

**THE FASCIST
OFFENSIVE
AND THE
TASKS OF THE
COMMUNIST
INTERNATIONAL**

By Georgi Dimitrov

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New Outlook Publishers
1808 Hylan Blvd, Suite 1009
Staten Island, NY 10314-0434
+1 (718) 979-6563
www.newoutlookpublishers.store

DEDICATION

We dedicate this book to all cadre who believe with their hearts, minds, and actions in a true Bolshevik Revolution!

For one to be a true Bolshevik, one must desire wholeheartedly, without reservation, to free themselves and their fellow workers from the bonds of class antagonisms. A true Bolshevik is one who understands the foundations of Marxist-Leninist teachings; one who understands that their sole purpose in life is to crush capitalism.

We dedicate this collection of works to you in the hopes that the truths expounded in this book and others will inspire you, the reader, to work to help build Communism.

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FASCISM AND THE WORKING CLASS

Comrades, as early as its Sixth Congress, the Communist International warned the world proletariat that a new fascist offensive was impending and called for a struggle against it. The Congress pointed out that “in a more or less developed form, fascist tendencies and the germs of a fascist movement are to be found almost everywhere.”

With the outbreak of the present most profound economic crisis, the sharp accentuation of the general crisis of capitalism and the revolutionization of the toiling masses, fascism has embarked upon a wide offensive. The ruling bourgeoisie is more and more seeking salvation in fascism, with the object of instituting exceptionally predatory measures against the toilers, preparing for an imperialist war of plunder, attacking the Soviet Union, enslaving, and partitioning China, and by all these means preventing revolution.

Imperialist circles are endeavoring to place the whole burden of the crisis on the backs of the toilers. *That is why they need fascism.*

They are trying to solve the problem of markets by enslaving the weak nations, by intensifying colonial oppression and repartitioning the world anew by means of war. *That is why they need fascism.*

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They are striving to forestall the growth of the forces of revolution by smashing the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants and by undertaking a military attack against the Soviet Union—the bulwark of the world proletariat. *That is why they need fascism.*

In a number of countries, Germany in particular, these imperialist circles have succeeded, before the masses have decisively turned towards revolution, in inflicting defeat on the proletariat and establishing a fascist dictatorship.

But what is characteristic of the victory of fascism is the fact that this victory, on the one hand, bears witness to the weakness of the proletariat, disorganized and paralyzed by the disruptive Social-Democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and, on the other, expresses the weakness of the bourgeoisie itself, afraid of the realization of a united struggle of the working class, afraid of revolution, and no longer in a position to maintain its dictatorship over the masses by the old methods of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism.

The victory of fascism in Germany, Comrade Stalin said at the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union:

“ ... must be regarded not only as a symptom of the weakness of the working class and a result of the betrayals of the working class by Social-Democracy, which paved the way for fascism; it must also be regarded as a sign of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, a sign that the bourgeoisie is no longer able to rule by the old methods of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, and, as a consequence, is compelled in its home policy to resort to terrorist methods of rule—as a sign that it is no longer able to find a way out of the present situation on

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the basis of a peaceful foreign policy, and, as a consequence, is compelled to resort to a policy of war.”¹

THE CLASS CHARACTER OF FASCISM

Comrades, as it was correctly described by the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, fascism in power is *the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital.*

The most reactionary variety of fascism is *the German type* of fascism. It has the effrontery to call itself National-Socialism, though having nothing in common with Socialism. Hitler fascism is not only bourgeois nationalism, it is bestial chauvinism. It is a government system of political banditry, a system of provocation and torture practiced upon the working class and the revolutionary elements of the peasantry, the petit bourgeoisie, and the intelligentsia. It is medieval barbarity and bestiality; it is unbridled aggression in relation to other nations and countries.

German fascism is acting as the spearhead of international counter-revolution, as the chief incendiary of imperialist war, as the initiator of a crusade against the Soviet Union, the great fatherland of the toilers of the whole world.

Fascism is not a form of State power “standing above both classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie,” as Otto Bauer, for instance, has asserted. It is not “the revolted petit-bourgeoisie which has seized the machinery of the State,” as the British Socialist Brailsford declares. No, fascism is not super-class government, nor government of the petit-bourgeoisie or

¹ Stalin, J.V., *Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the CPSU(B) in Works*, Vol. 13; Foreign Languages Publishing House: Moscow, 1955 pp. 299-300.

the lumpenproletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself. It is the organization of terrorist vengeance against the working class and the revolutionary section of the peasantry and intelligentsia. In foreign policy, fascism is chauvinism in its crudest form, fomenting the bestial hatred of other nations.

This, the true character of fascism, must be particularly stressed; because in a number of countries fascism, under cover of social demagogy, has managed to gain the following of the petit-bourgeois masses who have been driven out of their course by the crisis, and even of certain sections of the most backward strata of the proletariat. These would never have supported fascism if they had understood its real class character and its true nature.

The development of fascism, and of the fascist dictatorship itself, assumes *different forms* in different countries, according to historical, social, and economic conditions and to the national peculiarities and the international position of the given country. In certain countries, principally those in which fascism does not enjoy a broad mass basis and in which the struggle of the various groups within the camp of the fascist bourgeoisie itself is fairly acute, fascism does not immediately venture to abolish parliament, but allows the other bourgeois parties, as well as the Social-Democratic parties, to retain a certain degree of legality. In other countries, where the ruling bourgeoisie fears an *early* outbreak of revolution, fascism has established its unrestricted political monopoly, either immediately or by intensifying its reign of terror against and persecution of all competing parties and groups. This does not prevent fascism, when its position becomes *particularly* acute, from endeavoring to extend its basis and without altering its

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class nature, *combining* open terrorist dictatorship with a crude sham of parliamentarism.

The accession to power of fascism is not an *ordinary succession* of one bourgeois government by another, but a *substitution* for one State form of class domination of the bourgeoisie—bourgeois democracy—of another form—open terrorist dictatorship. It would be a serious mistake to ignore this distinction, a mistake which would prevent the revolutionary proletariat from mobilizing the broadest strata of the toilers of town and country for the struggle against the menace of the seizure of power by the fascists, and from taking advantage of the contradictions which exist in the camp of the bourgeoisie itself. But it is a mistake no less serious and dangerous to *underrate* the importance, in establishing the fascist dictatorship of the *reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie which are at present being increasingly initiated in bourgeois-democratic countries*—measures which are designed to destroy the democratic liberties of the toilers, to falsify and curtail the rights of parliament and to intensify the repression of the revolutionary movement.

Comrades, the accession to power of fascism must not be conceived of in so simplified and smooth a form, as though some committee or other of finance capital decided on a certain date to set up a fascist dictatorship. In reality, fascism usually comes to power in the course of a mutual, and at times severe, struggle against the old bourgeois parties, or a definite section of these parties, in the course of a struggle even within the fascist camp itself—a struggle which at times leads to armed clashes, as we have witnessed in the case of Germany, Austria, and other countries. All this, however, does not detract from the fact that before the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, bourgeois governments usually pass through a

number of preliminary stages and institute a number of reactionary measures, which directly facilitate the accession to power of fascism. Whoever does not fight the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie and the growth of fascism at these preparatory stages *is not in a position to prevent the victory of fascism, but, on the contrary, facilitates that victory.*

The Social-Democratic leaders glossed over and concealed from the masses the true class nature of fascism and did not call them to the struggle against the increasingly reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie. They bear great *historical responsibility* for the fact that, at the decisive moment of the fascist offensive, a large section of the toiling masses of Germany and a number of other fascist countries failed to recognize in fascism the most bloodthirsty monster of finance, their most vicious enemy, and that these masses were not prepared to resist it.

What is the source of the influence enjoyed by fascism over the masses? Fascism is able to attract the masses because it demagogically appeals to their *most urgent needs and demands*. Fascism not only enflames prejudices that are deeply ingrained in the masses but also plays on the better sentiments of the masses, on their sense of justice, and sometimes even on their revolutionary traditions. Why do the German fascists, those lackeys of the big bourgeoisie and mortal enemies of Socialism, represent themselves to the masses as "Socialists," and depict their accession to power as a "revolution"? Because they try to exploit the faith in revolution, the urge towards Socialism, which lives in the hearts of the broad masses of the toilers of Germany.

Fascism acts in the interests of the extreme imperialists, but it presents itself to the masses in the guise of champion of an ill-treated nation, and appeals to outraged national

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sentiments, as German fascism did, for instance, when it won the support of the masses by the slogan "Against the Versailles Treaty!"

Fascism aims at the most unbridled exploitation of the masses, but it appeals to them with the most artful anti-capitalist demagogy, taking advantage of the profound hatred entertained by the toilers for the piratical bourgeoisie, the banks, trusts, and the financial magnates, and advancing slogans which at the given moment are most alluring to the politically immature masses. In Germany—"The general welfare is higher than the welfare of the individual"; in Italy—"Our State is not a capitalist, but a corporate State"; in Japan—"For Japan, without exploitation"; in the United States—"Share the wealth," and so forth.

Fascism delivers up the people to be devoured by the most corrupt, most venal elements, but comes before them with the demand for "an honest and incorruptible government." Speculating on the profound disillusionment of the masses in bourgeois-democratic governments, fascism hypocritically denounces corruption (for instance, the Barmat and Sklarek affairs in Germany, the Stavisky affair in France, and numerous others).

It is in the interests of the most reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie that fascism intercepts the disappointed masses as they leave the old bourgeois parties. But it impresses these masses by the severity of its attacks on bourgeois governments and its irreconcilable attitude towards the old bourgeois parties.

Surpassing in its cynicism and hypocrisy all other varieties of bourgeois reaction, *fascism adapts* its demagogy to the national peculiarities of each country, and even to the peculiarities of the various social strata in one and the same country.

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And the petit-bourgeois masses, even a section of the workers, reduced to despair by want, unemployment, and the insecurity of their existence, fall victim to the social and chauvinist demagoguery of fascism.

Fascism comes to power as a *party of attack* on the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, on the masses of the people who are in a state of unrest; yet it stages its accession to power as a “revolutionary” movement against the bourgeoisie on behalf of “the whole nation” and for “the salvation” of the nation. (Let us recall Mussolini’s “march” on Rome, Pilsudski’s “march” on Warsaw, Hitler’s National-Socialist “revolution” in Germany, and so forth.)

But whatever the masks which fascism adopts, whatever the forms in which it presents itself, whatever the ways by which it comes to power—

Fascism is a most ferocious attack by capital on the toiling masses.

Fascism is unbridled chauvinism and annexationist war.

Fascism is rabid reaction and counter-revolution.

Fascism is the most vicious enemy of the working class and of all the toilers!

WHAT DOES VICTORIOUS FASCISM BRING FOR THE MASSES?

Fascism promised the workers “a fair wage,” but actually it has brought them an even lower, a pauper standard of living. It promised work for the unemployed, but actually has brought them even more painful torments of starvation and compulsory, servile labor. It actually converts the workers and unemployed into pariahs of capitalist society stripped of rights, destroys their trade unions; deprives them of the right to strike and to have their working-class press, forces them into fascist organizations, plunders their social insurance

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funds, and transforms the mills and factories into barracks where the unbridled arbitrary rule of the capitalists prevails.

Fascism promised the toiling *youth* a broad highway to a brilliant future. But actually, it has brought with it wholesale dismissals of young workers, labor camps, and continuous military drilling for a war of conquest.

Fascism promised the *nonmanual workers, the petit officials, and the intellectuals* to ensure them security of existence, to destroy the omnipotence of the trusts, and wipe out profiteering by bank capital. But actually, it has brought them an even greater degree of hopelessness and uncertainty as to the morrow; it is subjecting them to a new bureaucracy made up of the most compliant of its followers; it is setting up an intolerable dictatorship of the trusts and fosters corruption and degeneration to an unprecedented extent.

Fascism promised the ruined and impoverished peasants to put an end to debt bondage, to abolish rent and even to alienate the landed estates without compensation, in the interests of the landless and impoverished peasants. But actually, it is placing the toiling peasants in a state of unprecedented servitude to the trusts and the fascist State apparatus and promotes the exploitation of the great mass of the peasantry by the big agrarians, the banks, and the usurers to the very utmost limit.

"Germany will be a peasant country, or will not be at all," Hitler solemnly declared. And what did the peasants of Germany get under Hitler? A moratorium, which has already been cancelled? Or a law on the inheritance of peasant property, which is resulting in millions of sons and daughters of peasants being squeezed out of the villages and reduced to paupers? Farm laborers have been transformed into semi-serfs, deprived even of the elementary right of free

movement. Toiling peasants have been deprived of the opportunity of selling the produce of their farms in the market.

And in Poland?

“The Polish peasant,” says the Polish newspaper *Czas*—employs methods and means which were used perhaps only in the Middle Ages: “he nurses the fire in his stove and lends it to his neighbor; he splits matches into several parts; he lends dirty soap water to others; he boils herring barrels in order to obtain salt water. This is not a fable, but the actual state of affairs in the countryside, of the truth of which anybody may convince himself.”

And it is not Communists who write this, comrades, but a Polish reactionary newspaper!

But this is by no means all.

Every day, in the concentration camps of fascist Germany, in the cellars of the Gestapo, in the torture chambers of Poland, in the cells of the Bulgarian and Finnish secret police, in the “Glavnyacha” in Belgrade, in the Romanian “Siguranza” and on the Italian islands, some of the best sons of the working class, revolutionary peasants, fighters for the splendid future of mankind, are being subjected to revolting tortures and indignities, before which pale the most abominable acts of the Tsarist secret police. The villainous German fascists beat husbands to a bloody pulp in the presence of their wives and send the ashes of murdered sons by parcel post to their mothers. Sterilization has been made a method of political warfare. In the torture chambers, captured anti-fascists are given injections of poison, their arms are broken, their eyes gouged out; they are strung up and have water pumped into them; the fascist swastika is carved in their living flesh.

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I have before me a statistical summary drawn up by the International Red Aid—the international organization for aid to revolutionary fighters—regarding the number of killed, wounded, arrested, maimed, and tortured to death in Germany, Poland, Italy, Austria, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia. In Germany alone, since the National-Socialists came to power, over 4,200 anti-fascist workers, peasants, employees, intellectuals—Communists, Social-Democrats, and members of opposition Christian organizations—have been murdered, 317,800 arrested, 218,600 wounded and subjected to excruciating tortures. In Austria, since the battles of February last year, the “Christian” fascist government has murdered 1,900 revolutionary workers, maimed, and wounded 10,000 and arrested 40,000. And this summary, comrades, is far from complete.

Words fail me in describing the indignation which seizes us at the thought of the torments which the toilers are now suffering in a number of fascist countries. The facts and figures we quote *do not reflect one-hundredth part of the true picture* of the exploitation and the tortures inflicted by the White Terror which make up the daily life of the working class in many capitalist countries. Volumes cannot give a just picture of the countless brutalities inflicted by fascism on the toilers.

With feelings of profound emotion and hatred for the fascist butchers, we lower the banners of the Communist International before the unforgettable memory of John Scheer, Fiede Schulz and Luettgens in Germany, Koloman Wallisch and Muenichreiter in Austria, Sallai and Fuerst in Hungary, Kofardzhiev, Lutibrodsky and Voikov in Bulgaria—before the memory of thousands and thousands of Communists, Social-Democrats and nonpartisan workers, peasants and representatives of the progressive intelligentsia who have laid down their lives in the struggle against fascism.

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From this platform we greet the leaders of the German proletariat and the honorary chairman of our Congress—Comrade Thälmann (*Raucous ovation*). We greet Comrades Rakosi, Gramsci (*Raucous ovation*), Antikainen and J. Panov. We greet the leader of the Spanish Socialists, Caballero, imprisoned by the counter-revolutionaries, Tom Mooney, who has been languishing in prison for eighteen years, and the thousands of other prisoners of capitalism and fascism (*loud applause*), and we say to them: “Brothers in the fight, brothers in arms, you are not forgotten. We are with you. We shall give every hour of our lives, every drop of our blood, for your liberation, and for the liberation of all toilers, from the shameful regime of fascism.” (*Raucous ovation*)

Comrades, it was Lenin who warned us that the bourgeoisie may succeed in overwhelming the toilers by savage terror, in checking the growing forces of revolution for brief periods of time, but that, nevertheless, this would not save it from its doom.

