.

I shall be extremely interested to learn *how* the State Prosecutor's Department will attempt to justify a charge of high treason, based on the burning of the Reichstag building, against a man occupied in politics, who in actual fact has no connection, not even the very slightest connection, with the affair.

Any kind of evidence to be submitted can only be formulated when once I have the text of the indictment—which, if it is really based on the burning of the Reichstag, must be a work of art on the part of German justice—in my hands.

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 11

On 3rd August the indictment was presented to Dimitroff. He at once began to study it exhaustively, and in the first place wrote out the points referring to the accused Bulgarians, adding his own comments. The handwriting of these notes, made with fettered hands

(see facsimile III), and the observations, show what indignation this document aroused in Dimitroff. Against one of the assertions contained in the indictment, an assertion which was obviously intended to discredit him personally, he protested immediately in the following letter to Teichert. It turned out later at the trial that the announcement of betrothal mentioned here had been prepared without his knowledge by a Berlin acquaintance, Frau Kr.—who, as she declared to the court, wanted to protect herself from gossip by means of this card. The Examining Magistrate had had this document in his possession for a long time, but had deliberately kept it from Dimitroff. Equally intentional was the omission to confront Dimitroff with Frau Kr. These obvious measures immediately brought the nature of this " evidence " into the light of day, and robbed the prosecution of what was expected to be a trump card.

4th August 1933.

To Dr. Paul Teichert,
Leipzig.

SIR,

Yesterday I received the indictment.

In order to formulate the necessary evidence it would be best if you could talk to me personally. *I therefore request you for an immediate interview, if this is possible.*

As regards the charges against me one can say with confidence that with so much conjecture, concoction and interpretation, every Communist might be charged with treason and with setting fire to the Reichstag.

The indictment against me culminates in a gross untruth on page 23, where the following unheard-of assertion occurs :

" Although Dimitroff is married, he became engaged to be married under the name of Dr. Schaafsma-Schmidt to the divorced Frau Anny Krüge and has had betrothal cards printed. One of these cards is to be found in volume B II, file 132a of the dossier."

I declare categorically that the " notice of betrothal " mentioned must be a base forgery, for I have never become engaged under any name whatever and I have had no betrothal cards printed.

One asks oneself in vain when and for what purpose a forgery like this was made, if one does not want to assume that there is here the intention of morally discrediting the accused person concerned in a disgraceful manner.

I would ask you personally to examine the " notice of betrothal " in the dossier and to establish whence and from whom this " documentary proof " derives.

This case is also not without significance in relation to the character of the *methods of proof* employed in the indictment generally.

Should this assertion, which is to be regarded as an accusation against my personal character, find its way into the press, you, as my defending counsel, will as a matter of course publish my

categorical refutation and my description of the " card " as a forgery.

Awaiting an early visit from you or your advice in writing I remain,

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 12

On 7th August Dimitroff received a letter from Dr. Teichert, dated 3rd August. In this letter Teichert drew attention to the fact that the crime of which Dimitroff was accused was punishable with death, and again urged him to formulate his evidence. Especially he should name witnesses to testify that during the days preceding the fire he was not in the Reichstag building. We can see from Dimitroff's reply how at once he takes up the line of political defence and demands from Teichert the provision of material for this type of defence. All these applications were rejected by Teichert as " irrevelant."

G. Dimitroff,
Prisoner B.—No. 8085.

Berlin, N.W.40,
8th August 1933.

To Dr. Paul Teichert,
Advocate,
Leipzig.

SIR,

Yesterday I received your letter dated 3rd August. As I have already told you by letter (4th August) the indictment has also been handed to me.

As regards the submission of evidence I beg to inform you of the following :

Since 1921 I have *never* been inside the Reichstag building. I have *never* (not to this very day) *seen Torgler in person.* Not even during the whole interrogation have I once been confronted with him. But how can I name witnesses who can testify that I have *really* not been inside the Reichstag ? It is almost impossible to prove by witnesses what has never happened at all. I can only prove that for roughly ten days, until my departure for Munich, I was ill, remained at home (c/o Mansfeld, Klingsorstrasse 96) daily till 12 or 1 o'clock midday, and came back towards 8 or 9 or 10 in the evening. On Sunday, during these days, I was at home almost the whole day. In the afternoons I was generally at my place of work (c/o Koch, Zähringer Korso 7), from where I travelled home in the evening. At this time, too, I had terrible toothache, and on the recommendation of Herr Mansfeld went three times to a dentist whom he knew, Dr. Sonnenfeld (or Sonnenbach ?), Retinstrasse 20 (or 21) and had two teeth out.

As regards my meetings at the " Bayernhof," Herr Jakobus Rossner, an Austrian author (living in Berlin-Wittenau—I don't know the exact address), can testify that until Christmas he was frequently at the " Bayernhof " with me, and that van der Lubbe—whom I have *never* (right

down to this day) *seen personally*—was *never* in our group.

On the strength of the photograph of van der Lubbe, which I first saw in the papers, I take it that there is a certain superficial *resemblance* between Rossner and Lubbe, and that in the case of the witness Helmer (indictment, p. 175) a confusion of identities has taken place.

I propose further to call the following witnesses :

Alexander *Malinoff*, President of the Bulgarian Parliament and former Bulgarian Premier ;

Muravieff, Bulgarian Minister;

Vergil Dimoff, Bulgarian Minister;

Dimiter Gitchoff, Bulgarian Minister;

Nedelno Atanasoff, Bulgarian ex-Minister;

Christo Stoyanoff, Bulgarian ex-Minister;

Dr. *Nikola Sakaroff*, Director of the Agricultural Bank;

Anton Strashimiroff, Bulgarian writer;

—all residing in Sofia.

They are to testify :

(*a*) that on 9th June 1923 the constitutional peasants' Government of *Stambuliski* was overthrown against the will of the overwhelming majority of the Bulgarian people by means of a *military putsch* (supported by the armed Macedonian organisation), and a Government of terror was set up ;

(*b*) that thousands and thousands of workers, peasants and intellectuals (including the Premier Stambuliski and other Ministers) were treacherously murdered ;

(*c*) that the largest parties in the country—the Peasants' League and the Communist Party—and their adherents were subjected to abominable persecution ;

(*d*) that the political rights of the people were abolished and a military-Fascist dictatorship was set up ;

(*e*) that the resulting intolerable situation in the country led inevitably to a popular uprising on 23rd September 1923 ;

(*f*) that in connection with this revolt I, in my absence, months later, was sentenced to death ; hence I cannot return to the country and take part in political activity there ;

(*g*) that even abroad there were plots to kill me on the part of my political opponents (especially the Fascist Macedonians) and, therefore, I was unable to live as a political refugee under my own name ;

(*h*) that in the autumn of 1932 a new amnesty law was introduced in the Bulgarian Parliament, and that the question of an amnesty for myself also came up ;

(*i*) that abroad I was occupied with the cause of the Bulgarian political refugees and the

amnesty campaign and worked for my own amnesty;

(*k*) that I have been a Parliamentary Deputy, Deputy for Sofia, General Secretary to the Central Committee of the Trade Unions, and a political author.

I also propose as witnesses: *Henri Barbusse* (French writer), c/o *l'Humanité*, Paris, who will testify:

(*a*) that I was occupied with the cause of the Bulgarian political refugees abroad;

(*b*) that in Amsterdam (August 1932) and in Paris (December 1932) I discussed with him the development of the campaign abroad on behalf of the political amnesty in Bulgaria;

(*c*) that abroad I was in danger of death at the hands of my political opponents and, therefore, had to live illegally, under a different name and strictly incognito.

Also: *Marcel Cachin*, editor-in-chief of *l'Humanité*, Paris, who will testify that I was a constant contributor to *l'Humanité* up to my arrest (beginning of March 1933);

Berlioz, editorial offices of *International Press Correspondence*, Paris (editorial offices of *l'Humanité*), who will testify that I was a constant contributor to *International Press Correspondence* until my arrest.

In connection with the political part of the indictment I propose the following witnesses:

Manuilisky (Secretary of the Communist International).

Kuusinen (Secretary of the Communist International).

Piatnitsky (Secretary of the Communist International).

(All in Moscow, Comintern.)

They can testify:

(*a*) that the Communist International is a *unified world-party*, whose decisions are obligatory for all sections and for each individual Party Member in the various countries;

(*b*) that at the end of 1932 and the beginning of 1933 the task of the *direct struggle for power by means of armed insurrection had not been set in Germany* or anywhere else;

(*c*) that the chief task of the Communist Party of Germany during this period was the establishment of the proletarian United Front, the struggle for the winning over of the majority of the working class in Germany through daily mass-work and concrete struggle in defence of the interests of the workers and all producers;

(*d*) that every kind of *individual terror* and partial armed action was regarded as *inadmissible* and *damaging* to communism and consequently severely condemned;

(*e*) that Party Members taking part in such actions no longer have a place in the Communist International and its sections.

As documentary proof I put forward :

(*a*) the decisions of the XIIth Plenum of the Executive of the Communist International (September 1932) ;

(*b*) the Appeal of the German, Polish and Italian Red Trade Union Opposition for the summoning of an International Workers' Congress against fascism (Berlin, 25th February 1933) ;

(*c*) the Appeal of the Executive Committee of the Communist International for the united struggle of the proletariat (Moscow, 5th March 1933) ;

(*d*) the Programme and Statutes of the Communist International.

All these documents may be procured from the Executive of the Communist International (Moscow).

These documents show and confirm that at the time of the Reichstag Fire the Communist Party of Germany was not aiming in any way at an armed insurrection, but had concentrated its forces on systematic mass work and on mass struggle—of an economic and political nature—as well as on the defence of its legal existence and the maintenance of its contact with the masses in all circumstances (active participation in the

elections of 5th March), and that the burning of the Reichstag could have been planned only as an anti-Communist undertaking and that the authors and culprits are to be sought outside the ranks of the members of the Communist International and the Communist Party of Germany.

If the witnesses proposed by me are not *officially* summoned, I should like to have them *personally* summoned directly by me in virtue of Paragraph 220 of the Criminal Procedure Regulations.

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 13

In a letter supplementary to the foregoing, Dimitroff brought up a number of points which throw a significant light on the methods of the preliminary investigation.

10th August 1933.

To Dr. Paul Teichert,
Advocate,
Leipzig.

SIR,

Supplementing my letter of yesterday, I beg to inform you of the following :

In the case of various witnesses there is *confusion of identity* as regards myself. This is apparent from the following :

(*a*) It has been asserted that I was seen with Popoff and Taneff in the summer of 1932, although

Popoff only arrived in Berlin at the beginning of November 1932 and Taneff only stopped in Berlin on his way through from France at the end of February. Both were living in Moscow before this, a fact that can be confirmed by the Moscow authorities concerned.

(*b*) The indictment itself admits that an error of this kind has taken place in the case of the witness Theel (p. 179), who alleged that he had seen me on the day of the Reichstag Fire in front of the Reichstag building. Had I, however, not chanced to be in Munich at this time, then the evidence of this witness would certainly have played a decisive role in the indictment and would not have been regarded as an error at all.

(*c*) In this connection the following case is particularly characteristic :

At the beginning of the investigation a woman witness was brought in who asserted that she had seen me with van der Lubbe in a restaurant in the Düsseldorferstrasse on 26th February at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. On these grounds the investigating official said to me triumphantly : " Now we've got everything! That's all we needed! " The same woman is supposed to have alleged that she had seen a man resembling me with van der Lubbe. On the strength of this evidence my arrest took place and suspicion arose, on the strength of which the charge against me as Reichstag incendiary was built up.

But after it had been established that I was not in Berlin at all on 26th February, this witness vanished, and there is not another word about her information to be found in the indictment! You can, however, easily imagine what great value would have been attached to the evidence of this witness if I had been in Berlin at this time.

During the investigation, in connection with this witness, a mark was " found " against the Düsseldorferstrasse on my street map of Berlin, and this mark provided indisputable evidence that I had really been in this restaurant!

I shall be glad if you will be good enough to attach the proper value to these items.

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

P.S.—As I can have no advocate selected by myself in Berlin, I beg you to get into touch with my relatives and to be so good as to inform my mother and sister as to my position and the progress of my case. My mother's and sister's address is : Magdalina Dimitroff-Baramoff, Samokoff, Bulgaria.

No. 14

Dimitroff rightly assumed that Dr. Teichert would not agree with the political defence chosen by him—would even attempt to interfere with it and possibly take steps which Dimitroff as a Communist would consider inadmissable. In order to nip this possibility in the bud, he wrote again to Teichert. In the meantime the Supreme Court had informed Dimitroff that Detcheff, the

Bulgarian lawyer nominated by him, might be officially associated with Dr. Teichert and through his agency be advised of Dimitroff's wishes.

To Dr. Paul Teichert, 12th August 1933.
Advocate,
Leipzig.

SIR,

I wrote to you on 8th and 10th August and submitted a quantity of evidence and news relating to my case. I hope you have received my letters and that you will be able to take the necessary steps in good time.

It goes, I think, without saying (but so as to avoid any regrettable misunderstanding I would like to emphasise this explicitly) that in my case I can only be responsible for any steps or proposals of yours that have been made at my express suggestion or with my previous agreement and in the spirit of my ideas and my proposals. Towards any other action on your part relating to my case I retain the right to accept it or to reject it.

I shall be glad if you will make a note of this declaration.

Yesterday I received the decision of the Supreme Court (Fourth Criminal Court) dated 10th August, relating to the lawyer Stefan Detcheff, who is sure to be known to you, and I have got into touch with Herr Detcheff with a view to an early interview with him.

Yours respectfully,
(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 15

Dimitroff's greatest difficulty was to get into touch with his political friends in the U.S.S.R. One of his many attempts in this direction was the following letter to the senior doctor of a sanatorium at the Caucasian health resort Kislovodsk. It can be seen how he clothes important details concerning his position in general remarks of a personal nature. This letter passed the censor and was of great importance in the campaign for the release of the accused Bulgarians.

Berlin-Moabit,
14th August 1933.

Dr. Bolotner,
(Director of the " Dessyatiletye Oktyabrya " Sanatorium),
Kislovodsk (U.S.S.R.).

DEAR DR. BOLOTNER,

During my months of imprisonment I have often thought with pleasure and gratitude of your " health workshop " (" Zdravnitza "), where last year I was happily able to restore my seriously shattered health. Had not this cure been so successfully carried out, I should certainly not be in a position now to stand this severe imprisonment, and my health and working capacity would certainly be ruined. There is no doubt that the medical apparatus at Kislovodsk was a real salvation to me. For that—my sincere and hearty thanks to you, Dr. Popoff and Dr. Ehrlichsmann and the whole staff of the sanatorium!