“Life, [Lenin wrote] will assert itself. Let the bourgeoisie rave, work itself into a frenzy, go to extremes, commit follies, take vengeance on the Bolsheviks in advance, and endeavor to kill off (in India, Hungary, Germany, etc.) more hundreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands of yesterday’s and tomorrow’s Bolsheviks. In acting thus, the bourgeoisie is acting as all classes doomed by history have acted. Communists should know that the future in any case belongs to them; therefore, we can (and must) combine the most intense passion in the great revolutionary struggle with the coolest and most sober estimation of the frenzied ravings of the bourgeoisie.”²

² V. I. Lenin, *Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*; New Outlook Publishers: New York, 2022, pp. 121-122.

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Aye, if we and the proletariat of the whole world firmly follow the path indicated by Lenin and Stalin, the bourgeoisie will perish in spite of everything. (*Applause*)

IS THE VICTORY OF FASCISM INEVITABLE?

Why was it that fascism could triumph, and how?

Fascism is the most vicious enemy of the working class and the toilers. Fascism is the enemy of nine-tenths of the German people, nine-tenths of the Austrian people, nine-tenths of the other peoples in fascist countries. How, in what way, could this vicious enemy triumph?

Fascism was able to come to power primarily because the working class, owing to the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie pursued by the Social-Democratic leaders, proved to be split, politically and organizationally disarmed, in face of the onslaught of the bourgeoisie. And the Communist Parties, on the other hand, were not strong enough to be able, apart from and in the teeth of the Social-Democrats, to rouse the masses and to lead them in a decisive struggle against fascism.

And, indeed, let the millions of Social-Democratic workers, who together with their Communist brothers are now experiencing the horrors of fascist barbarism, seriously reflect on this. If in 1918, when revolution broke out in Germany and Austria, the Austrian and German proletariat had not followed the Social-Democratic leadership of Otto Bauer, Friedrich Adler and Karl Renner in Austria and Ebert and Scheidemann in Germany, but had followed the road of the Russian Bolsheviki, the road of Lenin and Stalin, there would now be no fascism in Austria or Germany, in Italy or Hungary, in Poland or in the Balkans. Not the bourgeoisie but the

working class would long ago have been the master of the situation in Europe. (*Applause*)

Take, for example, the Austrian Social-Democratic Party. The revolution of 1918 raised it to a tremendous height. It held the power in its hands, it held strong positions in the army and in the State Apparatus. Relying on these positions, it could have nipped fascism in the bud. But it surrendered one position of the working class after another without resistance. It permitted the bourgeoisie to strengthen its power, annul the constitution, purge the State Apparatus, army, and police force of Social-Democratic functionaries, and take the arsenals away from the workers. It allowed the fascist bandits to murder Social-Democratic workers with impunity and accepted the terms of the Hüttenberg Pact, which gave the fascist elements entry to the factories. At the same time the Social-Democratic leaders fooled the workers with the Linz program³, in which the alternative was provided for the possibility of using armed force against the bourgeoisie and for the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship, assuring them that in the event of the ruling classes using force against the working class, the party would reply by a call for a general strike and for armed struggle. As though the whole policy of preparation for a fascist attack on the working class were not one chain of acts of violence against the working class masked by constitutional forms. Even on the eve and in the course of the February battles, the Austrian Social-Democratic leaders left the heroically fighting Schutzbund⁴ isolated from the broad masses and doomed the Austrian proletariat to defeat.

³. Referring to the program adopted by the Congress of the Social-Democratic party in Linz

⁴. Schutzbund—Social-Democratic paramilitary organization in Austria.

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Was the victory of fascism inevitable in Germany? No, the German working class could have prevented it.

But in order to do so, it should have compelled the establishment of a united anti-fascist proletarian front, forced the Social-Democratic leaders to put a stop to their campaign against the Communists and to accept the repeated proposals of the Communist Party for united action against fascism.

When fascism was on the offensive and the bourgeois-democratic liberties were being progressively abolished by the bourgeoisie, it should not have contented itself with the verbal resolutions of the Social-Democrats, but should have replied by a genuine mass struggle, which would have made the fulfilment of the fascist plans of the German bourgeoisie more difficult.

It should not have allowed the prohibition of the League of Red Front Fighters by the government of Braun and Severing and should have established fighting contact between the League and the Reichsbanner⁵, with its nearly one million members, and have compelled Braun and Severing to arm both these organizations in order to resist and smash the fascist bands.

It should have compelled the Social-Democratic leaders who headed the Prussian Government to adopt measures of defense against fascism, arrest the fascist leaders, close down their press, confiscate their material resources and the resources of the capitalists who were financing the fascist movement, dissolve the fascist organizations, deprive them of their weapons, and so forth.

Furthermore, it should have secured the reestablishment and extension of all forms of social assistance and the

⁵ Reichsbanner—“The Flag of the Realm,” a Social-Democratic semi-military mass organization.

introduction of a moratorium and crisis benefits for the peasants—who were being ruined under the influence of crises—by taxing the banks and the trusts, in this way securing for itself the support of the toiling peasantry. It was the fault of the Social-Democrats of Germany that this was not done, and that is why fascism *was able* to triumph.

Was it inevitable that the bourgeoisie and the nobility should have triumphed in *Spain*, a country where the forces of proletarian revolt are so advantageously combined with a peasant war?

The Spanish Socialists were in the government from the first days of the revolution. Did they establish fighting contact between the working-class organizations of every political opinion, including the Communists and the Anarchists, and did they weld the working class into a united trade union organization? Did they demand the confiscation of all the lands of the landlords, the church, and the monasteries in favor of the peasants in order to win over the latter to the side of the revolution? Did they attempt to fight for national self-determination for the Catalonians and the Basques, and for the liberation of Morocco? Did they purge the army of monarchist and fascist elements and prepare it for passing over to the side of the workers and peasants? Did they dissolve the Civil Guard, so detested by the people, the executioner of every movement of the people? Did they strike at the fascist party of Gil Robles and at the might of the Catholic Church? No, they did none of these things. They rejected the frequent proposals of the Communists for united action against the offensive of the bourgeois-landlord reaction and fascism; they passed election laws which enabled the reactionaries to gain a majority in the Cortes (parliament), laws which penalized popular movements, laws under which the heroic miners of

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Asturias are now being tried. They had peasants who were fighting for land shot by the Civil Guard, and so on.

This is the way in which the Social-Democrats, by disorganizing and splitting the ranks of the working class, cleared the path to power for fascism in Germany, in Austria, in Spain.

Comrades, fascism *also* triumphed for the reason that the proletariat found itself isolated from its natural allies. Fascism triumphed because it was able to win over *large masses of the peasantry*, owing to the fact that the Social-Democrats, in the name of the working class, pursued what was in fact an anti-peasant policy. The peasant saw in power a number of Social-Democratic governments, which in his eyes were an embodiment of the power of the working class, but not one of them put an end to peasant want, none of them gave land to the peasantry. In Germany, the Social-Democrats did not touch the landlords; they combated the strikes of the agricultural workers, with the result that long before Hitler came to power, the agricultural workers of Germany were abandoning the reformist trade unions and in the majority of cases were going over to the Stahlhelm and to the National-Socialists.

Fascism also triumphed for the reason that it was able to penetrate the ranks of the *youth*, whereas the Social-Democrats diverted the working-class youth from the class struggle, while the revolutionary proletariat did not develop the necessary educational work among the youth and did not devote sufficient attention to the struggle for its specific interests and demands. Fascism grasped the very acute need of the youth for militant activity and enticed a considerable section of the youth into its fighting detachments. The new generation of young men and women has not experienced the

horrors of war. They have felt the full weight of the economic crisis, unemployment, and the disintegration of bourgeois democracy. But, seeing no prospects for the future, large numbers of young people have proved to be particularly receptive to fascist demagogy, which depicted for them an alluring future should fascism succeed.

In this connection, we cannot avoid referring also to a number of *mistakes committed by the Communist Parties*, mistakes that hampered our struggle against fascism.

In our ranks there were people who intolerably underrated the fascist danger, a tendency which has not everywhere been overcome to this day. Of this nature was the opinion formerly to be met with in our Parties to the effect that "Germany is not Italy," meaning that fascism may have succeeded in Italy, but that its success in Germany was out of the question, because the latter was an industrially and culturally highly developed country, with forty years of traditions of the working-class movement, in which fascism was impossible. Or the kind of opinion, which is to be met with nowadays, to the effect that in countries of "classical" bourgeois democracy the soil for fascism does not exist. Such opinions may serve and have served to weaken vigilance with regard to the fascist danger, and to render the mobilization of the proletariat in the struggle against fascism more difficult.

One might also cite a number of instances in which Communists were caught unaware by the fascist *coup*. Remember Bulgaria, where the leadership of our Party took up a "neutral," but in fact opportunist, position with regard to the *coup d'état* of June 9, 1923; Poland, where, in May 1926, the leadership of the Communist Party, making a wrong estimate of the motive forces of the Polish revolution, did not realize the fascist nature of Pilsudski's *coup*, and trailed in the rear of events;

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Finland, where our Party based itself on a false conception of slow and gradual fascination and overlooked the fascist *coup* which was being prepared by the leading group of the bourgeoisie and which caught the Party and the working class unaware.

When National-Socialism had already become a menacing mass movement in Germany, certain comrades, like Heinz Neumann, who regarded the Bruening government as already a government of fascist dictatorship, boastfully declared: "If Hitler's 'Third Empire' ever comes about, it will only be one and a half meters underground, and above it will be the victorious power of the workers."

Our comrades in Germany for a long time failed to reckon with the wounded national sentiments and indignation of the masses at the Versailles Treaty; they treated as of little account the vacillations of the peasantry and the petit bourgeoisie; they were late in drawing up their program of social and national emancipation, and when they did put it forward, they were unable to adapt it to the concrete demands and the level of the masses. They were even unable to popularize it widely among the masses.

In a number of countries, the necessary development of a mass fight against fascism was replaced by sterile hair splitting as to the nature of fascism "in general" and by a *narrow sectarian attitude* in presenting and solving the actual political problems of the Party.

Comrades, it is not simply because we want to dig up the past that we speak of the causes of the victory of fascism, that we point to the historical responsibility of the Social-Democrats for the defeat of the working class, and that we also point out our own mistakes in the fight against fascism. We are not historians divorced from living reality; we, active fighters of

the working class, are obliged to answer the question that is tormenting millions of workers: *Can the victory of fascism be prevented, and how?* And we reply to these millions of workers: Yes, comrades, the road in the way of fascism can be blocked. It is quite possible. It depends on ourselves—on the workers, the peasants and all the toilers!

Whether the victory of fascism can be prevented depends *in the first place* on the militant activity displayed by the working class itself, on whether its forces are welded into a single militant army combating the offensive of capitalism and fascism. Having established its fighting unity, the proletariat would paralyze the influence of fascism over the peasantry, the petit bourgeoisie of the towns, the youth, and the intelligentsia, and would be able to neutralize one section and win over another section.

Second, it depends on the existence of a strong revolutionary party, correctly leading the struggle of the toilers against fascism. A party which systematically calls on the workers to retreat in the face of fascism and permits the fascist bourgeoisie to strengthen its positions will inevitably lead the workers to defeat.

Third, it depends on whether a correct policy is pursued by the working class towards the peasantry and the petit-bourgeois masses of the towns. These masses must be taken as they are, and not as we should like to have them. It is only in the process of the struggle that they will overcome their doubts and vacillations. It is only provided we adopt a patient attitude towards their inevitable vacillations, it is only with the political help of the proletariat, that they will be able to rise to a higher level of revolutionary consciousness and activity.

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Fourth, it depends on whether the revolutionary proletariat exercises vigilance and takes action at the proper time. It must not allow fascism to catch it unaware, it must not surrender the initiative to fascism, it must inflict decisive blows on the latter before it can gather its forces, it must not allow fascism to consolidate its position, it must repel fascism wherever and whenever it manifests itself, it must not allow fascism to gain new positions—all of which the French proletariat is doing so successfully. (*Applause*)

These are the main conditions for preventing the growth of fascism and its accession to power.

FASCISM—A FEROCIOUS BUT UNSTABLE POWER

The fascist Dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is a ferocious power but an unstable one.

What are the chief causes of the instability of the fascist Dictatorship?

While fascism has undertaken to overcome the discord and antagonisms within the bourgeois camp, it is rendering these antagonisms even more acute. Fascism endeavors to establish its political monopoly by violently destroying other political parties. But the existence of the capitalist system, the existence of various classes and the accentuation of class contradictions inevitably tend to undermine and explode the political monopoly of fascism. This is not the case of a Soviet country, where the dictatorship of the proletariat is also realized by a party with a political monopoly, but where this political monopoly accords with the interests of millions of toilers and is increasingly being based on the construction of classless society. In a fascist country the party of the fascists cannot preserve its monopoly for long, because it cannot set itself the aim of abolishing classes and class contradictions. It

puts an end to the legal existence of bourgeois parties. But a number of them continue to maintain an illegal existence, while the Communist Party, even in conditions of illegality continues to make progress, becomes steeled and tempered and leads the struggle of the proletariat against the fascist dictatorship. Hence, under the blows of class contradictions, the political monopoly of fascism is bound to explode.

Another reason for the instability of the fascist dictatorship is that the contrast between the anti-capitalist demagogy of fascism and its policy of enriching the monopolist bourgeoisie in the most piratical fashion makes it easier to expose the class nature of fascism and tends to shake and narrow its mass basis.

Furthermore, the success of fascism arouses the profound hatred and indignation of the masses, helps to revolutionize them, and provides a powerful stimulus for a united front of the proletariat against fascism.

By conducting a policy of economic nationalism (autarky) and by seizing the greater portion of the national income for the purpose of preparing for war, fascism undermines the whole economic life of the country and accentuates the economic war between the capitalist states. It lends the conflicts that arise among the bourgeoisie the character of sharp and at times bloody collisions, which undermines the stability of the fascist State power in the eyes of the people. A government which murders its own followers, as was the case in Germany on June 30 of last year, a fascist government against which another section of the fascist bourgeoisie is conducting an armed fight (the National-Socialist *putsch* in Austria and the violent attacks of individual fascist groups on the fascist governments in Poland, Bulgaria, Finland, and other countries)—

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a government of this character cannot for long maintain its authority in the eyes of the broad petit-bourgeois masses.

The working class must be able to take advantage of the antagonisms and conflicts within the bourgeois camp, but it must not cherish the illusion that fascism will exhaust itself of its own accord. Fascism will not collapse automatically. It is only the revolutionary activity of the working class which can help to take advantage of the conflicts which inevitably arise in the bourgeois camp in order to undermine the fascist dictatorship and to overthrow it.

By destroying the relics of bourgeois democracy, by elevating open violence to a system of government, fascism shakes democratic illusions and undermines the authority of the law in the eyes of the toiling masses. This is particularly the case in countries such as, for example, Austria and Spain, where the workers have taken up arms against fascism. In Austria, the heroic struggle of the Schutzbund and the Communists, in spite of their defeat, from the very outset shook the stability of the fascist dictatorship. In Spain, the bourgeoisie did not succeed in placing the fascist muzzle on the toilers. The armed struggles in Austria and Spain have resulted in ever wider masses of the working class coming to realize the necessity for a revolutionary class struggle.

Only such monstrous philistines, such lackeys of the bourgeoisie, as the superannuated theoretician of the Second International, Karl Kautsky, are capable of casting reproaches at the workers, to the effect that they should not have taken up arms in Austria and Spain. What would the working-class movement in Austria and Spain look like today if the working class of these countries were guided by the treacherous counsels of the Kautskys? The working class would be experiencing profound demoralization in its ranks.