After five months I have at last received the indictment. It refers to high treason in connection with the burning of the Reichstag—a crime legally punishable by death. As I have had nothing whatever to do with this crime, and was not even in Berlin during the fire, the indictment could not contain any positive, indisputable evidence against me.

My official defending counsel (Dr. Paul Teichert, Leipzig) informs me that the trial will probably begin in the first half of September. I hope that this will really be the case, and I am waiting impatiently for it, in order to be able to refute the unjust charge.

It will certainly not be difficult for you to realise how I am longing for liberty, for work and the fight, and also for the chance once again to gain fresh strength and energy and the use of the necessary medical apparatus in your "Zdravnitza."

It would be a great pleasure to me to hear something of you, of your sanatorium (which is bound to be very busy now) and of my friends and acquaintances.

Please give my best greetings to Dr. Popoff, Dr. Ehrlichsmann, Dr. Beligson, the nurses and all the others.

All best wishes to you and your wife and great success to your "Zdravnitza."

With greetings,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 16.

The worst measure ordained by the Examining Magistrate, Vogt, for aggravating Dimitroff's prison conditions was the imposition of handcuffs. They were imposed the moment he was placed in the Moabit remand prison on 3rd April. The handcuffs were removed only for a few minutes at meal times, and for dressing and undressing. Dimitroff's extensive writing (letters, copies, extracts from books and newspapers, diary) was all done while his wrists were handcuffed. From the Criminal Procedure Regulations, which Dimitroff obtained with much effort, he learned that his fetters were illegal.

Berlin,
24th August 1933.

To Dr. Paul Teichert,
Leipzig.

In Paragraph 116 (section 3) of the Criminal Procedure Regulations I read the following:

> "Fetters may only be placed on an arrested person in prison when it appears necessary because he is a dangerous character, and especially on account of the safety of others, or when he has attempted or made preparations to attempt to commit suicide or to escape. Fetters are to be removed at the trial."

Since in my case this measure neither "seems necessary for the safety of others," nor have I "attempted or prepared to attempt suicide or escape," it may be concluded that the use of fetters has, even up till now, been contrary to the law.

Apart from this, my behaviour in prison, as the entire prison staff (from the Governor down to the most junior warder) can confirm, makes such a safety measure completely superfluous.

I hope that the above-mentioned paragraph is still in force and I request you instantly to take the necessary steps to have the fetters removed as soon as possible.

Yours respectfully,
(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 17

28th August 1933.

To the President of the Supreme Court,
Fourth Criminal Court.

SIR,

Since 4th April of this year my hands have been fettered day and night. My repeated applications for this measure to be withdrawn have remained without result.

On 26th July I again requested the Examining Magistrate of the Supreme Court if it were not possible to do away with the handcuffs altogether, or at least to keep me handcuffed only at night, as is the custom in the case of prisoners under sentence of death. I received a reply to the effect that " at present there can be no change in the matter of handcuffs."

On 18th August I approached Dr. Teichert, the defending counsel allotted to me, with the

request that he would take the necessary steps for the removal of the handcuffs.

As up till now I have received no answer, and the fettering, injurious to health and terribly painful, continues, I have decided to approach you with a view to obtaining a decision in accordance with the law.

In the Criminal Procedure Regulations I read the following :[1]

From this it can be seen that in my case the use of handcuffs has no legal basis or justification.

Yours respectfully,
(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 18

After Dimitroff had read in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of the argument between the State Prosecutor, Dr. Werner, and Romain Rolland, he decided once again to try to get into touch with the outer world through Rolland. He particularly wanted a hint as to the contents of the indictment to reach other countries.

The original letter written on 24th August was given back to Dimitroff with the remark that there could be no question of its being sent, since it dealt in an inadmissible form with the contents of the indictment. He was to revise the letter and alter the last paragraph in such a way as to show that the handcuff order had been revoked by a decision of the court.

The original version of the letter is reproduced here in facsimile, showing the comments of the censor. In its final form, given below, the letter, which was instrumental in securing the removal of the handcuffs, was

[1] See previous letter.

sent on 1st September. It reached its destination and was later printed throughout the Press. In this way the fact that for five months Dimitroff had been fettered day and night first became public.

Berlin-Moabit,
31st August 1933.

M. Romain Rolland,
Lucerne.

DEAR M. ROLLAND,

I feel that I must express to you my most sincere thanks for the resolute stand you have taken in defence of my innocence. I have already asked my official defending counsel (Dr. Paul Teichert, Leipzig, Otto-Schillerstrasse 2) to convey to you my thanks and at the same time to inform you of the concrete grounds for the charges made against me in the indictment.

The counsel chosen by me to conduct my defence—the Bulgarian advocate Detcheff and the French advocates Giafferi, Campinchi and Torrès, have been rejected by the Supreme Court. In the case of Detcheff the reason given is: "Because the advocate has no command of the German language"; in the case of the French lawyers: "apart from the fact that it is not certain whether the advocates have any command of the German language, and whether the German defending counsel has agreed to a joint defence, there is no apparent occasion for your admission in addition to the appointed counsel."

The trial has at last been fixed for 21st September. Since I have had nothing at all to do with the Reichstag fire, I await the trial, the result of which —in view of the circumstances—must lead to my release—with complete calm and confidence.

Apart from the strict solitary confinement, and the handcuff order which has tormented me day and night for five months (since 4th April), and which has to-day been withdrawn by a decision of the Supreme Court, my treatment is otherwise humane.

It would give me great pleasure if I could receive a few lines from you and learn something of your health and work.

Best wishes to our friend Barbusse!

With best greetings,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 19

When, in spite of the assent of the court, Detcheff, the Bulgarian advocate, was not allowed by Teichert to see the documents relating to the case, Dimitroff entered a vigorous protest both with the Criminal Court and Dr. Teichert against this failure to carry out an order of the court itself. Teichert tried to defend himself in a letter dated 2nd September, and stated that, in his view, the provision of the political documents suggested by Dimitroff would do more harm than good to the defence. And he added: "I can take no instructions from you as to how I should conduct the defence. . . . In your defence you must realise the fact that it is a matter not of defending the Communist Party, but of defending your own person."

6th September 1933.

Dr. Paul Teichert,
Advocate,
Leipzig.

SIR,

Thank you for your letter of 2nd September; I am very glad to find that you too are of a militant nature.

It is, however, not a question of *who* can better judge *how* the defence is to be conducted, and still less of exasperated nerves, but of the fact that I consider it important that a compatriot of mine, who knows my personal and political career well and consequently can believe in my innocence with 100 per cent. certainty, should take part—directly or indirectly—in the defence. This is obvious. As you are always declaring that you wish to conduct the defence in all seriousness and do not feel your hands in any way tied in this respect, surely you can have nothing against this; on the contrary, co-operation of this kind should only be welcomed by you.

A certain *indirect* share in my defence (through you) has been granted to Herr Detcheff by the court. It is, however, evident that if he is not allowed to have any knowledge of the *concrete* grounds for the charges raised against me in the indictment, he cannot contribute anything positive to my defence. And it is just this information concerning the concrete grounds for the charges (not the names of witnesses or other "secrets" in the indictment) that he has been unable—so he writes—to obtain from you.

This, I consider—if you will allow me to say so—very regrettable and even contrary to the intention of the decision of the Supreme Court itself.

As I cannot forgo the participation of a Bulgarian advocate in the defence I have again approached the Supreme Court with the request that the Bulgarian advocate, Herr Peter Grigoreff, at present in Switzerland, *who has command of the German language*, should be permitted to share in the defence.

I ask you, therefore, to advise the court of your acquiescence, required by law from you as German counsel for the defence.

Yours respectfully,
(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

P.S.—Although I am no lawyer, I think I understand enough to know that the appointed counsel does not need to take instructions from the accused. And naturally I never had any such intentions. On the other hand, the official defending counsel is also not the superior officer of the accused and cannot in this case act on the so-called "leader principle." Mutual understanding between counsel and accused is absolutely necessary here. Otherwise the accused can confidently forgo the blessings of an arbitrary defence, and choose in preference to conduct his own defence, even if very imperfectly.

No. 20

In the meantime Dimitroff's family in Bulgaria had had a fresh misfortune : Lubtcho, the son of Dimitroff's elder sister, had been sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment for taking part in Communist propaganda. But even this new misfortune could not weaken the courage and confidence of his grandmother and parents.

In the following letter Dimitroff's improved spirits, resulting from the removal of the handcuffs, are expressed in his humorous remarks about his sister Lena and in his ironic sallies at the prison administration.

Berlin-Moabit,
12th September 1933.

Paraskeva Dimitroff,
Samokoff.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I have received your letter of 30th August (together with the 200 leva) with joy and gratitude. I had become quite worried again, because I thought you might be ill or that some calamity had happened at home and that this was why nobody wrote. I see now, thank God, that everything's going on all right and that you—which is the important thing for me—are well in spite of so much strain and worry.

Yesterday, Herr Detcheff, the lawyer, was with me ; among other things he told me that Lena was coming to Berlin soon. I shall be so glad to see her and talk to her again.

The poor thing, she has gone to such trouble to provide me with an advocate. But the Supreme

Court is much more zealous than she—in its rejection of every lawyer suggested so far. And there are still three applications before the Supreme Court for the admission of the Bulgarian advocate, Peter Grigoreff, the American advocate, Leo Gallagher, and the German advocate, Lehmann, from Saarbrücken, as my counsel; but I fear that these applications will have no happier a fate than the earlier ones.

In every letter Lena complains that I haven't replied to her. And at the same time she always forgets to give me her address! After all, Paris is too big, and although our Lena is very clever she has not by a long way become such a world-famous personage that her name on an envelope is enough for the Paris post office to find her. But our good Lena has always been like that—a proper absent-minded professor!

I have already written to you several times that although the Bulgarian newspapers certainly arrive regularly, unfortunately they don't reach me. I did not get permission to receive and to read Bulgarian papers. It seems as if my " superior officers " were very concerned about my peace of mind and don't want me to be further annoyed by Bulgarian events. Perhaps they think that annoyance over German events is quite enough for me. . . . So there is no point in continuing to send me newspapers.

All good wishes to you, my dearest Mama, and to all at home, and above all the best of health.

As far as my health is concerned, it is satisfactory. I am incomparably better now, since the handcuffs, from which I had to suffer day and night for five long months, were removed at last on 31st August by a decision of the Supreme Court.

Herr Detcheff has told me that Lina has left for Varna on account of Lubtcho's being sent to prison.

Many hearty greetings to her and to brave Lubtcho. Of him I have no need to be ashamed. Quite the reverse! And Lina, too, as his mother, can only be proud.

My best wishes to you!

A kiss from your son, GEORGI.

P.S.—13th September. I have just had the letter from you and Lina dated 5th September. Many thanks! Lina is right when she writes: "Mother really is a heroine." Another of our family was certainly a heroine too—our unforgettable Lyuba. We can all find a good example in you and Lyuba. Once again many, many kisses.

Your GEORGI.

II. IN COURT

On 7th September 1933 the accused were at last officially informed that the trial had been fixed to begin on 21st September. On 18th September they were transferred to Leipzig. The 21st and 22nd of September were occupied with formalities and with the examination of van der Lubbe. On 23rd September Dimitroff was brought up for examination. The great political speech he delivered on this occasion burst like a bombshell. While the foreign correspondents made no secret of the fact that Dimitroff had made a great impression, and in some cases gave large extracts from his defence, the National-Socialist press attempted to counteract the powerful effect of the speech by means of spiteful comments. But the immense effect of the speech penetrates even through these comments. Thus the *Neue Leipziger Zeitung* wrote: "He is a Bulgarian, a man of the people, who has pushed his way up in life, and found out on the way that one gets forward most quickly along the political high road. . . . From the places where he has lived it can be seen that he has been a fanatical drummer of the Communist idea, of the Communist world-revolution. . . . Dimitroff is a picked example of this species. Unemotional himself, he does not appeal to the emotions of others. He has studied human character like the law, in order to use it for his own purposes. He is a consummate psychologist. It was not easy for Dr. Bünger to force this volcanic man into the dock. . . . He shifted the microphone when he needed it and never forgot to address himself indirectly to the foreign correspondents. It is the echo that he is after and—a glance at the world press shows this—he will get it." And in its leading article the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* wrote: "After

Dimitroff's first words one felt that this man had drawn even this great trial into his exclusively political existence. At once he means to force the tribunal into becoming a stage. . . . The whole court-room is suddenly charged with political energy. . . . It is all one whatever role he played in the burning of the Reichstag. At any rate it has been proved already that Dimitroff is a moral incendiary of the most monstrous dimensions. . . . The civilised world must wipe out this programme of the Third International become flesh, if it does not want to be swallowed up in a bloody night without end."

Below we give the notes made by Dimitroff for this, his first speech.

No. 21

DIMITROFF'S NOTES FOR HIS FIRST SPEECH IN COURT, 23RD SEPTEMBER 1933

Born on 18*th June* 1882 *at Radomir, near Sofia.*

Left High School in the 4th class, worked as a compositor up to 1904.

Son of the Bulgarian working class.

Born and brought up in the ranks of the revolutionary workers' movement (I have been active in this movement from the age of 15).

For thirty years member of the Bulgarian Communist Party—(formerly the Party of the so-called "Narrow-Minded" Left Social-Democrats).[1]

For twenty-one years member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bulgaria.

[1] The *Tesnyaks*, the Marxist, Left, section which split off from the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party in 1903 and formed a separate party; in 1919 it became the Bulgarian Communist Party.

From 1904 to 1923 Secretary of the Trade Union Federation.

From 1913 to 1923 Party Deputy for Sofia in the Bulgarian Parliament—also representative of the Party in the Municipal Council of Sofia and in the Regional Council of Sofia (Diet).

At the same time I was active as a Party speaker and writer.

9th June 1923—Military putsch—overthrow of Stambuliski's Government—by officers and Macedonian terrorists under the patronage of the King himself, aided by Social-Democrats and from abroad.

Thousands and thousands of peasants, workers, intellectuals murdered, Stambuliski murdered.

Largest parties—Peasants' League and Communist Party—dissolved.

All rights and liberties of the mass of the people abolished. Introduction of a military-Fascist régime. Boundless indignation—rising of the mass of the people inevitable.

23*rd September—Insurrection* of the workers and peasants under the leadership of the Communist Party against the oppressors of the people and the usurpers of power, *for* a workers' and peasants' government.