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“The school of civil war, [*Lenin says*] is never lost upon nations. It is a hard school, and its complete course *necessarily* includes victories for the counter-revolution, the unbridled license of the infuriated reactionaries, the savage reprisals of the old government against the rebels, *etc.* But only incurable pedants and doddering mummies can moan over the fact that the nations have entered this very painful school. For it is one that teaches the oppressed classes how to wage civil war and how to carry the revolution to victory. It concentrates in the masses of contemporary slaves the hatred which downtrodden, benighted, and ignorant slaves have always carried within them, and which leads to the supreme history making feats of slaves who have realized the shame of their slavery.”⁶

The success of fascism in Germany has, as we know, been followed by a new wave of fascist onslaughts, which, in Austria, led to the provocation by Dollfuss, in Spain to the new onslaughts of the counter-revolutionaries on the revolutionary conquests of the masses, in Poland to the fascist reform of the constitution, while in France it spurred the armed detachments of the fascists to attempt a *coup d'état* in February 1934. But this victory, and the frenzy of the fascist dictatorship, called forth a countermovement for a united proletarian front against fascism on an international scale. The burning of the Reichstag, which served as a signal for the general attack of fascism on the working class, the seizure and spoliation of the trade unions and the other working-class organizations, the groans of the tortured anti-fascists rising from the vaults of the fascist barracks and concentration camps, are making it clear to the masses what has been the outcome of the

⁶ Lenin, V.I., *Inflammable Material in World Politics* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 183.

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reactionary, disruptive role played by the German Social-Democratic leaders, who rejected the proposal made by the Communists for a joint struggle against advancing fascism. They are convincing the masses of the necessity of amalgamating all the forces of the working class for the overthrow of fascism.

Hitler's victory also provided a decisive stimulus to the creation of a united front of the working class against fascism in France. Hitler's victory not only aroused in the workers the fear of the fate that befell the German workers, not only inflamed hatred for the executioners of their German class brothers but also strengthened in them the determination never in any circumstances to allow in their country what had happened to the working class in Germany.

The powerful urge towards the united front in all the capitalist countries shows that the lessons of defeat have not been in vain. The working class is beginning to act in *a new way*. The initiative shown by the Communist Party in the organization of the united front and the supreme self-sacrifice displayed by the Communists, by the revolutionary workers in the struggle against fascism, have resulted in an unprecedented increase in the prestige of the Communist International. At the same time, within the Second International, a profound crisis has been developing, which has manifested itself with particular clarity and has become particularly accentuated since the bankruptcy of German Social-Democracy.

The Social-Democratic workers are able to convince themselves ever more forcibly that fascist Germany, with all its horrors and barbarities, is in the final analysis *the result of the Social-Democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie*. These masses are coming ever more clearly to realize that the path along which the German Social-Democratic

leaders led the proletariat must not again be traversed. Never has there been such ideological dissension in the camp of the Second International as at the present time. A process of differentiation is taking place in all the Social-Democratic parties. Within their ranks *two principal* camps are forming: side by side with the existing camp of reactionary elements, who are trying in every way to preserve the *bloc* between the Social-Democrats and the bourgeoisie, and who furiously reject a united front with the Communists, *there is beginning to form a camp of revolutionary elements who entertain doubts as to the correctness of the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, who are in favor of the creation of a united front with the Communists and who are increasingly coming to adopt the position of the revolutionary class struggle.*

Thus fascism, which appeared as the result of the decline of the capitalist system, in the long run acts as a factor of *its further disintegration*. Thus fascism, which has undertaken to bury Marxism, the revolutionary movement of the working class, is, as a result of the dialectics of life and the class struggle, itself leading to the *further development of those forces* which are bound to serve as its gravediggers, the gravediggers of capitalism. (*Applause*)

UNITED FRONT OF THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST FASCISM

Comrades, millions of workers, and toilers of the capitalist countries ask the question: How can fascism be prevented from coming to power and how can fascism be overthrown after it has been victorious? To this the Communist International replies: The first thing that must be done, the thing with which to commence, is to form a united front, to establish unity of action of the workers in every factory, in every district, in every region, in every country, all over the world. Unity of action of the proletariat on a national and international scale is the mighty weapon which renders the working class capable, not only of successful defense, but also of successful counteroffensive against fascism, against the class enemy.

IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED FRONT

Is it not clear that joint action by the adherents of the parties and organizations of the two Internationals, the Communist and the Second International, would facilitate the repulse by the masses of the fascist onslaught, and would enhance the political importance of the working class?

Joint action by the parties of both Internationals against fascism, however, would not be confined to influencing their present adherents, the Communists and Social-Democrats; it would also exert a powerful influence on the ranks of the *Catholic, anarchist and unorganized workers, even on those who had temporarily become the victims of fascist demagoguery.*

Moreover, a powerful united front of the proletariat would exert tremendous influence on *all other strata of the toiling people*, on the peasantry, on the urban petit bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia. A united front would inspire the wavering groups with faith in the strength of the working class.

But even this is not all. The proletariat of the imperialist countries has possible allies not only in the toilers of its own countries but also in the *oppressed nations of the colonies and semi-colonies*. Inasmuch as the proletariat is split both nationally and internationally, inasmuch as one of its parts supports the policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, in particular its system of oppression in the colonies and semi-colonies, this alienates from the working class the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies. and weakens the world anti-imperialist front. Every step on the road to unity of action, directed towards the support of the struggle for the liberation of the colonial peoples on the part of the proletariat of the imperialist countries denotes the transformation of the colonies and semi-colonies into one of the most important reserves of the world proletariat.

If finally, we take into consideration that international unity of action by the proletariat relies on *the steadily growing strength of a proletarian state, a land of socialism, the Soviet Union*, we see what broad perspectives are revealed by the realization of united action on the part of the proletariat on a national and international scale. The establishment of unity of

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action by all sections of the working class, irrespective of their party or organizational affiliation, is necessary *even before the majority of the working class is united in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the victory of the proletarian revolution.*

Is it possible to realize this unity of action by the proletariat in the individual countries and throughout the whole world? Yes, it is. And it is possible at this very moment. The Communist International attaches no conditions to unity of action except one, and that an elementary condition acceptable by all workers, viz., that the unity of action be directed against fascism, against the offensive of capital, against the threat of war, against the class enemy. This is our condition.

THE CHIEF ARGUMENTS OF THE OPPONENTS OF THE UNITED FRONT

What objections can the opponents of the united front have, and how do they voice their objections?

Some say: "To the Communists the slogan of the united front is merely a maneuver." But if it is a maneuver, we reply, why don't you expose the "Communist maneuver" by your honest participation in a united front? We declare frankly: "We want unity of action by the working class, so that the proletariat may grow strong in its struggle against the bourgeoisie, in order that while defending today its current interests against attacking capital, against fascism, the proletariat may be in a position tomorrow to create the preliminary conditions for its final emancipation."

"The Communists attack us," say others. But listen, we have repeatedly declared: We shall not attack anyone, neither persons nor organizations nor parties, that stand for the united front of the working class against the class enemy. But at the same time, it is our duty, in the interests of the proletariat and its cause, to criticize those persons, those

organizations, those parties which impede unity of action by the workers.

"We cannot form a united front with the Communists, since they have a different program," says a third group. But you yourselves say that your program differs from the program of the bourgeois parties, and yet this did not and does not prevent you from entering into coalitions with these parties.

"The bourgeois-democratic parties are better allies against fascism than the Communists," say the opponents of the united front and the advocates of coalition with the bourgeoisie. But what does Germany's experience teach? Did not the Social-Democrats form a *bloc* with those "better" allies? And what were the results?

"If we establish a united front with the Communists, the petit bourgeoisie will take fright at the 'Red danger' and will desert to the fascists," we hear it said quite frequently. But does the united front represent a threat to the peasants, the petit traders, the artisans, the toiling intellectuals? No, the united front is a threat to the big bourgeoisie, the financial magnates, the *Junkers* and other exploiters, whose regime brings complete ruin to all these strata.

"Social-Democracy is for democracy, the Communists are for dictatorship; therefore, we cannot form a united front with the Communists," say some of the Social-Democratic leaders. But are we offering you now a united front for the purpose of proclaiming the dictatorship of the proletariat? We make no such proposal for the time being.

"Let the Communists recognize democracy, let them come out in its defense, then we shall be ready for a united front." To this we reply: We are adherents of Soviet democracy, the democracy of the toilers, the most consistent

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democracy in the world. But in the capitalist countries we defend and shall continue to defend every inch of bourgeois-democratic liberties which are being attacked by fascism and bourgeois reaction, because the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat so dictate.

“But the tiny Communist Parties do not contribute anything by participating in the united front brought about by the Labor Party,” say, for instance, the Labor leaders of Great Britain. Recall how the Austrian Social-Democratic leaders said the same thing with reference to the small Austrian Communist Party. And what have events shown? It was not the Austrian Social-Democratic party headed by Otto Bauer and Karl Renner that proved right, but the tiny Austrian Communist Party which at the right moment signaled the fascist danger in Austria and called upon the workers to struggle. For the whole experience of the labor movement has shown that the Communists with all their relative insignificance in numbers are the motive power of the militant activity of the proletariat. Besides this, it must not be forgotten that the Communist Parties of Austria or Great Britain are not only the tens of thousands of workers who are supporters of the Party, but are parts of the world Communist movement, are *Sections of the Communist International*, the *leading* party of which is the party of a proletariat which has already achieved victory and rules over one-sixth part of the globe.

“But the united front did not prevent fascism from being victorious in the Saar,” is another objection advanced by the opponents of the united front. Strange is the logic of these gentlemen! First, they leave no stone unturned to ensure the victory of fascism and then they rejoice with malicious glee because the united front which they entered into only at the last moment did not lead to the victory of the workers.

“If we were to form a united front with Communists, we should have to withdraw from the coalition, and reactionary and fascist parties would enter the government,” say the Social-Democratic leaders holding cabinet posts in various countries. Very well. Was not the German Social Democratic Party in a coalition government? It was. Was not the Austrian Social-Democratic Party in office? It was. Were not the Spanish Socialists in the same government as the bourgeoisie? They were, too. Did the participation of the Social-Democratic Parties in the bourgeois coalition governments in these countries prevent fascism from attacking the proletariat? It did not. Consequently, it is as clear as daylight that participation of Social-Democratic ministers in bourgeois governments *is not* a barrier to fascism.

“The Communists act like dictators, they want to prescribe and dictate everything to us.” No. We prescribe nothing and dictate nothing. We only make proposals concerning which we are convinced that, if realized, they will meet the interests of the toiling people. This is not only the right but the duty of all those acting in the name of the workers. You are afraid of the “dictatorship” of the Communists? Let us jointly submit all proposals to the workers, both yours and ours, jointly discuss them and choose, together with all the workers, those proposals which are most useful to the cause of the working class.

Thus, all these arguments against the united front *will not bear the slightest criticism*. They are rather the reservations of the reactionary leaders of Social-Democracy, who prefer their united front with the bourgeoisie to the united front of the proletariat.

No. These reservations will not hold water! The international proletariat has known all the bitterness of tribulation

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caused by the split in the working class, and becomes more and more convinced *that the united front, that unity of action by the proletariat on a national and international scale, is both necessary and perfectly possible.* (Applause)

CONTENT AND FORMS OF THE UNITED FRONT

What is and ought to be the basic content of the united front at the present stage? The defense of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class, the defense of the working class against fascism, must form the *starting point* and *main content* of the united front in all capitalist countries.

We must not confine ourselves to bare appeals to struggle for the proletarian dictatorship but must also find and advance those slogans and forms of struggle which arise out of the vital needs of the masses and are commensurate with their fighting capacity at the given stage of development.

We must point out to the masses what they must do today to defend themselves against capitalist spoliation and fascist barbarity.

We must strive to establish the widest united front with the aid of joint action by workers' organizations of different trends for the defense of the vital interests of the toiling masses. This means:

First, joint struggle really to shift the burden of the consequences of the crisis on to the shoulders of the ruling classes, the shoulders of the capitalists, landlords—in a word, to the shoulders of the rich.

Second, joint struggle against all forms of the fascist offensive, in defense of the gains and the rights of the toilers, against the liquidation of bourgeois-democratic liberties.

Third, joint struggle against the approaching danger of imperialist war, a struggle that will impede the preparations for such a war.

We must indefatigably prepare the working class for a *rapid change in forms and methods of struggle* when there is a change in the situation. As the movement grows and the unity of the working class strengthens, we must go further, and prepare the transition *from the defensive to the offensive against capital*, steering towards the *organization of a mass political strike*. It must be an absolute condition of such a strike to draw into it the main trade unions of the respective countries.

Communists of course cannot and must not for a moment abandon their own independent work of Communist education, organization, and mobilization of the masses. However, for the purpose of ensuring that the workers find the road to unity of action, it is necessary to strive at the same time both for short-term and for long-term agreements providing for joint action with Social-Democratic Parties, reformist trade unions and other organizations of the toilers against the class enemies of the proletariat. The chief stress in all this must be laid on developing mass action locally, to be carried out by the local organizations through local agreements.

While loyally carrying out the conditions of all agreements made with them, we shall mercilessly expose all sabotage of joint action on the part of persons and organizations participating in the united front. To any attempt to wreck the agreements—and such attempts may possibly be made—we shall reply by appealing to the masses while continuing untiringly to struggle for the restoration of the broken unity of action.

It goes without saying that the concrete realization of the united front will take *various* forms in various countries,

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depending upon the condition and character of the workers' organizations and their political level, upon the concrete situation in the particular country, upon the changes in progress in the international labor movement, etc.

These forms may include, for instance: coordinated joint action of the workers to be agreed upon *from case to case* on definite occasions, on individual demands or on the basis of a common platform; coordinated actions at *individual enterprises* or by *whole industries*; coordinated actions on a *local, regional, national or international* scale; coordinated actions for the organization of the *economic* struggle of the workers; carrying out of mass *political* actions for the organization of joint *self-defense* against fascist attacks; coordinated action in the rendering of *aid to political prisoners and their families*, in the field of struggle against *social reaction*; joint actions in the defense of the *interests of the youth and women*, in the field of the *cooperative, cultural activity, sports, etc.*

It would be insufficient to content ourselves with the conclusion of a pact providing for joint action and the formation of contact committees consisting of the parties and organizations participating in the united front, like those we have in France, for instance. That is only the first step. The pact is an auxiliary means for realizing joint action, but by itself it does not constitute a united front. A contact commission between the leaders of the Communist and Socialist Parties is necessary to facilitate the carrying out of joint action, but by itself it is far from adequate for a real development of the united front, for drawing the broadest masses into the struggle against fascism.

The Communists and all revolutionary workers must strive for the formation of elective (and in the countries of fascist dictatorship—selected from the most authoritative

participants in the united front movement) *nonpartisan class bodies of the united front* at the *factories*, among the *unemployed*, in the *working-class districts*, among the *small townsmen* and in the *villages*. Only such bodies will be able to embrace in the united front movement the vast masses of unorganized toilers also, will be able to assist in developing the initiative of the masses in the struggle against the offensive of capital, against fascism and reaction, and on this basis to create the necessary broad active rank-and-file of the united front, the training of hundreds and thousands of non-party Bolsheviks in the capitalist countries.

Joint action of the *organized* workers is the beginning, the foundation. But we must not lose sight of the fact that the unorganized masses constitute the vast majority of workers. Thus, in *France* the number of organized workers—Communists, Socialists, trade union members of various trends—is altogether *about one million*, while the total number of workers is *eleven million*. In *Great Britain* there are approximately *five million* members of trade unions and parties of various trends. At the same time the total number of workers is *fourteen million*. In the *United States of America* about *five million* workers are organized, while altogether there are *thirty-eight million* workers in that country. About the same ratio holds good for a number of other countries. In “normal” times this mass in the main does not participate in political life. But now this gigantic mass is getting into motion more and more, is being brought into political life, comes out in the political arena.

The creation of nonpartisan class bodies is the *best form* for carrying out, extending, and strengthening the united front among the rank-and-file of the broadest masses. These bodies will likewise be the best bulwark against every

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attempt of the opponents of the united front to disrupt the established unity of action of the working class.

THE ANTI-FASCIST PEOPLE'S FRONT

In the mobilization of the toiling masses for the struggle against fascism, the formation of a *broad people's anti-fascist front on the basis of the proletarian united front* is a particularly important task. The success of the entire struggle of the proletariat is closely connected with the establishment of a fighting alliance between the proletariat on the one hand, and the toiling peasantry and the basic mass of the urban petit bourgeoisie constituting a majority in the population of even industrially developed countries, on the other.

In its agitation, fascism, desirous of winning these masses to its own side, tries to set the toiling masses of the cities and the countryside against the revolutionary proletariat, intimidating the petit bourgeoisie with the bugaboo of the "Red danger." We must *turn the spearpoint in the opposite direction* and show the toiling peasants, artisans, and toiling intellectuals whence the real danger threatens. We must *show* them *concretely* who piles the burden of taxes and imposts on to the peasant, squeezes usurious interest out of him, and who, while owning the best lands and enjoying every form of wealth, drives the peasant and his family from his plot of land and dooms him to unemployment and poverty. We must explain concretely, explain patiently and persistently, who ruins the artisans, the handicraftsmen, with taxes, imposts, high rents, and competition impossible for them to withstand, who throws into the street and deprives of employment the broad masses of the toiling intelligentsia.

But this is *not enough*.

The fundamental, the most decisive point in establishing the anti-fascist people's front is *the resolute action of the revolutionary proletariat* in defense of the demands of these strata, particularly of the toiling peasantry, demands in line with the basic interests of the proletariat, combining in the process of struggle the demands of the working class with these demands.

In forming the anti-fascist people's front, a correct approach to those organizations and parties to which a considerable number of the toiling peasantry and the mass of the urban petit bourgeoisie belong is of great importance.

In the capitalist countries the majority of these parties and organizations, political as well as economic, are still under the influence of the bourgeoisie and follow it. The social composition of these parties and organizations is heterogeneous. They include big kulaks (rich peasants) side by side with landless peasants, big business men alongside of petit shopkeepers, but control is in the hands of the former, the agents of big capital. This makes it our duty to *approach* these organizations in *different ways*, taking into consideration that not infrequently the bulk of the membership does not know anything about the real political character of its leadership. Under certain conditions, we can and must bend our efforts to the task of drawing these parties and organizations or certain sections of them to the side of the anti-fascist people's front, despite their bourgeois leadership. Such, for instance, is today the situation in France with the Radical Party, in the United States with various farmers' organizations, in Poland with the "Stronnictwo Ludowe⁷," in Yugoslavia with the Croatian Peasants' Party, in Bulgaria with the Agrarian League, in

⁷ *Stronnictwo Ludowe*—An agrarian party in Poland, represented the petit-bourgeois strata of peasants.

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Greece with the Agrarians, etc. But irrespective of whether there is any chance of attracting these parties and organizations to the side of the people's front, our tactics must *under all circumstances* be directed towards drawing the small peasants, artisans, handicraftsmen, etc., among their members into the anti-fascist people's front.

You see consequently that in this field we must put an end all along the line to what frequently occurs in our practical work—the ignoring of or contemptuous attitude towards the various organizations and parties of the peasants, artisans, and urban petit-bourgeois masses.

CARDINAL QUESTIONS OF THE UNITED FRONT IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES

There are in every country certain *cardinal questions* which at the present stage are agitating vast masses of the population and around which the struggle for the establishment of the united front must be developed. If these cardinal points, cardinal questions, are properly grasped, it will ensure and accelerate the establishment of the united front.

(a) the United States of America

Let us take, for example, so important a country in the capitalist world as the *United States of America*. There millions of people have been brought into motion by the crisis. The program for the recovery of capitalism has collapsed. Vast masses are beginning to abandon the bourgeois parties and are at present at the crossroads.

Incipient American fascism is endeavoring to direct the disillusionment and discontent of these masses into the reactionary fascist channels. It is a peculiarity of the development of American fascism that at the present stage it appears principally in the guise of an opposition to fascism, which it

accuses of being an "un-American" tendency imported from abroad. In contradistinction to German fascism, which acts under anti-constitutional slogans, American fascism tries to portray itself as the custodian of the constitution and "American democracy." It does not yet represent a directly menacing force. But if it succeeds in penetrating to the broad masses who have become disillusioned with the old bourgeois parties, it may become a serious menace in the very near future.

And what would the success of fascism in the United States entail? For the toiling masses it would, of course, entail the unrestrained strengthening of the regime of exploitation and the destruction of the working-class movement. And what would be the international significance of this success of fascism? As we know, the United States is not Hungary, or Finland, or Bulgaria, or Latvia. The success of fascism in the United States would change the whole international situation quite materially.

Under these circumstances, can the American proletariat content itself with the organization of only its class-conscious vanguard, which is prepared to follow the revolutionary path? No.

It is perfectly obvious that the interests of the American proletariat demand that all its forces dissociate themselves from the capitalist parties without delay. It must at the proper time find ways and suitable forms of preventing fascism from winning over the broad discontented masses of the toilers. And here it must be said that under American conditions the creation of a mass party of toilers, a "*Workers' and Farmers' Party*," might serve as such a suitable form. *Such a party would be a specific form of the mass people's front in America that should be set up in opposition to the parties of the trusts and the banks, and likewise to growing fascism. Such a party, of*

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course, will be *neither* Socialist *nor* Communist. But it *will have to be an* anti-fascist party and *not* an anti-Communist party. The program of this party must be directed against the banks, trusts, and monopolies, against the principal enemies of the people who are gambling on its misfortunes. Such a party will be equal to its task only if it defends the urgent demands of the working class, only if it fights for genuine social legislation, for unemployment insurance; only if it fights for land for the white and black sharecroppers and for their liberation from the burden of debt; only if it works for the cancellation of the farmers' indebtedness; only if it fights for the equal status of the Negroes; only if it fights for the demands of the war veterans, and for the interests of the members of the liberal professions, the small business men, the artisans. And so on.

It goes without saying that such a party will fight for the election of its own candidates to local offices, to the state legislatures, to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Our comrades in the United States acted rightly in taking the initiative for the creation of such a party. But they still have to take effective measures in order to make the creation of such a party the cause of the masses themselves. The question of forming a "Workers' and Farmers' Party," and its program, should be discussed at mass meetings of the people. We should develop the most widespread movement for the creation of such a party and take the lead in it. In no case must the initiative of organizing the party be allowed to pass to elements desirous of utilizing the discontent of the masses which have become disillusioned in both the bourgeois parties, Democratic and Republican, in order to create a "third party" in the United States, as an anti-Communist party, a party directed against the revolutionary movement.

(b) Great Britain

In *Great Britain*, as a result of the mass action of the British workers, Mosley's fascist organization has for the time being been pushed into the background. But we must not close our eyes to the fact that the so-called "National Government" is passing a number of reactionary measures directed against the working class, as a result of which conditions are being created in Great Britain, too, which will make it easy for the bourgeoisie, if necessary, to proceed to a fascist regime. At the present stage, fighting the fascist danger in Great Britain means primarily fighting the "National Government" and its reactionary measures, fighting the offensive of capital, fighting for the demands of the unemployed, fighting against wage reductions and for the repeal of all those laws with the help of which the British bourgeoisie is lowering the standard of living of the masses.

But the growing hatred of the working class for the "National Government" is uniting increasingly large numbers under the slogan of the formation of a *new Labor Government* in Great Britain. Can the Communists ignore this frame of mind of the masses, who still retain faith in a Labor Government? No, comrades. We must find a way of approaching these masses. We tell them openly, as did the Thirteenth Congress of the British Communist Party, that we Communists are in favor of a Soviet Government, as the only form of government capable of emancipating the workers from the yoke of capital. But you want a Labor Government? Very well. We have been and are fighting hand in hand with you for the defeat of the "National Government." We are prepared to support your fight for the formation of a new Labor Government, in spite of the fact that both the previous Labor Governments did not fulfil the promises made to the working class by the Labor Party. We do not expect this government to carry out

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Socialist measures. But *we shall present it with the demand*, in the name of the working-class millions, that it defend the most essential economic and political interests of the working class and of all the toilers. Let us jointly discuss a common program of such demands and let us achieve that unity of action which the proletariat requires in order to repel the reactionary offensive of the "National Government," the attack of capital and fascism, and the preparations for a new war.

On this basis, the British comrades are prepared at the forthcoming parliamentary elections to cooperate with branches of the Labor Party against the "National Government," and also against Lloyd George, who is endeavoring in his own way to lure the masses into following him against the cause of the working class and in the interests of the British bourgeoisie.

This position of the British Communists is a correct one. It will help them to set up a militant united front with the millions of members of the British trade unions and the British Labor Party.

While always remaining in the front ranks of the fighting proletariat, and pointing out to the masses the only right path—the path of struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a Soviet government—the Communists, in defining their immediate political aims, must not attempt to leap over those necessary stages of the mass movement in the course of which the working-class masses by their own experience outlive their illusions and pass over to the side of Communism.

(c) France

France, as we know, is a country in which the working class is setting an example to the whole world proletariat of how to fight fascism. The French Communist Party is setting

an example to all sections of the Comintern of how the tactics of the united front should be conducted; the Socialist workers are setting an example of what the Social-Democratic workers of other capitalist countries should now be doing in the fight against fascism. (*Applause.*) The significance of the anti-fascist demonstration, attended by half a million people, held in Paris on July 14 of this year, and of the numerous demonstrations in other French cities, is tremendous. This is not merely a movement of a united working-class front; it is the beginning of a wide general front of the people against fascism in France.

This united front movement enhances the confidence of the working class in its own forces; it strengthens its consciousness of the leading role it is playing in relation to the peasantry, the petit bourgeoisie of the towns and the intelligentsia; it extends the influence of the Communist Party among the working-class masses, and therefore brings new strength to the proletariat in the fight against fascism. It is mobilizing in good time the vigilance of the masses in regard to the fascist danger. And it will serve as an infectious example for the development of the anti-fascist struggle in other capitalist countries and will exercise a heartening influence on the proletarians of Germany crushed down by the fascist dictatorship.

The victory, needless to say, is a big one, but it still does not decide the issue of the anti-fascist struggle. The overwhelming majority of the French people are undoubtedly opposed to fascism. But the bourgeoisie is able by armed force to violate the will of peoples. The fascist movement is continuing to develop absolutely freely, with the active support of monopoly capital, the State apparatus of the bourgeoisie, the general staff of the French army, and the reactionary leaders

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of the Catholic church—that stronghold of all reaction. The most powerful fascist organization, the *Croix de Feu*, now commands 300,000 armed men, the backbone of which consists of 60,000 officers of the reserve. It holds strong positions in the police, the gendarmerie, the army, the air force and in all government offices. The recent municipal elections have shown that in France it is not only the revolutionary forces that are growing but also the forces of fascism. If fascism succeeds in penetrating widely among the peasantry, and in securing the support of one section of the army, while the other section remains neutral, the French toiling masses will not be able to prevent the fascists from coming to power. Comrades do not forget the organizational weakness of the French labor movement, which tends to facilitate the success of the fascist attack. The working class and all anti-fascists in France have no grounds for resting content with the results already achieved.

What are the tasks confronting the working class in France?

First, to achieve the establishment of a united front not only in the political sphere but also in the economic sphere in order to organize the struggle against the capitalist offensive, and by its pressure to smash the resistance offered to the united front by the leaders of the reformist Confederation of Labor.

Second, to achieve trade union unity in France—united trade unions based on the class struggle.

Third, to enlist in the anti-fascist movement the broad peasant masses, the petit-bourgeois masses, devoting special attention in the program of the anti-fascist people's front to their urgent demands.

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Fourth, to strengthen organizationally and extend further the anti-fascist movement which has already developed, by the widespread creation of elected non-partisan bodies of the anti-fascist people's front, the influence of which extends to wider masses than those in the parties and toilers' organizations in France at present in existence.

Fifth, to secure by their pressure the disbanding and disarming of the fascist organization, as organizations of conspirators against the republic and agents of Hitler in France.

Sixth, to achieve the purging of the State apparatus, the army and the police of the conspirators who are preparing a fascist coup.

Seventh, to develop the struggle against the leaders of the reactionary cliques of the Catholic church, as one of the most important strongholds of French fascism.

Eighth, to link the army up with the anti-fascist movement by creating in its ranks committees for the defense of the republic and the constitution, directed against those who want to utilize the army for an anti-constitutional coup d'état (*applause*); not to allow the reactionary forces in France to wreck the Franco-Soviet agreement, which defends the cause of peace against the aggression of German fascism. (*Applause*) And if in France the anti-fascist movement leads to the formation of a government which will carry on a real struggle against French fascism—not in word but in deeds—will carry out the program of demands of the anti-fascist people's front, the Communists, *while remaining* the irreconcilable foes of every bourgeois government and supporters of a Soviet government, will nevertheless, in face of the growing fascist danger, *be prepared to support such a government.* (*Applause*)

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THE UNITED FRONT AND THE FASCIST MASS ORGANIZATIONS

Comrades, the fight for the establishment of a united front in countries where the fascists are in power is perhaps the most important problem that confronts us. In such countries, of course, the fight is carried on under far more difficult conditions than is the case in countries which have legal labor movements. Nevertheless, all the conditions exist in fascist countries for the development of a real anti-fascist people's front in the struggle against the fascist dictatorship, since the Social-Democratic, Catholic, and other workers, in Germany for instance, are in a position to realize more directly the necessity for a joint struggle with the Communists against the fascist dictatorship. Wide strata of the petit bourgeoisie and the peasantry, having already tasted the bitter fruits of fascist rule, are growing increasingly discontented and disillusioned, which fact makes it easier to enlist them in the anti-fascist people's front.

But the principal task in fascist countries, particularly in Germany and Italy, where fascism has managed to gain a mass basis and has forced the workers and other toilers into its organizations, consists in a skillful combination of the struggle against the fascist dictatorship from without and its undermining from within, inside the fascist mass organizations and bodies. Special methods and means of approach suited to the concrete conditions prevailing in these countries must be learned, mastered, and applied, so as to facilitate the rapid disintegration of the mass basis of fascism and to prepare the way for the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship. We must learn, master, and apply this, and not only shout "Down with Hitler!" and "Down with Mussolini!" Yes, learn, master, and apply.

This is a difficult and complex task. It is all the more difficult because our experience in successfully combating the fascist dictatorship is extremely limited. Our Italian comrades, for instance, have already been fighting under the conditions of a fascist dictatorship for about thirteen years. Nevertheless, they have not succeeded in developing a real mass struggle against fascism, and therefore they have unfortunately been little able in this respect to help the Communist Parties in other fascist countries by their positive experience.

The German and Italian Communists, and the Communists in other fascist countries, as well as the Communist youth, have displayed prodigies of valor; they have made and are daily making tremendous sacrifices. We all bow our heads in honor of such heroism and sacrifices. But heroism alone is not enough. (*Applause*) Heroism must be combined with day-to-day work among the masses, with such concrete struggle against fascism as will achieve the most tangible results in this sphere. In our struggle against fascist dictatorship, it is particularly dangerous to confuse the wish with the fact. We must base ourselves on the facts, on the actual concrete situation.

And what is now the actual situation, in Germany for instance?

The masses are becoming increasingly discontented and disillusioned with the policy of the fascist dictatorship, and this even assumes the form of partial strikes and other acts. In spite of all its efforts, fascism has failed to win over politically the basic masses of the workers; it is even losing its former supporters and will lose them more and more in the future. Nevertheless, we must realize that the workers who are convinced of *the possibility* of overthrowing the fascist dictatorship, and who are prepared, already today, to fight for it actively, are still in the minority—they consist of us, the

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Communists, and the revolutionary section of the Social-Democratic workers. But the majority of the toilers have not yet become aware of the real, concrete possibilities and methods of overthrowing this dictatorship and are maintaining a waiting position. This we must bear in mind when we outline our tasks in the struggle against fascism in Germany, and when we seek, study, and apply special methods of bringing about the undermining and overthrow of the fascist dictatorship in Germany.