In this insurrection I was delegated by my Party to take an active and leading part.

After a week of armed struggle the insurrection was defeated. Fighting every step of the way,

with about a thousand of my comrades in arms I crossed over into Yugo-Slavian territory.

There we were treated at first as political prisoners and later as political refugees.

From that time onwards—exactly ten years—I have been living abroad as a political refugee and a political writer—unregistered and under a false name, because abroad as well I was threatened with death by my enemies.

Some months after the September insurrection I was sentenced to death in my absence—as the press announced at the time. I never had the opportunity of seeing the judgment passed upon me.

I am proud of the heroic insurrection!

I only regret that I and my Party were not yet *real Bolsheviks* at that time. For this reason we were unable successfully to organise and lead this historic people's insurrection with the proletariat at its head. Our un-Bolshevik organisation, policy and tactics, the lack of revolutionary experience, and especially our opportunist and so-called neutral attitude on the occasion of the military-Fascist coup on 9th June—did much to help the murderers and executioners of the Bulgarian people, the usurpers of State power, to suppress the insurrection of the masses.

But the Party has learned and appreciated the bloody lessons of this experience, and the struggle for the emancipation of the Bulgarian workers and peasants, under the leadership of the

Communist Party, enlightened by the great experience of the September insurrection, is going unfalteringly forward to the final victory.

In order to root out communism, immediately after the insurrection and in the two following years the government's Fascist gangs murdered more than 20,000 workers, peasants and intellectuals in a bestial manner. My brother, too, was murdered, in the police prison. But, notwithstanding this, communism has incomparably deeper and stronger roots in Bulgaria now than in the year 1923—undoubtedly a useful warning for all the eager extirpators of communism in other countries—for all the many varieties of modern Cervantes heroes!

1st October 1923 I journeyed to Vienna.

Support for my suffering fellow-fighters in Yugo-Slavia. Campaign for the defence of persecuted and bestially slaughtered class comrades in Bulgaria.

Here, for three months, I edited and published the Party organ, *Arbeiterzeitung*. Published two pamphlets against the bloody White Terror in Bulgaria, in Bulgarian, German and English.

In the spring of 1924 went to Moscow as a political refugee and political writer and stayed until the end of 1926.

In 1927 I was again in Vienna, in connection with the projected amnesty, up to the autumn of 1929. I was not amnestied. Publication of the

Party paper, *Kommunistische Fahne*, connection with certain Party papers.

From the autumn of 1929 I was settled in Berlin —far fewer Bulgarian refugees were there, and therefore safer incognito.

Two fairly long interruptions—from November 1929 to May 1930, and from December 1931 to June 1932, in Soviet Russia.

I returned specially to Berlin in the summer of 1932 in connection with the last draft Amnesty Law, in order personally to organise the amnesty campaign.

Journeys to Vienna, Amsterdam, Paris.

I have never taken part in German politics—have no contacts with the Communist Party of Germany. This was not necessary for my work.

But I openly state that if I had needed these contacts for my work I certainly should have been associated with the Communist Party of Germany.

I was in touch with *International Press Correspondence* only because of my articles.

It is true that I am a Bolshevik, a proletarian revolutionary. I must emphasise *proletarian* revolutionary because this is a period of confusion in which even the German Crown Prince is accustomed to proclaim himself a revolutionary, and in which there are also such crazy revolutionaries as, for instance, van der Lubbe! It is also true that as a Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Party, and a Member of the Executive

of the Communist International, I am a responsible and a leading Communist.

And I am very ready to accept full responsibility for all the decisions, documents, and actions of my Bulgarian Party and of the Communist International. But precisely for this reason I am not a terrorist adventurer, an instigator of putsches or an incendiary!

Further, it is perfectly true that I am in favour of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. I am firmly convinced that this is the only way out of, the only salvation from, the economic crisis and the catastrophe of war under capitalism.

And the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the victory of communism is, without any doubt, *the whole substance of my life*. I should like to live at least another twenty years for communism and then quietly die. But precisely for this reason I am a convinced opponent of the methods of individual terror and the instigation of putsches.

And this not from any sentimental or humanitarian considerations. In agreement with our Leninist theory, and with the decisions and discipline of the Communist International, which for me and for every true Communist are the supreme law, I am opposed to individual terror and to putschist activities from the standpoint of revolutionary usefulness, in the interests of the proletarian revolution and of communism itself

I am, in fact, an enthusiastic follower and admirer of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, because this Party rules the largest country in the world—a sixth part of the earth—and with our great leader Stalin at its head is building up socialism with such heroism and with such success. But I have never been an emissary in Germany of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as the indictment tries to indicate.

The only breach of the law which I have committed in Germany consists in the fact that I have lived there unregistered and under a false name. But unfortunately it was impossible for me to live in any other way!

With the burning of the Reichstag I had absolutely nothing to do, whether directly or indirectly. The Reichstag incendiary, van der Lubbe, I now see for the first time in this hall. When, early in the morning of the 28th February, in the train from Munich to Berlin, I read in the papers about the burning of the Reichstag, I immediately took the view that the instigators of this action were either despicable provocateurs or mentally and politically demented people, and in any case criminals in relation to the German working class and to communism.

I am now more inclined to assume that the burning of the Reichstag—this anti-Communist undertaking—must have taken place as a result of an alliance between provocation and madness.

It would hardly be possible to make a graver

attack upon my revolutionary, political and personal honour than to cast upon me the suspicion and the accusation that I had a share in this crime against the people and against communism.

My consolation was, and is to this day, that my Bulgarian comrades-in-arms, the class comrades abroad, the revolutionary proletarians in Germany, and all who are acquainted with me in some degree, cannot doubt for a single instant that I am innocent.

I can say with every confidence that I have had just as much to do with the burning of the Reichstag as, for instance, any foreign correspondent in this hall or the judges themselves could have had.

At the same time I wish to state most emphatically that I have had absolutely no connection, not even a chance connection or the most remote connection, with this crime.

During the preliminary examination I submitted two written statements—on the 20th March and the 30th May—where practically everything essential in my defence has already been said.

On the other hand I did not sign the depositions at the preliminary examinations because they were incomplete and tendentious. My whole preliminary examination was based on the express intention of turning me into an incendiary of the Reichstag for the benefit of the Supreme Court—at any price, and in spite of the facts which

disproved this; and even after the preliminary investigation, which had lasted for months, had still failed—as I now see clearly—to discover the real criminals.

No. 22

On the 27th September, after the sharp clash between Dimitroff and the Examining Magistrate Vogt, who appeared as a witness, Dimitroff was denied the right to speak. He seized the opportunity of raising once again, in a letter to the President of the Court, the question of admitting a defending counsel selected by himself, namely the French advocate, Villard. Up till this time Dimitroff had not publicly disassociated himself from the defence and had not as yet come forward as conducting his own defence, because he was still trying to gain permission for a foreign advocate to co-operate with the official defending counsel. He first took up his own defence at the first sitting of the court in Berlin, on the 4th October, after the Fourth Criminal Court, by its decision of the 28th September, had refused the application for the admission of Villard.

Leipzig,
28th September 1933.

To the President of the Fourth Criminal Court of the Supreme Court, Dr. Bünger.

SIR,

I regret that my appearance at the trial has already led several times to undesired disturbances and conflicts. I must, however, decidedly reject the interpretation that I have deliberately misused my right of putting questions by using

it as a means of propaganda. Moreover, as the State prosecution is demanding my head, I consider myself, as a completely innocent accused person, to have the natural and legal right to defend myself with every means at my command. Further, I am taking part for the first time in my life in a legal trial of this character.

I admit that I for my part have not always framed various questions in correct form or chosen the correct moment at which to put them. But this is to be explained by the fact that I am not familiar with German law.

Had I been allowed a defending counsel chosen by myself, I should certainly have been able to avoid incidents which are injurious to my own defence.

But I would remind you that all my applications for defending counsel (the advocates: Detcheff, Giafferi, Campinchi, Torrès, Grigoreff, Leo Gallagher and Dr. Lehmann, Saarbrücken) have been refused by the Supreme Court one after the other for various reasons, and that it seems that Herr Detcheff has even been refused a card of admission.

I have no personal mistrust for Dr. Paul Teichert, either as a person or as a lawyer, but, in view of his role as official defending counsel, in the present conditions in Germany, I cannot feel the necessary confidence in him, and I am, therefore,

attempting to defend myself and am, no doubt, making many mistakes from a legal point of view.

In the interests of my defence before the Supreme Court as well as, I think, in the interests of the normal progress of the trial, I am once more applying to the Supreme Court—and for the last time—with the request for permission to be given to the advocate M. Marcel Villard, who has been recently engaged by my sister, to co-operate in my defence.

If this, my final application, should also be unfortunately refused, then nothing will remain for me but to defend myself as best I can.

Yours respectfully,
(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 23

In order to weaken the effect of Dimitroff's attitude, which was very great even in Germany, the National-Socialist and " gleichgeschaltete "[1] German press started, on the 24th September, a campaign of provocation, full of lies, against the accused. Dimitroff, who attentively followed the *Völkischer Beobachter* and the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* throughout the trial, decided to meet this campaign of provocation with an open declaration. He addressed himself to the Fourth Criminal Court with the following application, which was refused on the 3rd October with the classic explanation : " The publication in the press of a declaration by the accused on the subject of the trial, while it is proceeding, is not permissible."

[1] See note on p. 24.

Leipzig,
30th September 1933.

SIR,

In connection with the report on the Reichstag Trial, in which, unfortunately, very much that is untrue has been said both about myself and about my examination on the 23rd September, I request your permission for the publication of the enclosed declaration by myself in the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, so that it may be made known to other reporters at the Reichstag Trial.

I have forwarded this declaration to the official defending counsel, Dr. Teichert, with the request that he will see to its publication.

Yours respectfully,
(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

1 enclosure.

ENCLOSURE

Leipzig,
30th September 1933.

To the Editor of the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*,
19 Peterssteinweg, Leipzig.

In the report on the Reichstag Trial, the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, which I have permission to read, has unfortunately said very much which is inaccurate both about myself and about my examination on the 23rd September.

Since it is impossible for me, as a prisoner, to correct everything at the right moment, I am requesting the editor to be so kind as to publish the following short declaration from me :

1. The indictment contains among other things the statement about my alleged betrothal, based on a betrothal card among the exhibits, a card which—as the Examining Magistrate, Judge Vogt, himself reported during the session of the 28th September—was not examined at the preliminary examination and was never shown to me at all. In this connection Judge Vogt also dropped suggestions about my alleged " large circle of female acquaintances " which might be interpreted in a way very discreditable to me.

Although *nobody*, except my Party and the Communist International—not even the Supreme Court itself—has any right to demand an account of my private life from me, nevertheless I request, in order that my political defence may not be injured by personal considerations, that a commission of German and foreign lawyers and journalists shall be appointed to examine this question. This commission should undertake a thorough investigation of my private life in Germany (including the fairy-tale about my betrothal), basing itself on the indictment and all available documents, and should issue its conclusions in a published statement.

2. I repeat the declaration which I have already made before the Supreme Court, that all the sentences previously passed upon me in Bulgaria have been of a purely political nature, that these sentences were passed during a period

of emergency in Bulgaria and in my absence, and that they are both directly and indirectly connected with the mass insurrection in September 1923.

In relation to this question I declare before the Supreme Court and the Bulgarian Government my readiness, on the conclusion of the Reichstag trial, to return to Bulgaria (or to be conducted there) in order to deliver a full account before the Bulgarian Court and the Bulgarian people of the whole of my political activity in Bulgaria up to September 1923, as well as of my activity abroad from 1923 up to the 9th March 1933 (the day of my arrest). In return, I only ask one single and quite natural condition : *free and public trial.*

3. With regard to the statement of the Examining Magistrate that I did not ask for any corrections to be made in the depositions at the preliminary examination, I hereby declare that I constantly emphasised to him that I should submit all that I have to submit in writing, and would hold myself fully responsible for the accuracy of these submissions, but that I refused any responsibility for his deposition at the preliminary examination. Moreover, I do not withdraw a single word or even a single comma or stop from the statements which I made on the 20th March and the 30th November.

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 24

In the first stages of the trial, the Court, vigorously supported by Torgler's defending counsel, Dr. Sack, made an attempt to refute the " Brown Book "—a book very inconvenient to the Prosecution—by various evidence. Dimitroff concluded from the way this book was treated, though he did not know its contents, that it must contain important material for his defence, and asked for it to be given him. Dr. Teichert, to whom he made this application, had refused, with obvious signs of alarm, to forward this application, so that Dimitroff was obliged to make it direct to the President. It was not until the 16th October that the Fourth Criminal Court came to its decision, which was, of course, to refuse the application on the following classic grounds : " The request that the ' Brown Book ' should be handed to the accused Dimitroff is refused in conformity with Prison Regulations, since it contains Communist propaganda material."

Berlin,

8th October 1933.

To the President of the Fourth Criminal Court of the Supreme Court.

SIR,

Since the first day of the trial it has often been the case that both prosecuting and defending counsel have quoted and refuted the so-called " Brown Book " on the subject of the burning of the Reichstag.

It is incomprehensible to me how it can be

possible that the accused himself should not have any idea of the contents of an openly published work which has already become to a certain extent a subject dealt with both by the prosecution and the defence.

As an accused and a participant in the Reichstag Fire Trial, I request you, Sir, to give permission for this book to be supplied me at my own expense through the official defence counsel for the Bulgarians, Dr. Teichert.

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 25

On the 11th October G. Dimitroff was excluded from the Court for the second time, and for the reason that after he had been refused permission to speak he had still made the following remark : " I am here not only as the accused Dimitroff, but also as the defender of the accused Dimitroff." The letter which Dimitroff wrote to the President of the Court, arising from this, shows his superiority and the strong position which he had already achieved for himself. It is also interesting because here for the first time occurs the hint at the obscure " Mephistopheles " of the Reichstag Fire—a hint which later became so famous. The threat that he would ultimately stay away altogether from the trial was successful in stopping the expulsions for a certain time.

Berlin,
12th October 1933.

To the President of the Supreme Court, Fourth Criminal Court.

SIR,

After the Supreme Court had refused all the eight defending counsel nominated by me, nothing remained to me but to defend myself by myself—in the best way that I was able. Thus I have been obliged to appear before the Supreme Court in a double character: first as the accused Dimitroff and second as the defender of the accused Dimitroff.

I admit that, both as the accused and also as defender of myself, I am unpleasant and inconvenient to my accusers and to those who instruct them. But I cannot help this. After the prosecuting authorities were so imprudent as to bring me before the bar of the Supreme Court as a substitute Reichstag incendiary when I was completely innocent, they must now accept the disagreeable results of their imprudence into the bargain. It is they who have made the soup, and now it is they who have got to eat the soup. Whether they like it or not is not my affair; it does not interest me in the very least. I believe I am placed before the Supreme Court as one accused of a political crime and not like a soldier in barracks or a prisoner of war in a concentration camp.

I am firmly convinced that in this trial van der Lubbe is, so to speak, only the Faust of the Reichstag Fire; behind him there undoubtedly stands a Mephistopheles of the Reichstag Fire. The wretched "Faust" stands alone before the bar of the Supreme Court, but "Mephistopheles" has vanished.

As a chance and wrongfully accused individual, and yet more, as a Communist and a member of the Communist International, I have the very greatest interest in the immediate and complete clearing up of the affair of the Reichstag Fire, and at the same time in the bringing to light of the vanished Mephistopheles.

My questions in the final trial have only this aim and nothing else. I do not need to conduct any propaganda before the Supreme Court. All the more so, because the best propaganda for communism has already been made, and not by me but by the very fact that innocent Communists are accused of being the incendiaries of the Reichstag, as well as by the "classic" indictment of Dr. Parisius.

I have the natural right to defend myself and to take an active part in the final trial both as accused and as one conducting his own defence. It is obvious that no exclusion from the sittings of the Supreme Court or from its proceedings conducted on the spot [in Berlin] will intimidate me in this respect. These exclusions from the very sessions and proceedings which are most

important, constitute an open robbery of my right of defence, and will only serve to show the world that my accusers do not feel particularly certain of the case themselves, will open the eyes of many uncritical people and are therefore well adapted to provide fresh fuel for Communist propaganda.

If treatment of this kind, which is quite intolerable to me, is continued, then—and I must say this frankly—I shall be obliged to consider whether there is any object in my appearing further before the Supreme Court at all, quite apart from the question of what results this may have.

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 26

From the first day of his imprisonment Dimitroff had characterised the Reichstag Fire as the product of an " alliance between political provocation and political madness," and van der Lubbe as a misused tool. In the course of the proceedings he succeeded in giving this correct conception of the background of the trial a concrete form. He realised that the special stress laid by the indictment on van der Lubbe's conversations in Neukölln was deliberately intended to put the investigation on a false track. At the first mention of van der Lubbe's stay in the police refuge at Henningsdorf, which the indictment passed over in two lines, it became clear to him that " this was where the link was to be found

with the background of the incendiary act." During the examination of the official of Criminal Police, Bunge, who had conducted part of the examination of van der Lubbe, Dimitroff, on the 30th October, suddenly put the question whether Lubbe's stay in Henningsdorf had been investigated. When Bunge gave an evasive answer, Dimitroff formulated the following application, which the Court accepted despite the opposition of the Chief Prosecuting Counsel.

APPLICATION

(Read in the Supreme Court at the session of 30th October)

As van der Lubbe's appearance at the Henningsdorf Police Station and the fact that he spent the night of the 26th February in the refuge there have not been investigated, I herewith request that the police officials and the attendants at the refuge concerned, among whom Lubbe appeared on that occasion, should be cited as witnesses.

Although it is too late, an attempt should nevertheless be made to establish :

1. With what persons van der Lubbe came into contact there ; and

2. What he did in general on that evening, during that night and on the following morning in Henningsdorf.

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 27

The Commissioner of Police, Heisig, who had been entrusted with the investigations into van der Lubbe's earlier life, had made statements, during his preliminary evidence, according to which van der Lubbe was alleged to have been in constant touch with the Dutch Communist Party. Dimitroff, who was not aware of the fact that the Dutch functionaries named by Heisig had already exposed his statements as lies in the press, made the following application on the 3rd November. This application was allowed by the Court, but the witnesses were never called.

APPLICATION FOR EVIDENCE

(*Handed in on the 3rd November* 1933)

In connection with the statement that van der Lubbe, after his expulsion from the Dutch Communist Party, remained in contact with the Party and is even alleged to have carried out various commissions for the Party, I hereby request that the leader of the Dutch Communist Party, Deputy Louis de Visser, should be cited as a witness.

SUBJECT OF THE EVIDENCE

1. Is it true that van der Lubbe was expelled from the Party years ago on account of his anarchistic attitude ?

2. Is it true that van der Lubbe had a hostile attitude to the Party ?

3. Is it true that van der Lubbe has had no connection with the Party for years and has never been entrusted with commissions by the Party ?

I further request that the Dutch friends of van der Lubbe named by the Criminal Commission : Allada, Hegefeld, and Vink, should be cited as witnesses.

SUBJECT OF EVIDENCE

1. What political views did van der Lubbe hold in Holland ?

2. What were his relations with the so-called group of " International Communists " in Holland ?

3. What differences existed and still exist between this group and the Communist Party of Holland ?

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

3rd November 1933.

No. 28

In his study of the indictment Dimitroff had found confirmation of the fact, which he had already exposed immediately after his arrest and in his written declarations, that the burning of the Reichstag and the trial had the political aim of putting the German Communist Party and the Communist International into the dock and providing material to justify the campaign for the destruction of communism. For this reason

special significance attached to the so-called " political section " of the indictment and the trial. It was here that the proof was to be given that the Communists had prepared an armed insurrection for the end of February, for which the Reichstag Fire was to serve as a " signal." Throughout the whole of the trial Dimitroff made use of every opportunity to refute this allegation by the questions he put to witnesses (Count Helldorf, Professor von Arnin, Göring, Göbbels, etc.). And, in fact, all the witnesses who were questioned were forced to admit that no concrete proofs could be brought forward in support of the allegation made in the indictment. After Göring, in his speech on the 14th November, had repeated this accusation yet again, Dimitroff put in his first application for evidence showing that the allegation was untenable. This application, which had the object of eliciting documents from the competent ministerial offices, was later followed, especially during the political portion of the trial, by further applications with the same object.

6th November 1933.

To the President of the Fourth Criminal Court of the Supreme Court, Dr. Bünger.

SIR,

I hereby request the Court to deal with the following application for evidence on my part.

APPLICATION FOR EVIDENCE

In connection with the well-known allegation in the indictment that the burning of the Reichstag is to be regarded as the opening move in an

armed Communist insurrection, and also in connection with the statement made by the Prussian Minister for the Interior and Minister-President Herr Göring that he had been expecting some kind of armed action on the part of the Communist Party of Germany since February 1st—I hereby request that authentic documents from the Secretariat of the Prussian Cabinet, from the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, from the War Ministry and from the Headquarters of the Berlin police, relating to the measures and countermeasures taken at the time, should be supplied me as material for evidence.

By means of these documents (decisions of the Cabinet, orders issued by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for War, orders issued by the Police President, etc.) the attempt should be made to establish :

1. Whether between February 1st and March 5th (the day of the Reichstag elections) and especially on the evening before the burning of the Reichstag, during the night after the fire and on the following day, the State officials concerned and the armed forces of the State were actually mobilised in expectation of a definite rising, and, if so, from what quarter this danger was expected at that time, and, further, whether any actual attempts at such a rising or other armed actions have been proved to have taken place at this time.

2. Whether it is not a fact, on the contrary, that all the measures taken at that time were directed towards suppressing the election campaigns of the Communist Party, of the Social-Democrats and even of other oppositional parties (mass arrests, suppression of the press, confiscation of election material, closing down of Party offices and polling stations, intimidation of the mass of oppositional electors, etc.), and first and foremost towards rooting out the so-called Bolshevik and Marxist plague, and whether in relation to this object the burning of the Reichstag itself was not used as a very favourable opportunity.

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 29

Incited by the National-Socialist Ministers Göring and Göbbels, the Court had attempted to scare public opinion. After Dimitroff had countered this attempt in the brilliant way which is already well known, publicly discrediting the National-Socialist Ministers, he pressed forward yet further. In order to provide an opportunity for a well-known German Communist leader to declare the real policy of the German Communist Party to the whole world, and, at the same time, in order to get further material against the allegation that an armed Communist insurrection had been prepared, he demanded that the leader of the German Communist Party, Ernst Thälmann, should be cited as a witness. This application, like the former one, was refused.

APPLICATION

16th November 1933.

In connection with the political bearing of the Reichstag Fire Trial I hereby request that the leader of the Communist Party of Germany, Ernst Thälmann, should be called as a witness.

His evidence should be heard above all on the following points :

1. Whether it is true that the Communist Party of Germany was already subjected to intensified persecution, attacks, and systematic limitation of its activities and opportunities for struggle in the year 1932 ?

2. Whether it is true that this intensified line of action taken against the German Communist Party was accompanied by a series of attacks on Communist meetings and demonstrations, on Communist meeting-places and on individual Communist workers and functionaries, by armed bodies of the National-Socialist Party, whether many Communists died as victims of these attacks and whether the Party was therefore obliged to defend itself by means of mass struggle ?

3. Whether it is true that, after the 30th January 1933, these bodies, organised in combination by the organs of the State and of the National-Socialist Party, transformed their persecutions and attacks into a campaign of destruction, with the aid of every form of State power, against the

German Communist Party and the organisations of the workers ?

4. Whether it is true that in the beginning of 1933 and at the time of the Reichstag Fire, the whole activity of the Party was directed, in consonance with the decisions of the Communist International, towards the political mobilisation of the masses, the establishment of a united fighting front of the workers, and the defence of the working-class movement and its vanguard, the Communist Party, and was in no way directed towards an immediate armed struggle for power ?

5. Whether it is true that the Party, in view of these primary objects of attack and this political orientation, decisively and with its whole strength opposed terrorist deviations and all forms of terrorist degeneracy, and mobilised for steady and systematic mass work and for mass struggle of an economic and political nature ?

6. Whether it is true that already in 1932 the Party had decisively declared itself against any terroristic interpretation of the slogan, " Beat the Fascists," and later, in order to avoid any possible misunderstandings, withdrew the slogan altogether ?

7. Whether it is true that in the course of its years of development the Party has carried out a series of purges, expelling alien, adventurous and undisciplined elements from its ranks (the Ivan Katz group, Ruth Fischer-Maslow, the

Trotskyists, etc.) and that many of these elements had found a place in the National-Socialist Party and in its Storm Troops and Black Guards ?

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 30

Dimitroff did not limit himself to refuting the allegation that the Communists had been preparing an insurrection. For his own part he made the allegation that in January and February 1933 a real illegal action by force had been prepared in Germany by the National-Socialists themselves, who intended forcibly to overcome the opposition of the German Nationalists and the Stahlhelm in this way. From the Oberfohren memorandum —published in the first " Brown Book," but not at that time known to Dimitroff—the non-Fascist public was already aware that plans of this nature had really existed. In order to prove his allegation, Dimitroff demanded on the 27th and 29th November that the witnesses competent to speak on this question should be called. These applications were, of course, also refused.

27th November 1933.

In order to elucidate the *actual* political situation in Germany at the beginning of 1933, as well as at the time of the Reichstag Fire, I hereby request that the following should be called as witnesses :

1. The former Reichs-Chancellor, General Schleicher.

2. Vice-Chancellor von Papen.

3. The Reichs-Minister of that period, Dr. Hugenberg.

4. The former Reichs-Chancellor, Dr. Brüning.

These gentlemen should be heard especially on the following points :

1. Whether it is true that at the end of 1932, and in January 1933, the National-Socialist leadership threatened an armed insurrection if Reichs-President von Hindenburg did not hand over power to Hitler ?

2. Whether it is true that in this connection a series of terrorist acts also were undertaken by the National-Socialist leadership, as a means of pressure ?

3. Whether it is true that the Schleicher Government took intensified measures even to the extent of imposing the death penalty on National-Socialist terrorists ?

4. Whether it is true that the National-Socialist leader, Hitler, in opposition to the Schleicher government, publicly took under his protection the National-Socialist terrorists who had been sentenced to death?

5. Whether it is true that in January 1933, and on the eve of the formation of the so-called National Government, as a result of the internal strife within the " National camp," and of the differences and quarrels between the National-Socialist leadership and their Shock Troops on the

one hand and the followers of General Schleicher, von Papen, and Hugenberg on the other hand, the danger of an immediate resort to force did not exist, and whether it was not precisely this danger which was the immediate reason for the sudden transfer of the Reich-Chancellorship to Hitler and the formation of the " National Coalition " ?

6. Whether it is not true that these differences also continued to exist after the 30th January, and that the relations between the National-Socialist Storm Troops on the one hand and the Stahlhelm, the League of Reserve Officers and other " Patriotic " organisations and groups on the other, were very strained and led to a number of conflicts ?

7. Whether it is true that certain Stahlhelm organisations established contact with the Reichsbanner[1] in February with the object of common action against the projected " autocracy " of the National-Socialists ?

8. Whether it is true that the Reichstag Fire has been utilised in every possible way by the National-Socialist leadership as a means of overcoming the difficulties which have arisen for its government, and in establishing its " autocracy " and the so-called " totalitarian State " (" Third Reich ")—dissolution by force of all Parties, organisations, auxiliary formations, except the Nationalist-Socialist—" gleichschaltung "[2] of the

[1] Social-Democratic defence force.

[2] See note on page 24.

economic, state, cultural, defence, sport, youth, religious and other organisations and institutions, of the press, of propaganda, etc. ?

9. Whether it is true that during this period (January and February 1933) there was no serious expectation that an immediate armed uprising would be launched on the initiative of the Communist Party, and that this story was only spread after the burning of the Reichstag in order to justify the oppressive measures undertaken by the Government, and the violent actions of the Storm Troops and Black Guards ?

10. Whether it is true that the suicide of the leader of the German National Reichstag fraction, Oberfohren, like many other suicides and all sorts of " accidents," has an immediate relation to this campaign of violence conducted by National-Socialism, and to the existing dissensions and internal conflicts within the camp of the so-called " National Revolution " ?

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 31

APPLICATION

29th November 1933.

I hereby request that the former Vice-President of the Stahlhelm, Düsterberg, should be called as a witness on the following points :

1. Whether it is true that the relations between

the National-Socialist leadership and the Stahlhelm were so strained in January and February 1933 that they represented a danger of armed conflict ?

2. Whether it is true that in February 1933, before the fire, a series of collisions took place between National-Socialist Shock Troops and Stahlhelmers ?

3. Whether it is true that a number of Stahlhelm organisations got into touch with the Reichsbanner in order to initiate common action against National-Socialist oppression and the National-Socialist ambitions towards " autocracy " ?