In order to be able to strike a telling blow at the fascist dictatorship, we must first find out what is its most vulnerable point. What is the Achilles' heel of the fascist dictatorship? Its social basis. The latter is extremely heterogeneous. It is made up of various classes and various strata of society. Fascism has proclaimed itself the sole representative of all classes and strata of the population, the manufacturer and the worker, the millionaire and the unemployed, the *Junker* and the small peasant, the big capitalist, and the artisan. It pretends to defend the interests of all these strata, the interests of the nation. But since it is a dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, fascism must inevitably come into conflict with its mass social basis, all the more since, under the fascist dictatorship, the class contradictions between the pack of financial magnates and the overwhelming majority of the people are brought out in greatest relief.

We can lead the masses to a decisive struggle for the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship only by getting the workers who have been forced into the fascist organizations, or have joined them through ignorance, to take part in *the most elementary movements* for the defense of their economic, political, and cultural interests. It is for this reason that the Communists must work in these organizations, as the best champions of

the day-to-day interests of the mass of members and must bear in mind that as the workers belonging to these organizations begin more and more frequently to demand their rights and defend their interests, they inevitably come into conflict with the fascist dictatorship.

In defending the urgent and, at first, the most elementary interests of the toiling masses of town and country, it is comparatively easier to find a common language not only with the conscious anti-fascists, but also with those toilers who are still supporters of fascism, but are disillusioned and dissatisfied with its policy, and are grumbling and seeking an occasion for expressing their discontent. We must in general realize that all our tactics in countries where a fascist dictatorship prevails must be of such a character as not to repulse the rank-and-file supporters of fascism, not to throw them once more into the arms of fascism, but to deepen the chasm between the fascist leaders and the mass of disillusioned rank-and-file followers of fascism drawn from the toiling strata.

We need not be dismayed, comrades, if the people mobilized around these day-to-day interests consider themselves either indifferent to politics or even followers of fascism. The important thing for us is to draw them into the movement, which although it may not at first proceed openly under the slogans of the struggle against fascism, is already objectively an anti-fascist movement counterposing these masses against the fascist dictatorship.

Experience teaches us that the view that it is *generally impossible*, in countries where a fascist dictatorship prevails, to come out legally or semi-legally, is harmful and incorrect. To insist on this point of view means to fall into passivity, and to renounce real mass work in general altogether. True, under the conditions of a fascist dictatorship, to find forms and

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methods of legal or semi-legal action is a difficult and complex problem. But, as in many other questions, the path is indicated by life and by the initiative of the masses themselves, which have already provided us with a number of examples that must be generalized and applied in an organized and effective manner. We must very resolutely put an end to the tendency to underestimate work in the fascist mass organizations. In Italy, in Germany and in a number of other fascist countries, our comrades concealed their passivity, and frequently even their direct refusal to work in the fascist mass organizations, by putting work in the factories in contradistinction to work in the fascist mass organizations. In reality, however, it was just this mechanical distinction which led to work being conducted very feebly, and sometimes not at all, both in the fascist mass organizations and in the factories.

Yet it is particularly important that Communists in the fascist countries should be wherever the masses are to be found. Fascism has deprived the workers of their own legal organizations. It has forced the fascist organizations upon them, and it is *there that the masses are* by compulsion, or to some extent voluntarily. These mass fascist organizations can and must be made our legal or semi-legal field of action, where we can meet the masses. They can and must be made our legal or semi-legal starting point for the defense of the day-to-day interests of the masses. In order to utilize these possibilities, Communists must strive to win elective posts in the fascist mass organizations, with the object of establishing contact with the masses and must rid themselves once and for all of the prejudice that this kind of activity is unseemly and unworthy of a revolutionary worker.

In Germany, for instance, there exists a system known as shop delegates. But where is it stated that we must leave the

fascists a monopoly in these organizations? Cannot we endeavor to unite the Communist, Social-Democratic, Catholic, and other anti-fascist workers in the factories so that when the list of shop delegates is voted upon the known agents of the employers may be struck off and other candidates, enjoying the confidence of the workers, inserted in their stead? Practice has already shown that this is possible.

And does not practice also go to show that it is possible, jointly with the Social-Democratic and other discontented workers, to demand that the shop delegates really defend the interests of the workers?

Take the "*Labor Front*" in Germany, or the fascist trade unions in Italy. Is it not possible to demand that the functionaries of the "*Labor Front*" be elected, and not appointed; to insist that the leading bodies of the local groups report to the meetings of the members of the organizations; to address these demands, following a decision by the group, to the employer, to the "guardian of labor," to the higher bodies of the "*Labor Front*"? This is possible, provided the revolutionary workers really work within the "*Labor Front*" and try to obtain posts in it.

Similar methods of work are possible and essential in other mass fascist organizations also—in the Hitler Youth Leagues, in the sports organizations, in the *Kraft durch Freude* organizations, in the *Doppo Lavoro* in Italy, in the cooperatives, and so forth.

Comrades, you remember the ancient tale of the capture of Troy. Troy was inaccessible to the armies attacking her, thanks to her impregnable walls. And the attacking army, after suffering many sacrifices, was unable to achieve victory until, with the aid of the famous Trojan horse, it managed to penetrate to the very heart of the enemy's camp.

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We revolutionary workers, it appears to me, should not be shy about using the same tactics with regard to our fascist foe, who is defending himself against the people with the help of the living wall of his cut throats. (*Applause*)

He who fails to understand the necessity of applying such tactics in the case of fascism, he who regards such an approach as "humiliating," may be a most excellent comrade, but, if you will allow me to say so, he is a windbag and not a revolutionary; he will be unable to lead the masses to the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship. (*Applause*)

Growing up inside and outside the fascist organizations in Germany, Italy and the other countries in which fascism possesses a mass basis, the mass movement for a united front, starting with the advocacy of the most elementary requirements, changing its forms and watchwords of the struggle as that struggle extends and grows, will be the *battering ram* that will shatter the now seemingly (to many) impregnable fortress of the fascist dictatorship.

THE UNITED FRONT IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS ARE IN OFFICE

The struggle for the establishment of the united front raises also another very important problem, the problem of the united front in countries where Social-Democratic governments, or coalition governments in which Socialists participate, are in power, as, for instance, in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Czechoslovakia and Belgium.

Our attitude of absolute opposition to Social-Democratic governments, which are governments of compromise with the bourgeoisie, is well known. But this notwithstanding, we do not regard the existence of a *Social-Democratic government*, or a coalition government formed by a Social-Democratic

party with bourgeois parties as an insurmountable obstacle to the establishment of a united front with the Social-Democrats on definite issues. We believe that in such a case also a united front for the defense of the vital interests of the toiling people and in the struggle against fascism is quite *possible* and *necessary*. It stands to reason that in countries where representatives of Social-Democratic parties take part in the government, the Social-Democratic leadership offers the greatest *resistance* to the proletarian united front. This is quite comprehensible. After all, they want to show the bourgeoisie that it is they who can keep the discontented working masses under control and prevent them from falling under the influence of Communism better and more skillfully than anyone else. The fact, however, that Social-Democratic ministers are opposed to the proletarian united front can, by no means justify a situation in which *the Communists do nothing to establish a united front of the proletariat*.

Our comrades in the Scandinavian countries often follow the line of least resistance, *confining themselves to propaganda exposing the Social-Democratic governments*. This is a mistake. In *Denmark*, for example, the Social-Democratic leaders have been in the government for the last ten years and for ten years, day in and day out, the Communists have been reiterating that it is a bourgeois, a capitalist government. We have to assume that the Danish workers are acquainted with this propaganda. The fact that a considerable majority nevertheless vote for the Social-Democratic government party only goes to show that the exposure of the government on the part of the Communists by means of propaganda *is insufficient*. It does *not* prove, however, that these hundreds of thousands of workers are satisfied with all the government measures of the Social-Democratic ministers. No, they are *not satisfied* with the

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fact that by its so-called "crisis agreement" the Social-Democratic government assists the *big capitalists and landowners* and not the workers and poor peasants. They are not satisfied with the decree issued by the government in January 1933, which deprived the workers of *the right to strike*. They are not satisfied with the government decision to *rearm the police and quarter them in barracks*. They are not satisfied with the project of the Social-Democratic leadership for a dangerous *anti-democratic electoral reform* which would considerably reduce the number of deputies. I shall hardly be in error, comrades, if I state that 99 percent of the Danish workers *do not approve* of these political steps taken by the Social-Democratic leaders and ministers.

Is it not possible for the Communists to call upon the trade union and Social-Democratic organizations of Denmark to discuss the various burning issues, to express their opinions on them and jointly come out for a proletarian united front with the object of obtaining the workers' demands? In October of last year, when our Danish comrades appealed to the trade unions to act against the reduction of unemployment relief and for the democratic rights of the trade unions, about a hundred local trade union organizations joined the united front.

In *Sweden*, a Social-Democratic government is for the third time in power, but the Swedish Communists have for a long time refused to apply the united front tactics in practice. Why? Was it because they were opposed to the united front? No, in principle, of course, they were for the united front *in general*, but they failed to understand in what circumstances, on what questions, in defense of what demands a proletarian united front could be successfully established, where and how to "hook on." A few months before the Social-

Democratic Party formed its government, it advanced during the elections a platform containing demands which were the very thing to include in a platform of the proletarian united front. For example, the slogans "*Against customs duties,*" "*Against militarization,*" "Make an end to the policy of delay in the question of *unemployment insurance,*" "*Grant adequate old age pensions,*" "*Prohibit organizations like the 'Munch' corps*" (a fascist organization), "*Down with class legislation against the unions* demanded by the bourgeois parties."

Over a million toilers of Sweden voted in 1932 for these demands advocated by the Social-Democrats and welcomed in 1933 the formation of a Social-Democratic government in the hope that now these demands would be realized. What could have been more natural in such a situation and what could have suited the working masses better than an appeal of the Communist Party to all Social-Democratic and trade union organizations to take joint action to secure *these demands advanced by the Social-Democratic Party?*

If we had succeeded in really mobilizing the broad masses, in welding the Social-Democratic and Communist workers' organizations into a united front to secure these demands which the Social-Democrats themselves had advanced, no one can doubt that the *working class of Sweden* would have gained thereby. The Social-Democratic ministers of Sweden, of course, would not have been very happy over it, for in that case the government would have been compelled to meet at least some of these demands. At any rate, what has happened now when the government, instead of abolishing has *raised* some of the duties, instead of restricting militarism has enlarged the military budget, and instead of rejecting any legislation directed against the trade unions has *itself* introduced such a bill in Parliament, would not have

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happened. True, on the last issue the Communist Party of Sweden carried through a good mass campaign in the spirit of the proletarian united front with the result that in the end even the Social-Democratic parliamentary fraction felt constrained to vote against the government bill, with the result that for the time being the bill has been defeated.

The *Norwegian* Communists were right in calling upon the organizations of the Labor Party to organize joint May Day demonstrations and in putting forward a number of demands which in the main coincided with the demands contained in the election platform of the Norwegian Labor Party. Although this step in favor of a united front was poorly prepared and the leadership of the Norwegian Labor Party opposed it, *united front demonstrations took place in thirty localities.*

Formerly many Communists used to be afraid that it would be opportunism on their part if they did not counter *every* partial demand of the Social-Democrats by demands of their own, which were twice as radical. That was a naïve mistake. If Social-Democrats, for instance demanded the dissolution of the fascist organizations, there was no reason why we should add: "and the disbanding of the state police" (a demand which would be expedient under different circumstances). We should rather tell the Social-Democratic workers: We are ready to accept these demands of your party as demands of the proletarian united front and are ready to fight to the end for its realization. Let us join hands for the battle.

In *Czechoslovakia* also certain demands advanced by the Czech and the German Social-Democrats, and the reformist trade unions, can and should be utilized for the establishment of a united front of the working class. When the Social-Democrats, for instance, demand work for the unemployed, or the abolition of the laws restricting municipal self-government,

as they have done ever since 1927, these demands must be made concrete in each locality, in each district, and a fight must be carried on hand in hand with the Social-Democratic organizations for their actual realization. Or, when the Social-Democratic parties thunder against the exponents of fascism in the state apparatus "in general," the proper thing to do is in each particular district to drag into the light of day the particular local fascist spokesmen, and together with the Social-Democratic workers demand their removal from government employ.

In *Belgium*, the leaders of the Socialist Party, with Emile Vandervelde at their head, have entered a coalition government. This "success" they have achieved thanks to their lengthy and extensive campaign for two main demands: (1) *The abolition of the emergency decrees* and (2) *The realization of the de Man plan*. The first issue is very important. The preceding government issued 150 reactionary emergency decrees, which are an extremely heavy burden on the toiling people. It was proposed to repeal them at once. Such was the demand of the Socialist Party. But have many of these emergency decrees been repealed by the new government? It has not rescinded a single one. It has only modified somewhat a few of the emergency decrees in order to make a sort of "token payment" in settlement of the generous promises of the Belgian Socialist leaders (like that "token dollar" which some European powers proffered the U.S.A. in payment of the millions due as war debts).

As regards the realization of the widely advertised de Man plan, the matter has taken a turn quite unexpected by the Social-Democratic masses. The Socialist ministers announced that *the economic crisis must be overcome first*, and only those provisions of de Man's plan should be carried into effect

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which improve the position of the industrial capitalists and the banks; only thereafter would it be possible to adopt measures to improve the conditions of the workers. But *how long* must the workers wait for *their* share in the "benefits" promised them in the de Man plan? The Belgian *bankers* have already had their veritable *shower of gold*. The Belgian franc has been devalued 28 percent; by this manipulation, the bankers were able to pocket 4,500,000,000 francs as their spoils at the expense of the wage earners and the savings of the small depositors. But how does this tally with the contents of the de Man plan? Why, if we are to believe the letter of the plan, it promises to "*prosecute* monopolist abuses and speculative manipulations."

On the basis of the de Man plan, the government has appointed a commission to supervise the banks. But the commission *consists of bankers* who can now gaily and lightheartedly supervise themselves.

The de Man plan also promises a number of other good things such as a "*shortening of the working day*," "*normalization of wages*," "*a minimum wage*," "*organization of an all-embracing system of social insurance*," greater convenience in living conditions through new *housing construction*, and so forth. These are all demands which we Communists can support. We should go to the labor organizations of Belgium and say to them: The capitalists have already received enough and even too much. Let us demand that the Social-Democratic ministers now carry out the promises they made to the workers. Let us get together in a *united front* for the *successful defense* of our interests. Minister Vandervelde, we support the demands on behalf of the workers contained in *your* platform; but we tell you frankly that we take these demands *seriously*, that we want action and not empty words, and therefore are

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uniting hundreds of thousands of workers to *struggle* for these demands!

Thus, in countries having Social-Democratic governments, the Communists ought to make use of appropriate individual demands taken from the platforms of the Social-Democratic parties themselves and of the election promises of the Social-Democratic ministers as the starting point for the realization of joint action with the Social-Democratic parties and organization, so that they may afterwards the more easily develop a campaign for the establishment of a united front, but on the basis of other mass demands to be raised in the struggle against the offensive of capital, against fascism and the threat of war.

It must further be borne in mind that if in general joint action with the Social-Democratic parties and organizations requires that the Communists exercise serious and substantiated criticism of Social-Democracy as the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and untiringly explain to the Social-Democratic workers in a comradely way the program and slogans of Communism, in countries having Social-Democratic governments this task is of particular importance in the struggle for the united front.

THE STRUGGLE FOR TRADE UNION UNITY

Comrades, the most important stage in the consolidation of the united front must be the establishment of national and international trade union unity.

As you know, the disruptive tactics of the reformist leaders were applied most virulently in the trade unions. The reason for this is clear. Here their policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie found its practical culmination directly in the factories, to the detriment of the vital interests of the

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working class. This, of course, gave rise to sharp criticism and resistance on the part of the revolutionary workers under the leadership of the Communists. That is why the struggle between Communism and reformism raged most fiercely in the trade unions.

The more difficult and complicated the situation became for capitalism, the more reactionary was the policy of the leaders of the Amsterdam unions, and the more aggressive were their measures against all opposition elements within the trade unions. Even the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany and the intensified capitalist offensive in all capitalist countries failed to diminish their aggressiveness. Is it not a characteristic fact that in 1933 alone, most disgraceful circulars were issued in Great Britain, Holland, Belgium, and Sweden, urging the expulsion of Communists and revolutionary workers from the trade unions?