4. Whether, as a result of this, differences arose within the Stahlhelm itself, and what these differences were ?

5. Whether it is true that the burning of the Reichstag has been utilised as a means of distracting attention from internal conflicts within the so-called " National camp " ?

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 32

Among the documents quoted by witnesses for the prosecution during the political portion of the trial, as evidence that the Communists prepared insurrections, there was included an anti-Communist compilation, published in 1933 under the title *Armed Insurrection*, the

author of which was a certain Dr. Ehrt. In order to prove the certain fact that this book, too, contained no serious proof for the thesis contained in the indictment, and to prove also the unreliable nature of the material relied upon in the indictment, Dimitroff applied on 2nd December for this National-Socialist " specialist " to be called as a witness. The application was refused.

APPLICATION

2nd December 1933.

I hereby request that Dr. Adolf Ehrt, the representative of the " United Federation of German Anti-Communist Organisations," and the author of the pamphlet *Armed Insurrection*—an incitement against Communists—should be called as a witness on the following points :

1. Whether any concrete attempts on the part of the Communists to launch an armed insurrection in connection with the Reichstag Fire are known to him, and what they were ?

2. Whether he is aware, on the contrary, that the Reichstag Fire was intended as a means of overcoming the internal difficulties in the so-called " National camp," for the breaking up of the united fighting front then being formed by the Communist, Social-Democratic and Christian workers, and as an introduction to and justification for the campaign of suppression against the working-class movement and its vanguard the Communist Party of Germany ?

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 33

In the course of the political section of the trial, two judicial authorities, Councillor Heller and Councillor Lösche, were commissioned by the prosecution to try and prove, by means of endless quotations from legal records, documents and books, that the Communists were mainly concerned with the preparation of armed insurrection. These witnesses were unable, however, to produce a single valid document proving the concrete preparation of an insurrection by the Communists in February 1933, or, as Dimitroff had demanded, proof of any concrete counter-measures taken by the government against such an insurrection. In their quotations, Heller and Lösche had several times cited the decisions of the 12th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in September 1932. In order to counteract the distorted interpretation put by the speakers on these decisions, which were taken six months before the Reichstag Fire, Dimitroff made the following application :

APPLICATION

4th December 1933.

In view of the fact that both the chief witnesses for the prosecution—Councillor Heller and Examining Magistrate Dr. Lösche—have cited the resolutions of the 12th Plenum of the Communist International as the basis for the alleged revolutionary projects of the German Communist Party in February 1933, I request that the principal reporter at the 12th Plenum, O. Kuusinen (Finland, at the present time in

Moscow), Member of the Presidium of the Communist International, together with the two Members of the Presidium, Marcel Cachin (France, at present in Paris) and Sen Katayama[1] (Japan, at present in Moscow) should be heard on the following points :

1. Whether it is true that, according to the decisions of the Communist International, the immediate task of the German Communist Party at the beginning of 1933 and at the time of the Reichstag Fire was in no wise an armed insurrection and the struggle for power, but was the establishment of the united front of the toiling masses for the defence of their own interests, of their organisations, their press, their property and their rights, and also a political mobilisation of the masses for the struggle against fascism, against the Versailles slavery and against the danger of imperialist war ?

2. Whether it is true that, in conformity with this immediate task, every kind of terrorist attack was decisively rejected as a *hindrance* to the mobilisation of the masses and to mass struggle ?

3. Whether it is true that the Communist Party of Germany took an active part in formulating these decisions of the Communist International and regarded them as directives for its own policy and activity ?

[1] In his isolation Dimitroff was not aware that Sen Katayama had died in Moscow a month previously.

4. Whether it is true that the Communist International is not a conspiratorial organisation, but a world Party, with a membership of millions, and that the Communist International conducts no double book-keeping but pursues an open and consistent policy based on principle ?

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 34

During the reports given by Heller and Lösche, the court paraded, as witnesses, ten police officials from various parts of the country, who were intended to give evidence on the alleged attempts at armed uprising made in their districts. In the meantime the court had forbidden Dimitroff to put verbal questions to individual witnesses, as this would constitute a disturbance of the procedure. Dimitroff accordingly formulated in writing the following ten questions, which were to be put to the ten officials collectively. The court, however, declined to admit the majority of the questions.

TEN QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE OFFICIALS

1st December 1933.

A series of witnesses, in particular the National-Socialist Deputies, have stated that before the fire, on the 25th, 26th and 27th February, the political situation was extremely strained.

1. What was the position in your districts at this time—was it also extremely strained ?

2. In what concrete forms did this strained situation show itself ?

3. Were any concrete indications of revolutionary action observed on the 26th and 27th February, and immediately after the Reichstag Fire, and what were they ?

4. What instructions, if any, were issued before the fire by the central authorities with regard to the immediate expectation of a Communist insurrection ?

5. When and at what period after the fire were the arrests of Communist, Social-Democratic and other oppositional functionaries and workers undertaken ?

6. Were these arrests carried out by the National-Socialist troops or through the official organs ?

7. In answer to my question as to the reasons which Count Helldorf had for the arrest of thousands and thousands of Communist and Social-Democratic functionaries and workers immediately after the fire, he replied : " According to our conception all Marxists in general are criminals." Were the mass arrests in your district based on this reason (on this " conception ") or was any other concrete ground given ?

8. Whether any dissensions and quarrels existed in January and February 1933 between the National-Socialist leadership on the one hand and the Stahlhelm and other so-called " patriotic " organisations on the other, and what were these differences ?

9. Whether after the 30th January, after the formation of " The National Government," these dissensions and quarrels still existed and led to numerous collisions ?

10. Whether it is true that, precisely in this strained situation, the Reichstag Fire served as the signal for the campaign of destruction against the working-class movement, and as one of the methods of overcoming the internal difficulties within the " National Coalition," and of establishing the National-Socialist " autocracy " and the so-called " totalitarian State " ; that is to say, the dissolution by force of all other parties and organisations and the " gleichschaltung " of the economic, State-cultural, defence, sport, youth, religious and other organisations and institutions, and of the press, propaganda, etc. ?

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 35

After the hearing of the ten police officials, the prosecution called twenty-five workers, mainly Communists, as witnesses ; these workers were at the time in prisons or concentration camps, charged with planning high treason. Statements as to alleged preparations for an insurrection had previously been extorted from them under torture. In court, when questioned by Dimitroff, the witnesses withdrew their statements and made revelations as to the tortures to which they had been subjected. Dimitroff addressed the following written questions to these witnesses ; the majority of the questions, however, were not admitted.

QUESTIONS TO THE WORKING-CLASS WITNESSES

3rd to 5th December 1933.

Among Communists, in January 1933, was the question put in this way :

If Hitler is nominated Reichs-Chancellor, the Communist Party of Germany will reply by summoning the masses to an immediate armed insurrection ?

The suppression of the Party was expected. What defensive measures were proposed—mass struggle, protest strikes, or armed insurrection ?

Did the witness ever notice anything which might have led him to conclude that at the time of the Reichstag Fire the Communists were awaiting a Party instruction to take to arms ?

Were the Party and the mass working-class organisations persecuted and oppressed by the State power and the National-Socialist Shock Troops and were they not by this means forced into a defensive position and driven to defensive struggle ?

How was this defensive struggle conceived ?

Was the burning of the Reichstag understood as a signal for taking to arms ?

What attitude did Party people take when the burning of the Reichstag was made known ?

What object had members of the Party when they stood by in readiness on election Sunday—to defend themselves against attacks expected from the National-Socialists or to start offensive actions of their own ?

Were the so-called Groups of Five underground Party units, or were they terrorist groups for the carrying out of terrorist activities ?

Were weapons supplied for an insurrection in connection with the Reichstag Fire ?

Was the Mass Self-Defence Organisation intended to defend meetings, organisations, speakers, poster-sticking brigades, the property of the workers, the workers' houses, etc.—or for an immediate insurrection in February and March 1933 ?

Did the witness observe on the 27th February, in connection with the Reichstag Fire, any attempts made on the part of Communists :

(*a*) to attack police barracks ;
(*b*) to free political prisoners ;
(*c*) to distribute arms ;
(*d*) to build barricades ;
(*e*) to occupy post offices, telegraph offices, railways, power stations and public buildings ;
(*f*) to call upon the masses to take up arms ?

When were the decisions of the 12th Plenum of the Communist International and the decisions of the National Party Conference of the Communist Party of Germany studied and discussed ?

Did these decisions remain in force as regards the activity and the actions undertaken by the Party in February 1933 before the fire, or had they been altered ?

In February 1933, what was the immediate task of the Party—the formation of the united front with the Social-Democratic and other workers against wage robbery, Fascist terror and the danger of imperialist war, or the carrying out of an immediate armed insurrection for the conquest of power ?

Had the National-Socialist troops arms, and were they not organised like military units ?

No. 36

The case for the defence was to begin on the 13th December. One after another, however, the defending counsel asked for postponements. Dimitroff utilised this opportunity in order to demand that, as he was defending himself, he should be allowed to make a speech for the defence ; this was, of course, refused him. On the 16th December, Torgler's defending counsel, Dr. Sack, made his five-hour speech for the defence. Following on this had to come the final statements of the accused. After van der Lubbe, who had waived his right to a final statement, Torgler's turn should have come next. But Torgler asked to be allowed not to speak until

the next day. Thus Dimitroff's opportunity for making his statement came quite unexpectedly. He had only been expecting to speak on the 17th, and had intended to make final preparations for his speech on the evening of the 16th. Dimitroff's final statement had, therefore, to be mainly an improvised one. We give below the notes which he had so far prepared for his speech, and which he followed when he spoke.

DIMITROFF'S NOTES FOR HIS FINAL SPEECH

16th December, 1933.

1. My attitude to the official defence.

On the 8th September I addressed the following letter to the President.[1]

After Marcel Villard had also been refused, I was justified in saying to myself : " I will neither have the honey nor the poison of the official defence," and defended myself the whole time alone.

It is quite clear that I do not even now feel myself in any respect committed by Dr. Teichert's speech for the defence.

The only material part of my defence is what I have said in court up to the present time, and what I am now about to say.

I can now also say openly that I prefer to be condemned to death when I am innocent rather than to gain my acquittal through such defending counsel as, for example, Dr. Sack.

[1] See document No. 17.

2. *The language* I use is rather harsh language. Yes, my life and my struggles have also been very hard. But my language is *open* and *honest* language. I am accustomed to call things by their right names. It must not be forgotten that I am not an *advocate*, who carries out his instructions as a *matter of duty*.

I am defending my own person as an accused Communist;

I am defending my own Communist revolutionary honour;

I am defending my ideas, my Communist opinions;

I am defending the sense and the content of my life! For this reason every sentence spoken by me before the Supreme Court is *blood of my blood and flesh of my flesh*.

Every word is the expression of my profound indignation at the unjust charge, at the fact that an anti-Communist crime has been placed to the account of Communists.

3. *I have often been met with the reproach that I do not take the highest tribunal in Germany seriously*. This is absolutely unjustified.

It is true that for me, as a Communist, *the highest tribunal is the programme of the Communist International*, and the Supreme Court is the Control Commission of the Communist International.

But for me as an accused person the Supreme Court is an organ to be taken very seriously. Not

only because the members of the Supreme Court have specially high qualifications, but because this court is a very important organ of national power, of the existing order of society—an organ which has the power to pass the supreme sentence in its ultimate form.

And I can say with a clear conscience that I have stated nothing but the truth on every question before the Supreme Court, and therefore also before the public.

4. *I must also decisively reject the allegation* that I have been pursuing propagandist aims. It may be that my defence before the Supreme Court has had a propagandist effect. It may even be assumed that my behaviour before the court might serve as a model for an accused Communist. But that was not the aim of my defence.

In my opinion the speeches of Herr Göring and Herr Göbbels have also undoubtedly had a certain propagandist effect in favour of Communists, but these gentlemen are in no way responsible for this fact!

5. I have not only been plentifully abused by the press—that is a matter of indifference to me—but here my own Bulgarian people also was characterised as "savage" and "barbarous," and that I cannot pass over in silence.

It is true that *Bulgarian fascism* is very savage and barbarous, but that can in fact be said of fascism in other countries also.

But the Bulgarian working class and peasantry, the intelligence of the people of Bulgaria, is by no means savage and barbarous.

Material culture in the Balkans is certainly not so high as in other European countries, but the mass of our people do not stand either intellectually or politically on a lower level than the masses in other countries of Europe.

During 500 years under a foreign yoke the Bulgarian people has lost neither its nationality nor its language, and has continuously struggled for emancipation. I have not the least reason to be ashamed of the fact that I am a Bulgarian. I am proud of the fact that I am a son of the Bulgarian working class which fights so bravely against fascism and for communism.

6. The character of this trial was determined by the thesis that the Reichstag Fire was the work of the German Communist Party and even of international communism.

Dr. Werner :

" The prosecution is therefore based also upon the standpoint that this criminal attack was to be the alarm signal for the enemies of the State, who were now to open their general attack against the German Reich, in order to destroy the German Reich and to replace it by the dictatorship of the proletariat, a Soviet State, by grace of the Third International."

But it is not the first time that such crimes have been laid to the account of Communists.

I will only bring to your recollection a few examples :

1. *Provocative attempts :*
   - (*a*) attack on the railway at Jüterbog—a Hungarian psychopath and provocateur ;
   - (*b*) murder of the French President, Doumer, by Gorguloff.
   - (*c*) attempt upon the cathedral in Sofia—2,000 active Communists murdered.
   - (*d*) bombing outrages by the Police President Prutkin in Sofia directed against the militant working class.
   - (*e*) incendiarism in Germany (information given by the *Völkischer Beobachter* of the 12th October 1933) : " *The incendiarism in Pomerania completely explained. Forty employers arrested by the police.*"[1]

" The Stettin police have discovered a case of incendiarism without precedent in German criminal records. In the Province of Pomerania in the course of the *last few years* property worth millions has been destroyed by incendiary fires.

" It has now been revealed that these crimes were carried out to a large extent by building contractors who had houses, farms and barns set on fire by a gang of incendiaries.

[1] Abridged version.

" Up till now forty employers, including the owner of a brickyard, six farmers and nine members of the incendiary gang, have been arrested in connection with this affair.

" The first traces of the criminal gang were found when a barn belonging to a farmer in Borin was burnt down on the evening of the 22nd April. An agricultural labourer, Emil Fechtner, was indicated as responsible.

" Fechtner made a confession, and admitted to fifty acts of arson, but the motive of his deeds still remained completely obscure. Then, during his examination, the prisoner let fall the remark that the houses which had been burnt down would after all have to be built up again, and that in this way labourers and unemployed would get work. This put the police on the right track.

" The leader of the incendiary organisation was Ernst Spörke, the owner of a brickyard in Borin. He was associated with several building contractors and farmers. Spörke took the commissions for fires and handed them on to the gang which was employed by these people. The brickyard owner, Spörke, fixed his prices very low. If possible, he did not pay more than three marks for a fire, although he derived great advantage from it, as he could considerably increase his market for tiles, cement and bricks as a result."

2. *For political ends—forgeries :*

(*a*) Zinoviev letter in England 1924.

(*b*) The forgers' workshop of the Russian White Guardists in Berlin—Drushelovsky. Comintern documents.

3. *Bismarck's telegram*, in 1870.

The war between France and Germany!

7. *Göring's thesis :*

" The Communists were obliged to undertake something. Now or never! "

Dr. Werner :

" For this reason the Communist Party was at that time in a position in which it had either to relinquish the struggle, or else, even if its preparations were not already fully completed, to take up the struggle. This was the only chance which it could still have in the circumstances. Either to relinquish its aim without a struggle or to resort to a certain act of desperation, to risk the final stake, which under certain conditions might still save the situation. It might also turn out badly ; but even so the Party would be in no worse a position than if it had relinquished the struggle without striking a blow."

He who would fight his adversary in the right way should at least know his adversary well. Suppression of the Party, dissolution of the mass organisations, loss of legality—are undoubtedly heavy blows for the revolutionary movement. *But that is very far from meaning that everything is lost.*

The German Communist Party knew that the Communist Parties in a number of countries are still alive and fighting under illegal conditions (Poland, Italy, Bulgaria, etc.).

The German Communist Party knew that the Russian Bolsheviks were an illegal party, persecuted in a bloody manner, when they organised and carried out the victorious October revolution of 1917, and achieved power.

Fortunately, the Communists are not so short-sighted as their enemies, and do not lose their nerve in difficult situations!

The Communist Party of Germany can also prepare and carry out the proletarian revolution illegally. This will cost much sacrifice, but the Party will be steeled and strengthened. One example: Bulgaria.

The trial—a link in the chain—of destroying communism.

What exactly is the Communist International?

A world Party with millions of members and followers.

Its first and largest section is a *ruling* Party, which rules the largest country in the world.

A world Party of this kind does not play with words and deeds.

A Party of this kind cannot officially say one thing to its millions of followers and at the same time do the opposite in secret.

A Party of this kind does not carry out any "*double book-keeping.*"

And this Party, millions strong, issued the following call to German Communists:

(Decisions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, Manifesto of the Communist International, the alpha and omega of Communist tactics!):

Mass work, mass struggle, mass resistance, united front, no adventures.

8. *What has the evidence shown?*

(*a*) *The myth* that the Reichstag Fire was the work of Communists has completely collapsed.

(*b*) No signal, no beacon fire, no opening move towards armed insurrection! No one expected a Communist rising at the end of February 1933.

No one observed any acts, deeds or attempts at insurrection in connection with the Reichstag Fire.

No one heard anything about it at that time.

All the stories relating to this are of a much later date.

(*c*) The working class at that period was putting itself on the defensive against the attacks of fascism.

The German Communist Party was attempting to organise the resistance of the masses and their defence.

It has, however, been proved that the burning of the Reichstag was the occasion, the opening move, the " signal " for the large-scale campaign of destruction directed against the working class and their vanguard, the German Communist Party.

9. *Who actually needed the Reichstag Fire at the end of February?*

The position :

(*a*) internal strife in the National camp. National-Socialist autocracy or " National Coalition "? (Thyssen-Krupp domination.)

(*b*) united front movement within the working class for resistance to the Fascist dictatorship.

Wels, Leipart, Severing and Braun were being more and more deserted by the Social-Democratic workers.

Gigantic increase in the influence of the German Communist Party.

The National-Socialist leadership needed :

(*a*) A manœuvre to divert attention from the internal difficulties—a means of establishing their hegemony in the National camp.

(*b*) The smashing of the working-class united front then coming into being.

(*c*) An impressive pretext for mass persecution of the German Communist Party and of the whole working-class movement.

(*d*) A proof that the National-Socialists are the saviours of Germany from the Bolshevik Communist danger.

EMERGENCY DECREE OF THE REICH-PRESIDENT FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE NATION AND THE STATE

(28th February 1933.)

State of Emergency.

1. Articles 114, 115, 117, 118, 123, 124 and 153 of the German National Constitution are suspended until further notice. Restrictions of personal liberty, of the right of free speech, including the freedom of the press, of the rights of organisation and assembly, breaches of the secrecy of correspondence and of the post, telegraphs and telephones, orders for the searching of houses and for confiscation and restriction of property, are, therefore, admissible, even beyond the legal limits by which they are otherwise determined.

10. *Lubbe was not alone.*

Parisius : " Upon the answer to this question hangs the fate of the other accused! " No! A thousand times no!

The assembly hall was set on fire by other persons. The setting on fire by Lubbe and the fire in the assembly hall only coincide so far as the *time* is concerned, but are otherwise *entirely*

distinct. Most probably Lubbe was the unconsciously misused tool of these people, but *Lubbe is no Communist.*

He was a rebellious lumpen-proletarian.

Thus the burning of the Reichstag arose from a concealed alliance between political madness and political provocation. The ally—from the side of political madness—sits in the dock. The allies from the side of political provocation have vanished. And thus the wretched *Faust* is present—the cunning *Mephistopheles* is absent.

11. *How did it come about that innocent Communists were accused as incendiaries?* I leave the facts to speak for themselves :

(*a*) *Göring's declaration* on the 28th February. Lubbe's Communist Party membership card.

Torgler and Lubbe.

The work of Communists!

(*b*) *Henningsdorf*—left out ; no investigation.

(*c*) *The sleeping companions* of Lubbe in the Henningsdorf refuge not sought for and, up to now, not to be found.

(*d*) *The civilian* who gave the first news of the Reichstag Fire to the Brandenburger Guard—not sought for, his identity not established, remains *unknown* to this day.

(*e*) Dr. Albrecht (a Nazi Deputy).

Strategy of the investigation all wrong—the incendiaries of the Reichstag are looked for where they are not to be found! At all costs Communists must be established as the accomplices of van der Lubbe!

Göring himself bears the chief responsibility for it!

12. The prosecution has made its task fairly easy for itself. The officials of the commission on the fire said to themselves : The real accomplices are missing—so substitutes have to be found ; and according to the line already adopted Communists had to be these substitute incendiaries of the Reichstag.

" Nature abhors a vacuum! "

Decisive circle of witnesses :

Karwahne ...	Lubbe with Torgler.
Frey	Torgler with Popoff.
Major Weberstedt	Taneff with Lubbe.
Dr. Dröscher ...	Torgler with Dimitroff.
Helmer	Lubbe with Dimitroff and Popoff.

(Dr. Dröscher identical with Job Zimmermann)

13. Heller quoted a Communist poem, written in January 1925, in order to prove that the burning of the Reichstag in 1933 was the work of Communists.

I quote the great German poet Goethe :

" Lerne zeitig klüger sein.
Auf des Glückes grosser Waage
Steht die Zunge selten ein :
Du musst steigen oder sinken,
Du musst herrschen und gewinnen
Oder dienen und verlieren,
Leiden oder triumphieren,
Amboss oder Hammer sein! "[1]

Yes, he who does not want to be the anvil must be the hammer! The German working class as a whole did not understand this truth in the year 1918 ; nor in the year 1924, and equally not in July 1932. Social-Democratic leaders — Wels, Severing, Braun, Leipart and Grassmann are to blame for this. Now the German workers will well be able to understand it.

14. *On the administration of Justice.*

I do not wish to offend my high judges in any way. But I must openly say that I can no more believe in the *blind Goddess of Justice*, Themis, than I can believe in the *existence of a God.*

And in this respect I have one very material witness even for the Supreme Court. That is the Minister of Justice, Herr Kerrl. This very honest and courageous fellow publicly made the

[1] Learn to be wiser in time ; the mighty scales of fortune seldom stand still. You must either rise or fall : win and rule or lose and serve; suffer or triumph ; if you are not the hammer you will be the anvil.

following declaration in April of this year (28.4. *Montagspost*) :

" It is a prejudice of formal liberalistic legal theory that the idol of legal decisions must be *objectivity*. Here we have also reached one *source* of the *alienation* between the *people* and *justice*, and in the last resort this alienation is always the fault of justice. What is objectivity, then, at a moment when a people is fighting for its life ? Does the fighting soldier or the victorious army know anything about objectivity ? The soldier and the army only know one thing, only have one line to follow, only ask one question : How can I save liberty and honour ? How can I save the nation ? So it is at once obvious that justice cannot make a business of the worship of objectivity amidst a people engaged in a life and death struggle. Measures taken by judges, prosecution and defence can only be directed by a single guiding line :

" *What will serve the life of the nation?*

" *What will save the people?*

" It is not undirected objectivity, meaning inactivity and hence ossification, alienation of the people, which should prevail ; no, all actions, all measures, individual or collective, belong to the demand of the people for life, are subordinate to the nation! "

These are golden words! Law and high treason are very relative conceptions, completely dependent upon time and circumstances.

What is legal in Russia, for instance, is persecuted in Germany as a breach of the law, and vice versa.

What was legal in Germany a year ago is to-day illegal.

In Germany National-Socialism *rules* for the time being; in Austria and Czecho-Slovakia National-Socialists are for the time being persecuted and are illegal; they have to supply themselves with false passports, false names and coded addresses.

TENDENTIOUS TRIALS AND TENDENTIOUS SENTENCES

15. In the seventeenth century, Galileo Galilei stood before the stern tribunal of the Inquisition and was to be condemned to death as a heretic. With the deepest conviction and resolution he exclaimed:

"*And yet the earth revolves!*"

And this scientific thesis later became the common possession of the whole of mankind.

We Communists to-day can say with no less resolution than old Galileo:

"And yet it revolves!" The wheel of history is still revolving forwards—towards a Soviet Europe, towards a world league of Soviet Republics.

And this wheel, driven by the proletariat under the leadership of the Communist International,

will not be stopped by any measures of extirpation, by any terms of penal servitude, by any sentences of death. It is still turning, and will go on turning until the final victory of communism!

16. The public prosecutor has asked that the Bulgarian accused should be acquitted "owing to absence of proof." But I am far from satisfied with this. The affair is not so simple. We Bulgarians, together with Torgler, must be acquitted, not owing to lack of evidence, but because we, as Communists, have had nothing to do with this *anti-Communist action*, and could have had nothing to do with it.

I demand:

1. That the Supreme Court admits our innocence of this deed and admits the indictment to have been unjustified.
2. Van der Lubbe to be regarded as a misused tool of the enemies of the working class.
3. That those guilty of bringing the unjustified charge against us should be made to answer for this.
4. That compensation, corresponding to our loss of time and health and the suffering caused us, should be granted us at the expense of those guilty of this.

A time will yet come when demands of this sort will be fulfilled with interest.

No. 37

After the announcement of the verdict of acquittal on the 23rd December, Dr. Bünger read a lengthy substantiation of the verdict, in which the acquittal of Torgler and of the Bulgarians was based on " lack of evidence." Dimitroff was intensely indignant that this reason was given. As soon as the President had ended, he demanded to be allowed to speak. Permission was not granted him, however, and the court left the hall as if fleeing from it. What Dimitroff wished to say in criticism of the reasons given for the verdict on that occasion can be seen from the following notes which he had made for this speech.

DIMITROFF'S NOTES FOR A FINAL SPEECH AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE VERDICT (23.12.33)

The heavy task of the court : the wolf to get a full meal and the sheep not to be devoured. The verdict is an unsuccessful attempt to solve this insoluble problem.

The identification and condemnation of the originators and men behind the scenes, of " Mephistopheles," remains reserved for the tribunal of the future proletarian dictatorship.

The prosecution found itself in the position of a mother who has had a miscarriage.

Why a " miscarried " verdict ?

Because the formal condemnation of communism as the originator actually works out as equivalent to indirect confirmation of the fact that the National-Socialists are the originators!

If van der Lubbe had accomplices and if these were not Torgler and the other accused, then— ?

Then the question remains : How was it that,

during the five months' preliminary investigation and the three months' final trial, the actual accomplices were not found ?

Further : these accomplices must have been " inside " people, i.e. people who were familiar with the layout and arrangement of the Reichstag ; otherwise even Lubbe could not have carried out his deed. But who at that time could have been so familiar with these things as the National-Socialists themselves ?

Who, at a time when all Communists were being strictly observed and followed up, could go in and out of the Reichstag secure and undisturbed ?

And then :

Henningsdorf—Refuge ? Other fellows who slept there ? The young man in Spandau ?

The unknown civilian ?

The National-Socialist Deputy Dr. Albrecht ?

Fairy stories about conversations in Neukölln ?

Karwahne, Frey, Kreyer ?

Beacon fire ? Signal ? but for what ?

For the " National Revolution," for the campaign of destruction against the working-class movement and the German Communist Party!

For the establishment of the " totalitarian State," of the National-Socialist autocracy!

" High treason " ? No!

Betrayal of the people—i.e. treason of the German people!

Fascist dictatorship—dictatorship of Thyssen-Krupp capital.

III. AFTER THE ACQUITTAL

After the conclusion of the trial, the acquitted men were taken to a room adjoining the Supreme Court, where they were informed that an order had been made for their detention. Long weeks of uncertainty followed. At first in the court prison in Leipzig, then in the underground prison of the Secret Police in Berlin, Dimitroff and his fellow-countrymen were still kept in solitary confinement and subjected to every possible form of petty persecution (restriction of visits, prohibition of newspapers, refusal to allow doctor's treatment, etc.). Dimitroff had to take up the fight against his torturers afresh. Once more there issued from his cell innumerable letters containing protests and demands to the competent police and Government offices. Dimitroff demanded from the court, among other things, a copy of the verbatim report of the verdict (including the reasons given for it), but never got this.

The following documents represent a small selection from this correspondence.

A peculiar fate befell the telegram to the Bulgarian Prime Minister Muschanoff (Document No. 37), in which Dimitroff declared his readiness to return to Bulgaria. Whilst the Bulgarian Government gave the impression that it had never received this telegram, it became known to foreign journalists and was published in the British press. The prison authorities used this as a pretext for accusing Dimitroff of illegal contact with the outer world and for aggravating his conditions in prison.

Nos. 38-40

8th December 1933.