The same year a circular was issued in Great Britain prohibiting the local branches of the trade unions from joining anti-war or other revolutionary organizations. That was a prelude to the notorious "black circular" of the Trade Union Congress General Council, which outlawed any trades council admitting delegates "directly or indirectly associated with Communist organizations." What is there left to be said of the leadership of the German trade unions, which applied unprecedented repressive measures against the revolutionary elements in the trade unions?

We must base our tactics, not on the behavior of individual leaders of the Amsterdam unions, no matter what difficulties their behavior may cause the class struggle, but primarily on the question of *where the masses of workers are to be found*. And here we must openly declare that work in the trade unions is the sorest spot in the work of all Communist

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Parties. We must bring about a real change for the better in trade union work and make the question of struggle for trade union unity the central issue.

“What constitutes the strength of Social-Democracy in the West?” asked Comrade Stalin ten years ago. Answering this question, he said:

“The fact that it has its support in the trade unions.

What constitutes the weakness of our Communist Parties in the West?

The fact that they are not yet linked with the trade unions, and that certain elements within the Communist Parties do not wish to be linked with them.

Hence, the main task of the Communist Parties of the West at the present time is to develop the campaign for unity in the trade union movement and to bring it to its consummation; to see to it that all Communists, without exception, join the trade unions, there to work systematically and patiently to strengthen the solidarity of the working class in its fight against capital, and thus attain the conditions that will enable the Communist Parties to rely upon the trade unions.⁸”

Has this precept of Comrade Stalin’s been followed? No, comrades, it has not.

Ignoring the urge of the workers to join the trade unions and faced with the difficulties of working within the Amsterdam unions, many of our comrades decided to pass by this complicated task.

They invariably spoke of an organizational crisis in the Amsterdam unions, of the workers deserting the unions, but

⁸ Stalin, J.V., *The Results of the Work of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P. in Works*, Vol. 7; Foreign Languages Publishing House: Moscow, pp. 106-107.

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failed to notice that after some decline at the beginning of the world economic crisis, these unions later began to grow again. The peculiarity of the trade union movement has been precisely the fact that the attacks of the bourgeoisie on trade union rights, the attempts in a number of countries to unify the trade unions (Poland, Hungary, etc.), the curtailment of social insurance, and wage cuts, forced the workers notwithstanding the lack of resistance displayed by the reformist trade union leaders to rally still more closely around these Unions, because the workers wanted and still want to see in the trade unions the militant champions of their vital class interests. This explains the fact that most of the Amsterdam unions in France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, etc., have grown in membership during the last few years. The American Federation of Labor has also considerably increased its membership in the past two years.

Had the German comrades better understood the problem of trade union work of which Comrade Thälmann spoke on many occasions, we would undoubtedly have had a better situation in the trade unions than was the case at the time the fascist dictatorship was established. By the end of 1932 only about *ten percent* of the Party members belonged to the free trade unions. This in spite of the fact that after the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, the Communists took the lead in quite a number of strikes. Our comrades used to write in the press of the need to assign 90 percent of our forces to work in the trade unions, but in reality, activity was concentrated exclusively around the revolutionary trade union opposition which actually sought to replace the trade unions. And how about the period after Hitler's seizure of power? For two years many of our comrades stubbornly and systematically

opposed the correct slogan of fighting for the reestablishment of the free unions.

I could cite similar examples about almost every other capitalist country.

But we already have the first serious achievements to our credit in the struggle for trade union unity in European countries. I have in mind little Austria, where on the initiative of the Communist Party a basis has been created for an illegal trade union movement. After the February battles the Social-Democrats, with Otto Bauer at the head, threw out the watchword: "The free unions can be reestablished only after the downfall of fascism." The Communists applied themselves to the *task of reestablishing the trade unions*. Each phase of that work was a bit of the living united front of the Austrian proletariat. The successful reestablishment of the free trade unions in underground conditions was a serious blow to fascism. The Social-Democrats were at the parting of the ways. Some of them tried to negotiate with the government. Others, seeing our successes, created their own parallel illegal trade unions. But there could only be one road: *either capitulation to fascism, or towards trade union unity through joint struggle against fascism*. Under mass pressure, the wavering leadership of the parallel unions created by the former trade union leaders decided to agree to amalgamation. The basis of this amalgamation is irreconcilable struggle against the offensive of capitalism and fascism and the guarantee of trade union democracy. We welcome this fact of the amalgamation of trade unions, which is the first of its kind since the formal split of the trade unions after the war and is therefore of *international importance*.

In *France* the united front has unquestionably served as a mighty impetus towards the establishment of trade union

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unity. The leaders of the General Confederation of Labor have hampered and still hamper in every way the realization of unity, countering the main issue of the class policy of the trade unions by raising issues of a subordinate and secondary or formal character. An unquestionable success in the struggle for trade union unity has been the establishment of *single unions* on a local scale, embracing, in the case of the railroad workers, for instance, approximately three-quarters of the membership of both trade unions.

We are definitely for the reestablishment of trade union unity in each country and on an international scale. We are for one union in each industry.

We stand for one federation of trade unions in each country. We are for one international federation of trade unions organized according to industries.

We stand for one International of trade unions based on the class struggle. We are for united class trade unions as one of the major bulwarks of the working class against the offensive of capital and fascism. Our only condition for uniting the trade unions is: Struggle against capital, struggle against fascism, and internal trade union democracy.

Time does not stand still. To us the question of trade union unity on a national as well as international scale is a question of the great task of uniting our class in mighty, single trade union organizations against the class enemy.

We welcome the fact that on the eve of May First of this year the Red International of Labor Unions addressed the Amsterdam International with the proposal to consider jointly the question of the terms, methods, and forms of unification of the world trade union movement. The leaders of the Amsterdam International rejected that proposal, using the stock argument that unity in the trade union movement is

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possible only within the Amsterdam International, which, by the way, includes almost none but trade unions in a number of European countries.

But the Communists working in the trade unions must continue to struggle indefatigably for the unity of the trade union movement. The task of the Red trade unions and the R.I.L.U. is to do all in their power to hasten the hour of joint struggle of all trade unions against the offensive of capital and fascism, to establish a united trade union movement, despite the stubborn resistance of the reactionary leaders of the Amsterdam International. The Red trade unions and the R.I.L.U. must receive our unstinted support in this matter.

In countries where small Red trade unions exist, we recommend working for their affiliation with the big reformist unions, but to insist on the right to defend their views and on the reinstatement of expelled members. But in countries where big Red trade unions exist parallel with big reformist trade unions, we must work for the convening of *unity congresses* on the basis of platforms of struggle against the capitalist offensive and of ensuring *trade union democracy*.

It should be stated categorically that any Communist worker, any revolutionary worker, who does not belong to the mass trade union of his industry, who does not fight to transform the reformist trade union into a real class trade union organization, who does not fight for trade union unity on the basis of the class struggle, such Communist worker, such revolutionary worker, does not discharge his elementary proletarian duty. (*Applause*)

THE UNITED FRONT AND THE YOUTH

I have already pointed out the role which the drawing of the youth into the fascist organizations played in the victory of

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fascism. In speaking of the youth, we must state frankly that we have neglected our task of drawing the masses of the toiling youth into the struggle against the offensive of capital, against fascism and the danger of war; we have neglected these tasks in a number of countries. We have underestimated the enormous importance of the youth in the fight against fascism. We have not always taken count of the specific economic, political, and cultural interests of the youth. We have likewise not paid proper attention to revolutionary education of the youth.

All this has been utilized very cleverly by fascism, which in some countries, particularly in Germany, has inveigled large sections of the youth on to the anti-proletarian road. It should be borne in mind that the glamour of militarism is not the only enticement with which fascism captures the youth. It feeds and clothes some of them in its detachments, gives work to others, even sets up so-called cultural institutions for the youth, trying in this way to imbue them with the idea that it really can and wants to feed, clothe, teach, and provide work for the masses of the toiling youth.

In a number of capitalist countries, our *Young Communist Leagues* are still largely sectarian organizations divorced from the masses. Their fundamental weakness is that they are still trying to copy the Communist Parties, their forms, and methods of work, forgetting that the Y.C.L. is *not a Communist Party of the youth*. They do not sufficiently take into consideration the fact that this is an organization having its own specific tasks. Its methods and forms of work, of education and of struggle, must be adapted to the specific level and needs of the youth.

Our Young Communists have given memorable examples of heroism in the fight against fascist violence and

bourgeois reaction. But they still lack the ability to win the masses of the youth away from hostile influences by dint of stubborn, concrete work. This is attested by the fact that they have not yet overcome their opposition to work in the fascist mass organizations, and that their approach to the Socialist youth and other non-Communist youth is not always correct.

A great part of the responsibility for all this must be borne, of course, by the Communist Parties as well, for they ought to lead and support the Y.C.L. in its work. For the problem of the youth is not only a Y.C.L. problem. *It is a problem for the entire Communist movement.* In the struggle for the youth, the Communist Parties and the Y.C.L. organizations must actually effect a decisive change. The main task of the Communist youth movement in capitalist countries is to advance boldly in the direction of bringing about the *united front*, along the path of organizing and uniting the toilers of the young generation. The tremendous importance for the revolutionary movement of the youth that attaches to even the first steps taken in this direction is shown by the examples of *France* and the *United States* during the recent past. It was sufficient in these countries to proceed to apply the united front when considerable successes were at once achieved. In the sphere of the international united front, the successful initiative of the anti-fascist and anti-war committee in Paris in bringing about the international cooperation of all *non-fascist* youth organizations is also worthy of note in this connection.

These recent successful steps in the united front movement of the youth also show that the forms which the united front of the youth is to assume must not be stereotyped, nor be necessarily the same as those met with in the practice of the Communist Parties.

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The Young Communist Leagues must strive in every way to unite the forces of all non-fascist mass organizations of the youth, including the formation of various kinds of common organizations for the struggle against fascism, against the unprecedented manner in which the youth is being stripped of every right, against the militarization of the youth and for the economic and cultural rights of the young generation, in order to draw these young toilers over to the side of the anti-fascist front, no matter where they may be—in the factories, the forced labor camps, the labor exchanges, the army barracks and the fleet, the schools, or in the various sports, cultural or other organizations.

In developing and strengthening the Y.C.L., our Y.C.L. members must work for the formation of anti-fascist associations of the Communist and Socialist Youth Leagues on a platform of class struggle.

WOMEN AND THE UNITED FRONT

Nor was work among toiling women—among working women, unemployed women, peasant women and housewives—underestimated any less than was work among the youth. While fascism exacts most from youth, it enslaves women with particular ruthlessness and cynicism, playing on the most painful feelings of the mother, the housewife, the single working woman, uncertain of the morrow. Fascism, posing as a benefactor, throws the starving family a few beggarly scraps, trying in this way to stifle the bitterness aroused, particularly among the toiling women, by the unprecedented slavery which fascism brings them. It drives working women out of industry, forcibly ships needy girls to the country, reducing them to the position of unpaid servants of rich farmers and landlords. While promising women a happy home and

family life, it drives women to prostitution like no other capitalist regime.

Communists, above all our women Communists, must remember that there cannot be a successful fight against fascism and war unless the broad masses of women are drawn into it. And agitation alone will not accomplish this. We must find a way of mobilizing the masses of toiling women around their vital interests and demands, taking into account the concrete situation in each instance, in the fight for their demands against high prices, for higher wages on the basis of the principle of equal pay for equal work, against mass dismissals, against every manifestation of inequality in the status of women, and against fascist enslavement.

In endeavoring to draw the toiling women into the revolutionary movement, we must not be afraid of forming separate women's organizations for this purpose, wherever necessary. The preconceived notion that the women's organizations under Communist Party leadership in the capitalist countries must be liquidated, as part of the struggle against "women's separatism" in the labor movement, has frequently caused a great deal of harm.

It is necessary to seek out the simplest and most flexible forms, in order to establish contact and bring about cooperation in struggle between the revolutionary, Social-Democratic and progressive anti-war and anti-fascist women's organizations. We must spare no pains to see that the women workers and toilers fight shoulder to shoulder with their class brothers in the ranks of the united working-class front and the anti-fascist people's front.

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THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST UNITED FRONT

In connection with the changed international and internal situation, exceptional importance attaches in all colonial and semi-colonial countries to the question of the anti-imperialist united front.

In forming a wide anti-imperialist united front of struggle in the colonies and semi-colonies, it is necessary above all to recognize the variety of conditions in which the anti-imperialist struggle of the masses is proceeding, the varying degree of maturity of the national liberation movement, the role of the proletariat within it, and the influence of the Communist Party over the broad masses.

In Brazil, the problem is different from that of India, China, etc.

In *Brazil*, the Communist Party, having laid a correct foundation for the development of the united anti-imperialist front by the establishment of the National Liberation Alliance, has to make every effort to extend further this front by drawing into it first and foremost the many millions of the peasantry, leading up to the formation of units of a people's revolutionary army, completely devoted to the revolution, and to the establishment of the rule of the National Liberation Alliance.

In *India*, the Communists have to support, extend, and participate in anti-imperialist mass activities, not excluding those which are under national reformist leadership. While maintaining their political and organizational independence, they must carry on active work inside the organizations which take part in the Indian National Congress, facilitating the process of crystallization of a national revolutionary wing among them, for the purpose of further developing the

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national liberation movement of the Indian peoples against British imperialism.

In *China*, where the people's movement has already led to the formation of Soviet districts over a considerable territory of the country and to the organization of a powerful Red Army, the predatory attack of Japanese imperialism and the treason of the Nanking Government have brought into jeopardy the national existence of the great Chinese people. Only the Chinese Soviets can act as a unifying center in the struggle against the enslavement and partition of China by the imperialists, as a unifying center which will rally all anti-imperialist forces for the national defense of the Chinese people.

We therefore approve the initiative taken by our courageous brother Party of China in the creation of a most extensive anti-imperialist united front against Japanese imperialism and its Chinese agents, jointly with all those organized forces existing on the territory of China which are ready to wage a real struggle for the salvation of their country and their people. I am sure that I express the sentiments and thoughts of our entire Congress if I state that we send our warmest fraternal greetings, in the name of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world, to all the Soviets of China, to the Chinese revolutionary people. (*Raucous Applause*) We send our ardent fraternal greetings to the heroic Red Army of China, tried in a thousand battles. (*Loud Applause*) And we assure the Chinese people of our firm resolve to support its struggle for its complete liberation from all imperialist robbers and their Chinese henchmen. (*Raucous Applause, Cheers From all Delegates*)

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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED FRONT

Comrades, we have taken a bold and determined course towards the united front of the working class and are ready to carry it out with full consistency.

If we Communists are asked whether we advocate the united front only in the struggle for partial demands, or whether we are prepared to share the responsibility even when it will be a question of forming a government on the basis of the united front, then we say with a full sense of our responsibility: Yes, we recognize that a situation may arise in which the formation of a *government of the proletarian united front*, or of the *anti-fascist people's front*, will become not only possible but necessary in the interests of the proletariat. (*Applause*) And in that case, we shall declare for the formation of such a government without the slightest hesitation.

I am not speaking of a government which may be formed *after* the victory of the proletarian revolution. It is not impossible, of course, that in some country, immediately after the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie, there may be formed a Soviet government on the basis of a government *bloc* of the Communist Party with a definite party (or its Left wing) participating in the revolution. After the October Revolution, the victorious Party of the Russian Bolsheviks, as we know, included representatives of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in the Soviet government. This was a specific feature of the first Soviet government after the victory of the October Revolution.

I am not speaking of such a case, but of the possible formation of a united front government on the eve of and before the victory of the Soviet revolution.

What kind of government is this? And in what situation could there be any question of such a government?

It is primarily a *government of struggle against fascism and reaction*. It must be a government arising as the result of the united front movement and in no way restricting the activity of the Communist Party and the mass organizations of the working class, but on the contrary taking determined measures against the counter-revolutionary financial magnates and their fascist agents.

At a suitable moment, relying on the growing united front movement, the Communist Party of a given country will declare for the formation of such a government on the basis of a definite anti-fascist platform.

Under what objective conditions will it be possible to form such a government? In the most general terms, our reply to this question will be as follows: Under conditions of *political crisis*, when the ruling classes are no longer in a condition to cope with the mighty upsurge of the mass anti-fascist movement. But this is only a general perspective, without which it is scarcely possible in practice to form a united front government. Only the existence of definite and *specific prerequisites* can put on the order of the day the question of forming such a government as a *politically necessary* task. It seems to me that the following prerequisites deserve the greatest attention in this connection.

First, the State apparatus of the bourgeoisie must already be sufficiently *disorganized* and *paralyzed*, so that the bourgeoisie cannot prevent the formation of a government of struggle against reaction and fascism.

Second, the broadest masses of toilers, particularly the mass trade unions, must be in a violent state of revolt against fascism and reaction, but are not yet ready to rise in insurrection, to fight under Communist Party leadership for the achievement of Soviet power.

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Third, the differentiation and Leftward movement in the ranks of Social-Democracy and other parties participating in the united front must already have reached the point where a considerable proportion of them demand *ruthless measures against the fascists and the other reactionaries*, struggle together with the Communists against fascism, and openly come out against that reactionary section of their own party which is hostile to Communism.

When and in what countries a situation will actually arise in which these prerequisites will be present in a sufficient degree, it is impossible to state in advance. But inasmuch as such a possibility *is not precluded in any of the capitalist countries* we must reckon with it, and not only orientate and prepare ourselves but also orientate the working class accordingly.

The fact that we are bringing up this question for discussion at all today is, of course, connected with our evaluation of the situation and the immediate prospects, also with the actual growth of the united front movement in a number of countries during the recent past. For more than ten years the situation in the capitalist countries has been such that it was not necessary for the Communist International to discuss a question of this kind.

You remember, comrades, that at our Fourth Congress, in 1922, and again at the Fifth Congress, in 1924, the question of the slogan of *a workers' or a workers' and peasants' government*, was under discussion. Originally the issue turned essentially upon a question which was almost analogous to the one we are discussing today. The debates that took place at that time in the Communist International concerning this question, and in particular the political errors which were committed in connection with it, have to this day retained their importance for *sharpening our vigilance against the danger of deviations to the*

Right or "Left" from the Bolshevik line on this question. Therefore, I shall briefly point out a few of these errors, in order to draw from them the lessons necessary for the present policy of our Parties.

The *first* series of mistakes was determined precisely by the circumstance that the question of a workers' government was not clearly and firmly interlinked with the existence of a political crisis. Owing to this the *Right opportunists* were able to interpret matters as though we should strive for the formation of a workers' government, supported by the Communist Party, in any, so to speak, "normal" situation. The *ultra-Lefts*, on the other hand, recognized only such a workers' government as could be formed exclusively by armed insurrection, *after* the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Both views were wrong. In order to avoid a repetition of such mistakes, we now lay *such great stress on the exact consideration* of the specific, concrete circumstances of the political crisis and the upsurge of the mass movement, in which the formation of a united front government may prove possible and politically necessary.

The *second* series of errors were determined by the circumstance that the question of a workers' government was not interlinked with the development of the militant mass united front movement of the proletariat. Thus, the Right opportunists were enabled to distort the question, reducing it to the unprincipled tactics of forming blocs with Social-Democratic Parties on the basis of purely parliamentary arrangements. The ultra-Lefts, on the other hand, shouted: "No coalitions with the counter-revolutionary Social-Democrats!" regarding all Social-Democrats as counter-revolutionaries at bottom.

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Both were wrong, and we now emphasize, on the one hand, that we are not in the least anxious for such a "workers' government" as would be nothing more or less than an enlarged Social-Democratic government. We even prefer to waive calling it a "workers' government," and *speak of a united front government* which in political character is something absolutely different, *different in principle*, from all the Social-Democratic governments which usually call themselves "workers' (or Labor) governments." While the Social-Democratic government is an instrument of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie in the interest of the preservation of capitalist order, a *united front government* is an instrument of collaboration between the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat and other anti-fascist parties, in the interest of the entire toiling population, a government of struggle against fascism and reaction. Obviously, there is a radical *difference* in these two things.

On the other hand, we emphasize the necessity of seeing *the difference between the two different camps of Social-Democracy*. As I have already pointed out, there is a reactionary camp of Social-Democracy, but alongside of it there exists and is growing the camp of the Left Social-Democrats (without quotation marks), of workers who are becoming revolutionary. The decisive difference between them in practice consists of their attitude to the united front of the working class. The reactionary Social-Democrats are *against* the united front, they slander the united front movement, they sabotage and disintegrate it, as it undermines their policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie. The left Social-Democrats are *for the united front*; they defend, develop, and strengthen the united front movement. Inasmuch as this united front movement is a militant movement against fascism and reaction, it will be a constant motive

force, impelling the united front government to struggle against the reactionary bourgeoisie. The more powerfully this mass movement develops, the greater the force which it can offer to the government to combat the reactionaries. And the better this mass movement will be organized *from below*, the wider the network of *non-partisan class organs of the united front in the factories*, among the *unemployed*, among the *workers' districts*, among the *small people of town and country*, the greater will be the guarantee against a possible degeneration of the policy of the united front government.

The *third* series of mistaken views which came to light during our former debates touched precisely on the *practical policy* of the "workers' government." The *Right opportunists* considered that a "workers' government" ought to keep "within the framework of bourgeois democracy," and consequently ought not to take any steps going beyond this framework. The ultra-Lefts, on the other hand, actually refused to make any attempt to form a united front government.

In 1923, *Saxony* and *Thuringia* presented a clear picture of a Right opportunist "workers' government" in action. The entry of the Communists into the Saxony government jointly with the Left Social-Democrats (Zeigner group) was no mistake in itself; on the contrary, the revolutionary situation in Germany fully justified this step. But, when participating in the government, the Communists should have used their positions primarily *for the purpose of arming the proletariat*. This they did not do. They did not even requisition a single apartment of the rich, although the housing shortage among the workers was so great that many of them were still without a roof over their heads, together with their wives and children. They also did *nothing* to organize the revolutionary mass movement of the workers. They behaved generally like

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ordinary parliamentary ministers "within the framework of bourgeois democracy." As you know this was the result of the opportunist policy of Brandler and his adherents. The result was such bankruptcy that we are still compelled to refer to the government of Saxony as the classical example of how revolutionaries should *not* behave when in office.

Comrades, we demand of every united front government an entirely different policy. We demand that such a government carry out definite and *fundamental revolutionary demands* required by the situation. For instance, control of production, control of the banks, disbanding of the police, its replacement by an armed workers' militia, etc.

Fifteen years ago, Lenin called upon us to focus all our attention on "searching out forms of *transition* or *approach* to the proletarian revolution." It may be that in a number of countries the *united front government* will prove to be *one* of the most important transitional forms. The "Left" doctrinaires always evaded this precept of Lenin's. Like the limited propagandists that they were, they spoke only of "aims," without ever worrying about "forms of transition." The Right opportunists, on the other hand, tried to establish a special "*democratic intermediate stage*" lying between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the purpose of instilling into the workers the illusion of a peaceful parliamentary procession from the one dictatorship to the other. This fictitious "intermediate stage" they also called the "transitional form," and even quoted Lenin on the subject! But this piece of swindling was not difficult to expose; for Lenin spoke of the form of transition and approach to the "*proletarian revolution*," i.e., to the overthrow of the bourgeois dictatorship, and *not* of some transitional form between the bourgeois and the proletarian dictatorship.

Why did Lenin attribute such exceptionally great importance to the form of transition to the proletarian revolution? Because he bore in mind “*the fundamental law of all great revolutions,*” the law that for the masses propaganda and agitation alone cannot take the place of *their own political experience*, when it is a question of attracting really broad masses of the toilers to the side of the revolutionary vanguard, without which a victorious struggle for power is impossible. It is a common mistake of a Leftist character to imagine that as soon as a political (or revolutionary) crisis arises, it is enough for the Communist leaders to throw out the slogan of revolutionary insurrection, and the broad masses will follow them.

No, even in such a crisis the masses are far from always being ready to do so. We saw this in the case of *Spain*. To help the *millions* to master as rapidly as possible, through their own experience, what they have to do, where to find a radical solution, what party is worthy of their confidence—these among others are the purposes for which both transitional slogans and special “forms of transition or approach to the proletarian revolution” are necessary. Otherwise, the great mass of the people, a prey to petit-bourgeois democratic illusions and traditions, may waver even when there is a revolutionary situation, may procrastinate and stray, without finding the road to revolution, and then come under the axe of the fascist executioners.

That is why we indicate the possibility of forming a government of the anti-fascist united front in the conditions of a political crisis. Insofar as such a government will really prosecute the struggle against the enemies of the people and give a free hand to the working class and the Communist Party, we Communists shall accord it our unstinted support, and as

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soldiers of the revolution shall take our place in the *first line of fire*. But we state frankly to the masses:

Final salvation this government *cannot* bring. It is not in a position to overthrow the class rule of the exploiters, and for this reason cannot finally eliminate the danger of fascist counter-revolution. Consequently, it is necessary *to prepare for the socialist revolution!* Soviet power and *only* Soviet power can bring such salvation!

In estimating the present development of the world situation, we see that a *political crisis* is maturing in quite a number of countries. This determines the great urgency and importance of a firm decision by our Congress on the question of a united front government.

If our Parties are able to utilize in a Bolshevik fashion, the opportunity of forming a united front government, of waging the struggle for its formation and the existence in power of such a government *for the revolutionary training of the masses*, this will be *the best political justification* of our policy of the formation of united front governments.

THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM

One of the weakest aspects of the anti-fascist struggle of our Parties lies in the fact that they *react inadequately and too slowly to the demagogy of fascism*, and to this day continue to look with disdain upon the problems of the struggle against fascist ideology. Many comrades did not believe that so reactionary a variety of bourgeois ideology as the ideology of fascism, which in its stupidity frequently reaches the point of lunacy, was capable of gaining a mass influence at all. This was a great mistake. The putrefaction of capitalism penetrates to the innermost core of its ideology and culture, while the desperate situation of the broad masses of the people renders

certain sections of them susceptible to infection from the ideological refuse of this putrefaction.

We must under no circumstances underrate this fascist capacity for ideological infection. On the contrary, we must develop for our part an extensive ideological struggle on the basis of clear, popular argumentation and a correct, well-thought-out approach to the peculiarities of the national psychology of the masses of the people.

The fascists are rummaging through the entire *history* of every nation so as to be able to pose as the heirs and continuators of all that was exalted and heroic in its past, while all that was degrading or offensive to the national sentiments of the people, they make use of as weapons against the enemies of fascism. Hundreds of books are being published in Germany which pursue only one aim — to falsify the history of the German people and give it a fascist complexion.

The new-baked National-Socialist historians try to depict the history of Germany as if for the last two thousand years, by virtue of some "historical law," a certain line of development had run through it like a red thread which led to the appearance on the historical scene of a national "savior," a "Messiah," of the *German* people, a certain "corporal" of *Austrian* extraction! In these books the greatest figures of the German people in the past are represented as having been fascists, while the great peasant movements are set down as the direct precursors of the fascist movement.

Mussolini makes every effort to capitalize the heroic figure of Garibaldi. The French fascists bring to the fore as their heroine Joan of Arc. The American fascists appeal to the traditions of the American War of Independence, the traditions of Washington and Lincoln. The Bulgarian fascists make use of the national liberation movement of the seventies and its

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heroes beloved of the people, Vasil Levski, Stephan Karaj, and others.

Communists who suppose that all this has nothing to do with the cause of the working class, who do nothing to enlighten the masses on the past of their own people, in a historically correct fashion, in a genuinely Marxist, a Leninist-Marxist, a Leninist-Stalinist spirit, who do nothing to *link up their present struggle with its revolutionary traditions and past*—voluntarily relinquish to the fascist falsifiers all that is valuable in the historical past of the nation, that the fascists may bamboozle the masses. (*Applause*)

No, comrades, *we are concerned with every important question, not only of the present and the future but also of the past of our own peoples.* For we Communists do not pursue a narrow policy based on the craft interests of the workers. We are not of those narrowminded functionaries of the trade unions or leaders of the medieval guild handicraftsmen and journeymen. We are the representatives of the class interests of the most important, the greatest class of modern society—the working class, to whose destiny it falls to free mankind from the sufferings of the capitalist system, the class which on one-sixth of the world has already cast off the yoke of capitalism and constitutes the ruling class. We defend the vital interests of all the exploited toiling strata, i.e., of the overwhelming majority of the people in any capitalist country.

We Communists are the *irreconcilable opponents, on principle, of bourgeois nationalism of every variety. But we are not supporters of national nihilism and should never act as such.* The task of educating the workers and all toilers in the spirit of proletarian internationalism is one of the fundamental tasks of every Communist Party. But whoever thinks that this permits him, or even compels him, to sneer at all the national

sentiments of the broad toiling masses is far from genuine Bolshevism and has understood nothing of the teaching of Lenin and Stalin on the national question. (*Applause*)

Lenin, who always fought bourgeois nationalism resolutely and consistently, gave us an example of the correct approach to the problem of national sentiments, in his article "On the National Pride of the Great-Russians," written in 1914. I shall quote a passage:

"Is a sense of national pride alien to us, Great-Russian class-conscious proletarians? Certainly not! We love our language and our country, and we are doing our very utmost to raise *her* toiling masses (i.e., nine-tenths of *her* population) to the level of a democratic and socialist consciousness. To us it is most painful to see and feel the outrages, the oppression and the humiliation our fair country suffers at the hands of the tsar's butchers, the nobles and the capitalists. We take pride in the resistance to these outrages put up from our midst, from the Great Russians; in *that* midst having produced Radishchev, the Decembrists and the revolutionary commoners of the seventies 53 ; in the Great-Russian working class having created, in 1905, a mighty revolutionary party of the masses... We are full of national pride because the Great-Russian nation, *too*, has created a revolutionary class, because it, *too*, has proved capable of providing mankind with great models of the struggle for freedom and socialism, and not only with great pogroms, rows of gallows, dungeons, great famines and great servility to priests, tsars, landowners and capitalists."

"We are full of a sense of national pride, and for that very reason we particularly hate our slavish past (when the landed nobility led the peasants into war to stifle the freedom of Hungary, Poland, Persia and China), and our slavish present, when these selfsame landed proprietors, aided by the capitalists, are loading us into a war in order to throttle Poland

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and the Ukraine, crush the democratic movement in Persia and China, and strengthen the gang of Romanovs, Bobrinskys and Purishkeviches, who are a disgrace to our Great-Russian national dignity.”⁹

This is what Lenin wrote on national pride.

I think, comrades, that when the fascists, at the Leipzig trial, attempted to slander the Bulgarians as a barbarian people, I was not wrong in taking up the defense of the national honor of the toiling masses of the Bulgarian people, who are struggling heroically against the fascist usurpers, the real barbarians and savages (*Raucous Applause*), nor was I wrong in declaring that I had no cause to be ashamed of being a Bulgarian but that, on the contrary, I was proud of being a son of the heroic Bulgarian working class. (*Applause*)

Comrades, proletarian internationalism must, so to speak, “acclimatize itself ” in each country in order to sink deep roots in its native land. *National forms* of the proletarian class struggle and of the labor movement in the individual countries are in no contradiction to proletarian internationalism; on the contrary, it is precisely in these forms that the *international interests* of the proletariat can be successfully defended.

It goes without saying that it is necessary *everywhere and, on all occasions*, to expose before the masses and prove to them concretely that on the pretext of defending general national interests, the fascist bourgeoisie is conducting its egotistical policy of oppressing and exploiting its own people, as well as robbing and enslaving other nations. But we must not *confine ourselves* to this. We must at the same time prove by the very struggle of the working class and the actions of the

⁹ Lenin, V.I., *On the National Pride of the Great Russians* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 21; Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1974, pp. 102-103.

Communist Parties that the proletariat in rising against every manner of bondage and national oppression is the *only* true fighter for national freedom and the independence of the people.