To the President of the Supreme Court, Fourth Criminal Court.

SIR,

I request that a decision may be taken on the question of the application which I already made verbally in the session of the 6th December, namely, that I should be allowed, now that the hearing of evidence has been concluded, to speak with my fellow Bulgarian accused.

I would remind you that for nine months, since the day of my arrest, I have been kept strictly isolated from my comrades, and in conformity with the regulations have not been allowed to exchange a single word with them. Now that the examination and the hearing of evidence are concluded, this measure can no longer be regarded as necessary from the standpoint of the conduct of the trial.

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

24th December 1933.

To the President of the Supreme Court, Fourth Criminal Court.

SIR,

I venture to express my astonishment and regret at the fact that up to the present time I

have received no answer to my letter of the 8th December in which I enquired about the application also made by me at the sitting of the 6th December with regard to the question of free intercourse with my fellow Bulgarian accused.

Curiously enough, even now, after the announcement of the verdict, I am still kept strictly isolated from Taneff and Popoff.

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

25th December 1933.

To the President of the Criminal Court.

I beg you to arrange for me to be provided with a *copy* of the verdict according to the verbatim report (including the reasons given for the verdict).

If it is not otherwise possible, then I request that this should be done at my expense.

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 41

Leipzig,
28th December 1933.

To the Police President of Leipzig.

SIR,

On the 23rd December, immediately after the announcement of the verdict of the Supreme

Court, your order was handed to me, decreeing my detention " until further notice."

As up to the present day neither an order for my release nor the actual reasons for my further imprisonment have been made known, I venture to apply to you and to request the following information :

(1) For what reasons has this detention been ordered ?

(2) Who is responsible for this measure ?

(3) How long will this detention last ?

(4) To whom should I apply in order that this detention order may be rescinded ?

As an alien acquitted by the highest court in Germany, I believe I am entitled to demand that I should be immediately deported to Czecho-Slovakia or to France, where the possibility of my return to my home, Bulgaria, can be cleared up. If this return should not be possible at the moment, I would then journey to Moscow, where I have previously lived as a Bulgarian political refugee with the rights of a citizen of Soviet Russia.

Awaiting speedy information from you, sent either directly to myself or to my mother and sister, and in expectation that you on your side will make the necessary arrangements,

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF

P.S.—On my arrest on March 9th a number of my things, including my private library and two trunks, were confiscated.

I request that these things should be released and put at my disposal.

No. 42

Leipzig,
29th December 1933.

To Dr. Bolotner, Kislovodsk, U.S.S.R.

DEAR DR. BOLOTNER,

I only received your letter of the 5th December yesterday. Many thanks! For the time being I am in an extraordinary position: acquitted by the highest court in Germany and yet not free!

What is still worse is that my health is rather shaken. I have come to an end of all my stock of health. For several weeks I have been almost continuously ill. I am especially troubled by bronchitis.

I hope there will be no great complications before I get the opportunity of undergoing a proper course of treatment.

Heartiest greetings to all friends and acquaintances and especially to yourself and your wife.

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 43

TELEGRAM

30th December 1933.

To the Prime Minister Muschanoff, Sofia.

As intending live again in my home and undertake political activity repeat my public declaration before Supreme Court namely to return on conclusion of Reichstag Fire Trial and fight for abrogation of sentence on me on account of September insurrection 1923 stop request for this free conduct personal security and public trial request decision of Government

(*signed*) GEORG DIMITROFF,
Leipzig Prison.

No. 44

Leipzig,
6th January 1934.

To the Police President of Leipzig.

SIR,

My mother and sister have been unable to speak with me for some days.

Unfortunately, I do not know the reasons for this, or whose order it is.

But as the refusal of the visiting hour is very painful to my old mother, I request you, sir, to be so good as to permit my mother and sister to visit me as before.

Assuming that someone feels it necessary to torment me personally, still it is not fitting that such measures should cause fresh and quite superfluous suffering to an old woman who has already suffered so much.

Yours respectfully,
(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 45

Leipzig,
24th January 1934.

To the Police President of Leipzig.

SIR,

It appears that both in Germany and abroad various incorrect news is being spread about my position.

I request that I may be allowed the opportunity of making a statement on my *actual* position to foreign and German journalists.

Yours respectfully,
(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 46

Leipzig,
25th January 1934.

To the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Frick.

On the 7th January I addressed a letter[1] to you and asked for information as to the reasons why I

[1]This letter had approximately the same substance as the one addressed to the Leipzig Police President on the 28th December (Document No. 36).

have been put under detention after having been acquitted by the Supreme Court—the highest court in Germany—and when I, as an alien, shall be deported to a neighbouring country (Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Switzerland, France or Holland).

On the 13th January I also sent a telegram on the same question.

On the 16th January my mother visited the Ministry of the Interior and was promised that the question would be finally settled in a week.

Up till to-day (the 25th January) I have, unfortunately, received no answer and am unaware of any order concerning my release and deportation.

I finally request a clear and categorical answer, as I have at least a right to expect this.

Yours respectfully,
(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 47

Berlin,
7th February 1934.

To the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Frick.

One and a half months have already passed since the announcement of the verdict in the Reichstag Fire Trial, and we, the three acquitted Bulgarians, still remain in prison—in solitary confinement injurious to our health and savouring morally of the Inquisition, almost hermetically

isolated from the outer world and as if buried alive. I myself, for example, am not only forbidden every foreign newspaper, but also the Bulgarian Government papers, the papers of my own country. During my conversations with my mother and sister they are not even allowed to give me information as to the situation and events in Bulgaria!

Up till to-day I have never been made aware of any authentic official statement as to the actual reasons for this imprisonment.

The telegrams and letters which I have addressed to you have remained unanswered.

From the indications given by various officials, however, one gathers the following different explanations :

(1) We are to remain in prison because we constitute a political danger to the Government ;

(2) We are kept under detention for the sake of our own personal safety ;

(3) We still remain in prison because the necessary negotiations with other countries regarding our deportation are not concluded.

The first explanation can obviously not be taken seriously. A government which feels itself so strong can certainly not be endangered by the release and deportation of three Bulgarian political refugees.

The second explanation has no basis because it cannot be assumed that a convinced National-Socialist could be found who would assault innocent foreign Communists on his own initiative.

The third explanation has already been refuted by the simple fact, which has been established, that Poland is ready to grant a transit visa and that the Soviet Union is ready to receive us as political refugees.

And if, despite all this, our imprisonment still continues, then, in our opinion, it can only have the object—either of gradually turning us into physical and moral cripples, or of having us got rid of on a " suitable " opportunity by " irresponsible " elements.

I do not believe that the Government can have any political interest in this, and am therefore daily awaiting the settlement of our case by speedy deportation to the Soviet Union or to one of the countries bordering on Germany.

If this should unfortunately not take place soon, then there remains nothing for me—and I must say this frankly, not as a threat, but as a dilemma forced upon me—but to use the only method of personal defence open to an innocent prisoner and to start a hunger strike. My health and my stock of patience are almost exhausted. Rather a horrible end than horror without end. I have now been for *eleven* months in this fearful prison.

Yours respectfully,

(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

IV. IN MOSCOW

After the Bulgarian Embassy, in the course of various conversations with Dimitroff's mother, had indicated verbally that the Bulgarian Government no longer regarded the three acquitted men as Bulgarian subjects, the Soviet Government was able to decide officially on the 15th February to accept the three Bulgarians as Soviet citizens. This was the decisive step towards their final release. On the 27th February, very early in the morning, Dimitroff, Popoff and Taneff were awakened and shortly afterwards put into an aeroplane, which was to take them to Moscow by way of Königsberg. This order came as a surprise. Not only to the three Bulgarians, but also to various State officials. In the general hurry, the order for deportation was drawn up without a date (see facsimile No. VII). Similarly, the prison authorities were also unprepared, and not only did not return the things which had been confiscated at the time from the prisoners (money, trunks, books, etc.) but omitted to examine the luggage of the deportees. It was thanks to this circumstance that Dimitroff was able to take with him the whole of the notes made by him during the preliminary investigation and the trial, from which all the documents reproduced in this collection have been selected.

Although the National-Socialist Government did everything possible to keep the departure a secret until the evening—even from the Soviet Embassy in Berlin—(" we wanted to prevent them from preparing a royal welcome for Dimitroff over in Moscow," Göring explained to Soviet journalists on the 28th February at a press reception)—the arrival of the rescued comrades in Moscow took the form of a tremendous demonstration. On the very evening of the arrival, on the 27th February,

despite his fatigue after the excitements of the last period and the journey, Dimitroff gave an interview to the representatives of the foreign and Soviet press, from which we extract the following passages :

No. 48

THE FIRST THING THAT WE MUST SAY

The first thing that we must say—is the unbounded gratitude which we feel to the international proletariat, to the widest sections of the workers in every country, to the honest intellectuals, who fought for our freedom. And above all, our warmest thanks to the workers and collective peasants of the Soviet country, of *our* country.

I can state with full conviction : without this admirable mobilisation of public opinion in our defence we should certainly not have been in a position to be talking to you here. German fascism had determined to destroy us morally and physically.

Unfortunately it was only very late that my comrades and I learned of the magnificent campaign which was conducted throughout the whole world for our release. It is only now, a few hours after our arrival here, that we have learnt in conversation with the comrades much of what was happening around us all through this time. I am firmly convinced that this campaign has not merely saved us, the three Bulgarians and Torgler, but that we have also to thank it for the

fact that the provocation by German fascism, which aimed at the destruction of many thousands of workers, was brought to nothing. This campaign deprived the Fascists of the possibility of setting further provocation going for the extermination of the leading cadres of the revolutionary proletariat in Germany.

In short—*the trial was a provocation*, just as the burning of the Reichstag was a provocation. The trial was intended to conceal the incendiaries. The object was to shift the blame on to other people. But, in accordance with the laws of dialectic, the laws of the class struggle of the proletariat, the trial turned into its opposite. The anti-Communist trial was transformed into a magnificent anti-Fascist demonstration and a shameful fiasco for fascism. The fire was intended to convince the German people that Communists were incendiaries, the trial convinced the German people that this was a myth.

In the meantime a year has passed, and although Fascist Germany—one single prison—is isolated from the whole world, there is no one to-day in Germany who believes that the Communists set fire to the Reichstag. Even among the simple rank and file members of the National-Socialist Party there are many who are convinced that the Reichstag Fire was the work of the Fascist leaders.

We have left Germany with the greatest hatred for German fascism, but also with the greatest love, the deepest sympathy, for the German workers and Communists. Owing to our strict isolation it was impossible for us to know exactly what they have to suffer and how they are fighting. But up to the time we were in court and as we stood in the dock, we were conscious that the mighty German Communist Party was standing unshaken at its post. Loyalty, devotion to their Party, was expressed in the attitude of the working-class witnesses who had been fetched out of the concentration camps to the court. The struggle conducted for our release must be continued for the release of thousands of proletarian prisoners from the Fascist barracks.

What I shall do here ? That is quite clear. . . . *I am a soldier of the proletarian revolution, a soldier of the Communist International.* It was with that point of view that I came before the Tribunal. I shall carry out my duty as a soldier of the proletarian revolution here, I shall also continue to carry it out up to my last breath.

No. 49

Among the first to whom Dimitroff in Moscow wrote abroad, were the great writers Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse, who had taken a specially vigorous part in the world-campaign for the support of the innocent accused.

Moscow,
18th March 1934.

MY DEAR COMRADE ROMAIN ROLLAND,
MY DEAR COMRADE HENRI BARBUSSE,

Now that I have had the opportunity of studying the documents relating to the great mass movement which was started throughout the whole world by the Reichstag Fire Trial, I feel the need to address a few words to you. These lines are addressed both personally to you, whose courageous opposition to imperialist war and to fascism I have always followed with the greatest attention and sympathy, and also to the many hundreds and thousands of poets, artists and scientists who have publicly placed themselves on our side in the course of the movement.

I well know that the stand you and your friends made during the trial was not only for the sake of myself and my fellow accused. On the sector of the front in which we found ourselves we fought against barbarous fascism and for communism, for the Communist International, to whose struggle of emancipation we have dedicated our lives. The fact that, in connection with the great struggles of the toiling masses which have taken place in France and Austria during the last week, a large number of intellectuals have joined the Party of the workers, fighting against Fascist reaction, confirms me in the idea that you and your friends are concerned above all with the cause of the proletariat.

Fascism wants to turn the wheel of world history backwards. It systematically destroys the foundations of cultural progress. It maintains and increases the misery of the labouring masses. It fights against technique and openly preaches the return to barbarism. What have the intellectuals to expect from this regime except further decay of the foundations of research, of artistic creation, of technique and therefore of the conditions of existence for intellectuals ?

The proletarian revolution frees the masses from exploitation, opens the door for them to a quick ascent, develops the domination of man over Nature with the aid of technique controlled by man, and so produces the prerequisites for an undreamt-of development of creative power. What I have been able, since my return to the Soviet Union, to see of the successes in the building up of socialism is new and indisputable evidence of the enormous perspectives which the victory of the proletarian revolution unfolds to mankind.

The bourgeoisie will do everything possible to sow confusion in the ranks of the intelligentsia who are striving towards socialism. It will not shrink from any slander or distortion. The Reichstag Fire Trial has furnished enough examples of this. And the ruling class will be supported in this course by the policy of social democracy, which asserts that it also desires

socialism, but which stands fundamentally on the side of bourgeois ideology, and in practice comes out in opposition to the revolutionary front of the working class at all decisive moments. Obviously we, you and your friends, will not and must not be frightened by the difficulties. A great aim is worth any stake, and our rescue from the claws of the German Fascists proves that when every force is harnessed in a common front then even really great difficulties can be victoriously overcome.

And so the next thing to do is to put all our strength into gaining the release of the anti-Fascist fighters who are still in the power of the National-Socialists. I think here specially of Ernst Thälmann, the leader of the German Communists, the best and clearest leading mind of the German proletariat, whose fate disturbed me throughout my imprisonment and the whole trial, and whom I cannot forget for a moment to-day. You have done so much for us—now it is necessary to do more, much more, for him. For to gain his freedom will of course be a far more difficult task.

To you, my dear Romain Rolland, my dear Henri Barbusse, and to all who have stood by us so helpfully in the course of the last year, I express in our name and in the name of our International, our thanks, and look forward with pleasure to the day when we shall again stand

shoulder to shoulder in the fight against our common enemy.

Yours,
(*signed*) G. DIMITROFF.

No. 50

At the end of April, in Moscow, Dimitroff received the representatives of the Communist press abroad. In his statement he drew out the lessons of the world campaign which had led to the acquittal of the Communist accused, and to the release of the Bulgarian accused. He did this with a view to the campaign which was begun at this time for the release of Ernst Thälmann.

THE FIRST LESSONS

From the interview with the representatives of the foreign Communist press, given at the end of April 1934.[1]

" There has surely seldom before been a case of such a wide campaign on an international subject. How can this be explained, do you think ? "

" I think this solidarity proves that the interest was not simply in the accused persons. The strong sympathy of the workers and also of other sections was the expression of satisfaction in our struggle against fascism in Germany and of their determination to take part themselves actively in this struggle."

" I think your courageous bearing was of special assistance to this."

" It is true that I fought before the Tribunal fiercely, consistently and ruthlessly to the very

[1] The questions put by the correspondents are given in smaller type.

end. You mentioned courage, heroic behaviour, in the court. No fear of death—but that is not a case of personal heroism, you know; it is, fundamentally, a quality of communism, of the revolutionary proletariat, and of the Bolsheviks. The bourgeois class is no longer in a position to exhibit real courage and heroism in its ranks. It is a declining class and has no further perspectives."

"You are probably aware that a large number of Social-Democratic workers in every country were enthusiastic about your stand?"

"Yes, they contributed a great deal towards our release. But these Social-Democratic workers should now put a question to themselves: how is it that the Social-Democrats have no heroic leaders? How does that come about? There is only one explanation: social-democracy is dragged along in the wake of the bourgeoisie, its theory and practice make it a tool of the bourgeois dictatorship. Therefore they cannot have any really heroic and courageous leaders any more than the bourgeoisie themselves can."

"What conclusions do you think one should draw from this, then?"

"One of the most important conclusions is that the Social-Democratic workers can only conduct the struggle against the bourgeoisie successfully if they fight together with the Communist workers. Up till now many of the Social-Democratic workers have not got further than being

sympathetic towards us. But sympathy is not enough. It must be transformed into an active struggle against the bourgeoisie and fascism, into a firm, united struggle conducted by Socialist, Christian and non-party workers, side by side with Communist workers. But tell your workers one thing. The fight against fascism means at the same time and above all—the fight against fascism in one's own country. No one can deny that every country has its own Hitlers, Görings and Göbbels growing up. It is not enough only to assemble one's forces and to wait for a given moment when it will already be too late to strike. Even in Holland the fight has had to start already. We must fight daily and hourly against all Fascist manifestations. In the factories, in the streets, among the unemployed and at meetings, we must bar the way to the Fascists. Every worker should see that fascism gets no chance of growing and gaining influence over workers and peasants. Fascism has to be resisted step by step and blow by blow."

"Then you are convinced that the setting up of a Fascist dictatorship can be prevented?"

"Yes, undoubtedly! If the Social-Democratic workers in Germany had marched soon enough side by side with the Communist workers, step by step against fascism, if they had not followed their leaders so blindly, then we should certainly have had no Fascist dictatorship at the present moment. The German example is full of lessons for

the workers in every country. But it is necessary to draw the lessons from this example immediately."

" We will see to that. But how can something be done immediately for the German anti-Fascists ? "

" Hundreds and thousands of the best workers and fighters of the German proletariat are in prisons and concentration camps in Germany today, in constant danger of their lives. That is true above all of the leader of the German revolutionary working class, Ernst Thälmann. I am never tired of repeating again and again that it is a question of honour for the proletariat of every country to make every possible effort, to exert all its forces, in order to deliver the leader of the German working class, Ernst Thälmann, from the hands of the Fascist executioners."

" Have you any exact information as to how Thälmann is ? "

" During my imprisonment I saw Thälmann three times ; on two of those occasions he could not see me, but the third time, in October, during the Berlin portion of the trial, he had a glimpse of me as well. From the corridor, I saw him in his cell. I greeted him and he answered me. He was full of courage, despite his severe imprisonment. The latest news as to his treatment is very suspicious."

" What do you think will happen to him ? "

" In any case the attempt will be made to destroy him physically and mentally. We must

bear in mind the whole time that the release of Thälmann and of the other German comrades will be much more difficult than our release."

No. 51

The more the Leipzig trial became a thing of the past the more did Dimitroff turn his attention away from this subject and towards the international struggle of the Communist Parties, and of the anti-Fascist united front. In particular he showed a burning interest in the campaign for the release of Ernst Thälmann, who was a personal friend of his, and whom he valued as one of the best minds and most important leaders of the international working class. He took action in this campaign by writing a pamphlet from which we give the following extracts :

SAVE ERNST THÄLMANN

(From the pamphlet with the same title)

A great political battle against fascism in Germany, a moral victory over this force of darkness and reaction lies behind us : the Leipzig trial.

The whole world has seen that the plans of fascism can be upset if the enemy is attacked in the right way.

The acquittal of the Communist accused in Leipzig was not a matter of Hitler's " sense of justice." He was forced to it by the combined struggle conducted in Germany and abroad.

Men, and especially the leaders of the policy of declining capitalism, do not do what they wish to do but what they have to do. It was not because of his goodwill that Hitler delivered us from the

executioner and did not despatch us along the final path trodden by van der Lubbe; it was because he was forced to act thus.

After the overwhelming majority of the German people, including thousands and thousands of National-Socialists, had been convinced of our innocence and had angrily and indignantly rejected the framed-up provocative accusation; after the world-wide public indignation awakened by this gross provocation had filtered through to the German people by innumerable channels; after Hitler had been obliged to realise that he stood hopelessly isolated on this question amidst the whole world, it was no longer politically advantageous to the National-Socialist Government to destroy us; they had to recognise that our destruction would, on the contrary, have seriously threatened their demagogic influence over the masses even in their own militant organisations. And, because national-socialism is obliged to pay attention to this feeling, Hitler had to give way and renounce his original schemes.

Even more than at the Leipzig trial it is now important in the fight for Ernst Thälmann to create a situation inside and outside Germany which will oblige the Hitler Government, from the point of view of their own political interests, to give up its plan of destroying Thälmann.

" Ernst Thälmann must be won like a battle," our great friend Henri Barbusse has most truly said.

In Germany a great ferment is spreading among the working masses and a large section of the intelligentsia against the domination of the Brownshirts. Manifestations of the resistance of the working masses are increasing despite all the terror. Discontent is increasing among ever wider sections of the people and penetrating even into the ranks of the National-Socialists themselves. The number of " grumblers, criticisers and professional agitators " is growing to such a degree that Herr Göbbels finds himself obliged to interrupt his sermons about the united harmony of the entire nation and its loyalty to the " Leader " and to announce quite a large-scale campaign against " disaffection."

It is necessary to create from this ferment such a movement against the destruction of Ernst Thälmann that it will become an insuperable barrier to the realisation of Hitler's sinister plans. The fight for the release of Thälmann must become the powerful expression, the embodiment, of the discontent and of the protest of the majority of the German people against the National-Socialist reign of blood.

Hundreds of German workers and intellectuals found their way into the concentration camps and prisons as a result of the Leipzig trial, because, regardless of all dangers, they spread the truth about the provocation. During my imprisonment I met many of these brave fighters. I

was deeply moved to see and to feel again and again that the prisoners not only showed no trace of discouragement, but that they were proud to have fulfilled their duty as fighters and as honourable men.

I am convinced that now, when it is a question of freeing the leader of the German working class and when we have the benefit of the experience of the Leipzig trial and our victory, the number of brave fighters for Thälmann in Germany will grow many times over.

The movement in the country itself, as the Leipzig trial proved, is the decisive factor in this struggle. But the anti-Fascist fighters in Germany will be able to work with more courage and more success if they are supported by a powerful mass movement abroad. The German people must not merely have some notion that this mass movement exists, only getting its knowledge of it through the distorted reflection of Göbbels' counter-propaganda. It must actually be made to feel it.

It is a question of using every means which can possibly be thought of in order to bring home to wide sections of the German population the fact that the proletarian world and all honest people are proffering Ernst Thälmann, and with him the oppressed German people, fraternal solidarity, warm affection and determined readiness to save him.

No enemy of fascism abroad should visit Germany or allow a relative or acquaintance to travel to Germany, or send letters to Germany, without using the opportunity to carry into the Third Reich, in the most diverse forms, the cry : " Save Ernst Thälmann! "

No motor trip, no party of travellers, no school excursion, no steamer, no commercial traveller or lecturer, no actor or conductor, no exchanged schoolboy or student from Germany, should come to another country without taking back home in one form or another a deep impression that all around Germany millions of people are supporting the slogan : Release Thälmann!

All official and semi-official representatives of the Hitler Government, of the Fascist organisations and institutions, of National-Socialist artistic, scientific and literary circles, who live abroad or travel abroad, whether officially or on private business, must everywhere, day by day, wherever they go, be made to realise that they will have no peace so long as Ernst Thälmann remains a prisoner in Germany and in danger of death.

It is necessary to exert moral pressure on the representatives from Hitler Germany at congresses, conferences, meetings and exhibitions of all kinds so long as Hitler keeps Ernst Thälmann a prisoner threatened with death.

It must not be possible in any country that publications which take a hostile attitude to the movement for Thälmann's release, or even treat it with indifference, should still be bought by honest people.

No opportunity should be missed in parliaments, municipal councils, and in every kind of public meeting, to bring forward and emphasise the question of Ernst Thälmann's release, and to brand the hangman Hitler.

So this is the position, and it cannot be otherwise :

Every thinking man must decide for himself whether he is going to be on the side of Hitler or on the side of Thälmann.

It is impossible to have a neutral attitude to this question.

Anyone who tries to remain neutral is actually helping, whether he wants to or not, the hangman Hitler.

Anyone who never stirs a finger to save Ernst Thälmann, bears, whether he wants to or not, a share in the responsibility for the crime of those who hold power in Germany.

Anyone who remains aloof from the movement for the release of Ernst Thälmann will, whether he wants to or not, share the guilt for his suffering in prison, for his physical and mental ruin, perhaps, even, for his eventual murder.

All out to release Ernst Thälmann !

To save Ernst Thälmann is a matter of honour for the international working class and is the duty of every honest thinking man in the world.

G. DIMITROFF,

Moscow, 19th May 1934.

No. 52

In his preface to a biography of Ernst Thälmann, Dimitroff gave the following description of the qualities necessary to a proletarian revolutionary. This description, which refers to Ernst Thälmann, defines in an incomparable way the very qualities which millions of people throughout the world have learnt to admire in Dimitroff himself.

WHAT MAKES A REVOLUTIONARY ?

(*From Dimitroff's Preface to a Biography of Ernst Thälmann.*)

The life of Ernst Thälmann shows that a true revolutionary and proletarian leader is formed *in the fire of the class struggle* and by making Marxism-Leninism his own.

It is not enough to have a revolutionary temperament—one has to understand how to handle the weapon of revolutionary theory.

It is not enough to know theory—one must also forge oneself a strong character with Bolshevist steadfastness.

It is not enough to know what ought to be done —one must also have the courage to carry it out.

One must always be ready to do anything, at any cost, which is of real service to the working class.

One must be capable of subordinating one's whole personal life to the interests of the proletariat.

APPENDIX

LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND

Name of writer : G. DIMITROFF.
Prisoner B. No. 8085
(to be given on every letter).

Berlin, N.W. 40, 24th August 1933.
Alt-Moabit 12a.
Read :

To M. ROMAIN ROLLAND,
Lucerne.

DEAR M. ROLLAND,

I feel I must express to you my sincere thanks for the resolute stand you have taken in defence of my innocence.

I have also already asked my official defending counsel (Dr. Paul Teichert, Leipzig, Otto-Schillerstrasse 2) to convey to you my thanks and at the same time to inform you of the concrete grounds for the charges made against me in the indictment.

The counsel chosen by me on 12th April, Herr Werner Wille (Berlin N., Heidebrinkerstrasse 6), informed me on 19*th July* that he was " no longer in a position " to represent me any further and had relinquished the brief.

The counsel whom I applied for—Bulgarian advocate Detcheff and French advocates Giafferi, Campinchi and Torrès—have been rejected by the Supreme Court.

Since I and my two Bulgarian comrades had absolutely nothing to do with the burning of the Reichstag, naturally the indictment could not produce any positive, indisputable proofs. Everything is built up on presumption, interpretations and concoctions in conjunction with evidence from suspicious witnesses.

My official counsel informed me yesterday that everything points to the trial beginning at the end of September.

My treatment in prison is *humane* except for the *handcuffs*, from which I have already had to suffer *day* and *night* for almost five months.

Many greetings to our friend Barbusse!

With best greetings,

G. DIMITROFF.

FROM DIMITROFF'S PRISON DIARY

30.4 (Sunday)
—*Fifth Sunday here!*
how much longer?

1st May (Monday)—Day of " National Labour."
—Moscow—Berlin—two historical antipodes!
—And I sit here in " Moabit "—fettered!
—Bad and sad enough!
—But : Dant., " no weakness! "

EXTRACTS MADE BY DIMITROFF FROM THE INDICTMENT WITH HIS MARGINAL NOTES (TWO PAGES FROM THE NOTE-BOOKS)

28 that D. had been seen several times earlier in company with the accused van der *Lubbe* in the " Bayernhof," and also, some time before the fire, had remained repeatedly in the Reichstag, once even accompanied by *Torgler*, so here, too, the conclusion is *justified* that D,, even if at the time of the burning of the Reichstag he was not himself present at the scene of the crime, *was at least implicated in some manner or other in the preparations for the crime, if only in the form of having by advice or psychological influence abetted the deed of the others and strengthened their will to commit the crime.* Many of the circumstances also indicate that D. went to Munich for the sole purpose of procuring *by this means* an *alibi* for himself. At all events he was unable to give a tenable reason for his journey. If in this connection he asserts that he met in Munich a Bulgarian physician who was travelling through from Paris to Sofia, little credence is to be attached to *this*, particularly as he *refused* to give the name of this physician so that his statements cannot be verified.

? !

? !
Justified!
Oh the bandit!

By means of telepathy, perhaps? !

The peak of the prosecution's objectivity!
? !

? !

P. 187 25. *Testimony of* the witness *Grothe*

LEAF FROM DIMITROFF'S NOTE BOOK

Hamlet

This above all : to thine
ownself be true.
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be
false to any man.

" Vor allem : sei wahrhaft gegen dich
selbst.
So unfehlbar die Nacht dem
Tage folgt :
Du wirst dann niemanden be-
lügen können. . ."

(Taken for my guiding motto)

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keuchend *Groll*
erzfalsch Unstern