The interests of the class struggle of the proletariat against its native exploiters and oppressors are in no contradiction whatever to the interests of a free and happy future of the nation. On the contrary, the Socialist revolution will signify the *saving of the nation* and will open up to it the road to loftier heights. By *the very fact* of building at the present time its class organizations and consolidating its positions, by the very fact of defending the democratic rights and liberties against fascism, by the very fact of fighting for the overthrow of capitalism, the working class is fighting for the future of the nation.

The revolutionary proletariat is fighting to save the culture of the people, to liberate it from the shackles of decaying monopoly capitalism, from barbarous fascism which is violating it. *Only* the proletarian revolution can avert the destruction of culture and raise it to the highest stage of florescence as a truly national culture—*national in form and socialist in content*—which, under *Stalin's* leadership, is being realized in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics before our very eyes. (*Applause*)

Proletarian internationalism not only does not contradict this struggle of the toilers of the individual countries for national, social, and cultural freedom but, thanks to international proletarian solidarity and fighting unity, provides the *support* which is necessary for victory in this struggle. The working class in the capitalist countries can triumph *only in closest alliance* with the victorious proletariat of the great Soviet Union. *Only* by struggling hand in hand with the

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proletariat of the imperialist countries can the colonial peoples and oppressed national minorities achieve their freedom. The road to victory for the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries lies *only* through the revolutionary alliance of the working class of the imperialist countries with the national liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries, because, as *Marx* taught us, “no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations.”

Communists belonging to an oppressed, dependent nation cannot combat chauvinism successfully among the people of their own nation if they *do not at the same time show* in practice, in the mass movement, that they actually struggle for the liberation of their nation from the alien yoke. And again, on the other hand, the Communists of an oppressing nation cannot do what is necessary to educate the toiling masses of their nation in the spirit of internationalism *without waging* a resolute struggle against the oppressor policy of their “own” bourgeoisie for the right to complete self-determination of the nations kept in bondage by it. If they do not do this, they likewise do not make it easier for the toilers of the oppressed nation to overcome their nationalist prejudices.

If we act in this spirit, if in all our mass work we prove convincingly that we are free of both national nihilism and bourgeois nationalism, then and only then shall we be able to wage a really successful struggle against the chauvinist demagoguery of the fascists.

This is the reason why a correct and practical application of the Leninist-Stalinist national policy is of such paramount importance. It is *unquestionably an essential* preliminary condition for a successful struggle against chauvinism—this main instrument of ideological influence of the fascists upon the masses. (*Applause*)

CONSOLIDATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES AND STRUGGLE FOR THE POLITICAL UNITY OF THE PROLETARIAT

Comrades, in the struggle for the establishment of the united front, the importance of the leading role of the Communist Party increases extraordinarily. Only the Communist Party is at bottom the initiator, the organizer, and the driving force of the united front of the working class.

The Communist Parties can ensure the mobilization of the broadest masses of the toilers for a united struggle against fascism and the offensive of capital *only if they strengthen their own ranks in every respect*, if they develop their initiative, pursue a Marxist-Leninist policy, and apply correct flexible tactics which take into account the concrete situation and alignment of class forces.

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In the period between the Sixth and Seventh Congresses, our Parties in the capitalist countries have undoubtedly *grown in stature and have been considerably steeled*. But it would be a most dangerous mistake to rest on this achievement. The more the united front of the working class extends, the more will new, complex problems rise before us and the more will

it be necessary for us to work on the political and organizational consolidation of our Parties. The united front of the proletariat brings to the fore an army of workers which will be able to carry out its mission if this army is headed by a leading force which will point out its aims and paths. This leading force can *only be a strong proletarian, revolutionary party.*

If we Communists exert every effort to establish a united front, we do this not for the narrow purpose of recruiting new members for the Communist Parties. But we must strengthen the Communist Parties in every way and increase their membership *for the very reason* that we seriously want to strengthen the united front. The strengthening of the Communist Parties is not a narrow Party concern but the concern of the entire working class.

The unity, revolutionary coherence and fighting preparedness of the Communist Parties constitute most valuable capital which belongs not only to us but to the entire working class. We have combined and shall continue to combine our readiness to march jointly with the Social-Democratic Parties and organizations to the struggle against fascism with an irreconcilable struggle against Social-Democracy as the ideology and practice of compromise with the bourgeoisie, and consequently also against *any penetration* of this ideology into our own ranks.

In boldly and resolutely carrying out the policy of the united front, we meet in our own ranks with obstacles which we must remove at all costs in the shortest possible time.

After the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, a *successful struggle was waged* in all Communist Parties of the capitalist countries *against any tendency towards an opportunist adaptation to the conditions of capitalist stabilization and against any infection*

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with reformist and legalist illusions. Our Parties purged their ranks of various kinds of Right opportunists, thus strengthening their Bolshevik unity and fighting capacity. Less successful and frequently entirely lacking was the fight against *sectarianism*. Sectarianism manifested itself no longer in primitive, open forms, as in the first years of the existence of the Communist International, but undercover of a formal recognition of the Bolshevik theses, hindered the development of a Bolshevik mass policy. In our day this is often no longer an "*infantile disorder*" as Lenin wrote, but a *deeply rooted vice*, which must be shaken off or it will be impossible to solve the problem of establishing the united front of the proletariat and of leading the masses from the positions of reformism to the side of the revolution.

In the present situation, sectarianism, *self-satisfied sectarianism*, as we designate it in the draft resolution, *more than anything else* impedes our struggle for the realization of the united front. Sectarianism, satisfied with its *doctrinaire narrowness*, its divorcement from the real life, of the masses, satisfied with its *simplified methods* of solving the most complex problems of the working-class movement on the basis of stereotyped schemes; sectarianism, which professes to know all and considers it needless to learn from the masses, from the lessons of the labor movement. In short, sectarianism, to which, as they say, mountains are mere steppingstones.

Self-satisfied sectarianism *will not and cannot* understand that the leadership of the working class by the Communist Party cannot be attained by a process of spontaneous development. The leading role of the Communist Party in the struggles of the working class must be won. For this purpose, it is necessary not to rant about the leading role of the Communists, but to *merit and win the confidence of the working masses*

by everyday mass work and correct policy. This will only be possible if we Communists, in our political work, seriously take into account the actual level of the class consciousness of the masses, the degree to which they have become revolutionized, if we soberly appraise the concrete situation, not on the basis of our wishes, but on the basis of the actual state of affairs. Patiently, step by step, we must make it easier for the broad masses to come over to the positions of Communism. We ought never to forget these warning words of Lenin, so forcefully expressed:

“This is the whole point—we must not regard that which is obsolete for us as being obsolete *for the class*, as being obsolete *for the masses*.”¹⁰

Is it not a fact, comrades, that there are still not a few such doctrinaire elements left in our ranks who at all times and places sense nothing but danger in the policy of the united front? For such comrades the whole united front is one unrelieved peril. But this sectarian “stickling for principle” is nothing but political helplessness in face of the difficulties of directly leading the struggle of the masses.

Sectarianism finds expression *particularly* in overestimating the revolutionization of the masses, in overestimating the speed at which they are abandoning the positions of reformism, in attempts to leap over difficult stages and over complicated tasks of the movement. Methods of leading the masses have in practice been frequently replaced by the methods of leading a narrow party group. The power of traditional contacts between the masses and their organizations and leaders has been underestimated, and when the masses did not break

10. Lenin, V.I., *Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*; New Outlook Publishers: New York, 2022, p. 59.

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off these contacts immediately, the attitude taken towards them was just as harsh as that adopted towards their reactionary leaders. Tactics and slogans have tended to become stereotyped for all countries, and the specific features of the specific conditions in each individual country have been left out of account. The necessity of stubborn struggle in the very midst of the masses themselves to win their confidence has tended to be ignored; the struggle for the partial demands of the workers and work in the reformist trade unions and fascist mass organizations has been neglected. The policy of the united front has frequently been replaced by bare appeals and abstract propaganda.

In no less a degree has sectarian views hindered the correct selection of people, the training and developing of *cadres connected with the masses, enjoying the confidence of the masses, cadres whose revolutionary mettle has been tried and tested in class battles, cadres that are capable of combining the practical experience of mass work with the staunchness of principle of a Bolshevik.*

Thus, sectarianism has to a considerable extent retarded the growth of the Communist Parties, has impeded the prosecution of a real mass policy, prevented our taking advantage of the difficulties of the class enemy to strengthen the positions of the revolutionary movement, hindered the winning over of the broad proletarian masses to the side of the Communist Parties.

While fighting most resolutely to overcome and exterminate the last remnants of self-satisfied sectarianism, we must increase to a maximum our vigilance in regard to, and the struggle against, *Right opportunism*, and against every one of its concrete manifestations, bearing in mind that the danger of Right opportunism will increase in proportion as the wide

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united front develops more and more. Already there are tendencies to reduce the role of the Communist Party in the ranks of the united front and to effect a reconciliation with Social-Democratic ideology. Nor must the fact be lost sight of that the tactics of the united front are a method of convincing the Social-Democratic workers by object lesson of the correctness of the Communist policy and the incorrectness of the reformist policy, and *that they are not a reconciliation with Social-Democratic ideology and practice*. A successful struggle for the establishment of the united front imperatively demands constant struggle in our ranks against tendencies to *depreciate the role of the Party*, against *legalist illusions*, against reliance on *spontaneity and automatism*, both in the liquidation of fascism and in conducting the united front against the *slightest vacillation at the moment of determined action*.

“It is necessary,” Stalin teaches us, “that the Party be able to combine in its work the greatest adhesion to principle (not to be confused with sectarianism!) with a maximum of contacts and connections with the masses (not to be confused with ‘tailism’!), without which it is not only impossible for the Party to teach the masses but also to learn from them, not only to lead the masses and raise them to the level of the Party, but to listen to the voice of the masses and divine their sorest needs.¹¹”

POLITICAL UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS

Comrades, the development of the united front of joint struggle of the Communist and Social-Democratic workers against fascism and the offensive of capital likewise brings to the fore the question of *political unity, of a single political mass*

¹¹ Stalin, J.V. “*The Perspective of the Communist Party of Germany and Bolshevization*,” Pravda, No. 27, February 3, 1925.

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party of the working class. The Social-Democratic workers are becoming more and more convinced by experience that the struggle against the class enemy demands unity of political leadership, inasmuch as *duality in leadership* impedes the further development and reinforcement of the joint struggle of the working class.

The interests of the class struggle of the proletariat and the success of the proletarian revolution make it imperative that there be a *single party of the proletariat* in each country. Of course, it is not so easy or simple to achieve this. This requires stubborn work and struggle and will of necessity be a more or less protracted process. The Communist Parties must, in reliance upon the growing urge of the workers for a unification of the Social-Democratic Parties or of individual organizations with Communist Parties, firmly and confidently take the initiative in this unification. The cause of amalgamating the forces of the working class in a single revolutionary proletarian party, at the time when the international labor movement is entering the period of closing the split in its ranks, is *our cause*, is the cause of the Communist International.

But while it is sufficient for the establishment of the united front of the Communist and Social-Democratic Parties to have an agreement to struggle against fascism, the offensive of capital, and war, the achievement of political unity is possible only on the basis of a number of definite conditions involving principles.

This unification is possible only:

First, on condition of their complete independence of the bourgeoisie and the complete rupture of the bloc of Social-Democracy with the bourgeoisie;

Second, on condition that unity of action be first brought about;

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Third, on condition that the necessity of the revolutionary overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets be recognized;

Fourth, on condition that support of one's own bourgeoisie in imperialist war be rejected;

Fifth, on condition that the Party be constructed on the basis of democratic centralism, which ensures unity of will and action, and has been tested by the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks.

We must explain to the Social-Democratic workers, patiently and in comradely fashion, why political unity of the working class is impossible without these conditions. We must discuss together with them the sense and significance of these conditions.

Why is it necessary for the realization of the political unity of the proletariat that there be complete independence of the bourgeoisie and a rupture of the *bloc* of Social-Democrats with the bourgeoisie?

Because the entire experience of the labor movement, particularly the experience of the fifteen years of coalition policy in Germany, has shown that the policy of class collaboration, the policy of dependence on the bourgeoisie, leads to the defeat of the working class and to the victory of fascism. And only the road of irreconcilable class struggle against the bourgeoisie, the road of the Bolsheviks, is the true road to victory.

Why must unity of action be first established as a preliminary condition of political unity?

Because unity of action to repel the offensive of capital and of fascism is possible and necessary even before the majority of the workers are united on a common political platform for the overthrow of capitalism, while the working out of unity of views on the main lines and aims of the struggle

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of the proletariat, without which a unification of the parties is impossible, requires a more or less extended period of time. And unity of views is worked out best of all in joint struggle against the class enemy *even today*. To propose to unite at once instead of forming a united front means to place the cart before the horse and to imagine that the cart will then move ahead. (*Laughter*) Precisely for the reason that for us the question of political unity is not a maneuver, as it is for many Social-Democratic leaders, we insist on the realization of unity of action as one of the most important stages in the struggle for political unity.

Why is it necessary to recognize the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviet power?

Because the experience of the victory of the great October Revolution on the one hand, and, on the other, the bitter lessons learned in Germany, Austria, and Spain during the entire post-war period have confirmed once more that the victory of the proletariat is possible only by means of the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and that the bourgeoisie would rather drown the labor movement in a sea of blood than allow the proletariat to establish Socialism by peaceful means. The experience of the October Revolution has demonstrated patently that the basic content of the proletarian revolution is the question of the proletarian dictatorship, which is called to crush the resistance of the overthrown exploiters, to arm the revolution for the struggle against imperialism, and to lead the revolution to the complete victory of Socialism. In order to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat as the dictatorship of the vast majority over an insignificant minority, over the exploiters—and only as such can it be brought about—for this are needed Soviets, embracing all

strata of the working class, the basic masses of the peasantry and the rest of the toilers, without the awakening of whom, without the inclusion of whom in the front of the revolutionary struggle, the victory of the proletariat cannot be consolidated.

Why is the refusal of support of the bourgeoisie in an imperialist war a condition of political unity?

Because the bourgeoisie wages imperialist war for its predatory purposes, against the interests of the vast majority of the peoples, under whatever guise this war may be waged. Because all imperialists combine their feverish preparations for war with extremely intensified exploitation and oppression of the toilers in their own country. Support of the bourgeoisie in such a war means treason to the country and the international working class.

Why, finally, is the building of the Party on the basis of democratic centralism a condition of unity?

Because only a party built on the basis of democratic centralism can ensure unity of will and action, can lead the proletariat to victory over the bourgeoisie, which has at its disposal so powerful a weapon as the centralized State apparatus. The application of the principle of democratic centralism has stood the splendid historical test of the experience of the Russian Bolshevik Party, the party of Lenin and Stalin.

Yes, comrades, we are for a single mass political party of the working class. But this party must be, in the words of Comrade Stalin:

“...a militant party, a revolutionary party, one bold enough to lead the proletarians in the struggle for power, sufficiently experienced to find its bearings amidst the complex conditions of a revolutionary situation, and sufficiently

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flexible to steer clear of all submerged rocks in the path to its goal.”¹²

This explains why it is necessary to strive for political unity on the basis of the conditions indicated.

We are for the political unity of the working class! Therefore, we are ready to collaborate most closely with all Social-Democrats who are for the united front and sincerely support unification on the principles indicated. But precisely because we are for unity, we shall struggle resolutely against all “Left” demagogues, who will try to make use of the disillusionment of the Social-Democratic workers to create new Socialist Parties or Internationals directed against the Communist movement, and thus keep deepening the split in the working class.

We welcome the aspiration which is gaining ground among Social-Democratic workers for a united front with the Communists. In this fact, we see a growth of their revolutionary consciousness and a beginning of the healing of the split in the working class. Being of the opinion that unity of action is a pressing necessity and the truest road to the establishment of the political unity of the proletariat as well, we declare that the Communist International and its Sections are ready to enter into negotiations with the Second International and its Sections for the establishment of the unity of the working class in the struggle against the offensive of capital, against fascism and the threat of imperialist war. (*Applause*)

¹² Stalin, J.V., *Foundations of Leninism*; New Outlook Publishers: New York, 2020, p. 83.

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Comrades, I am concluding my report. As you see, we are raising a number of questions today in a new light, taking count of the change in the situation since the Sixth Congress and of the lessons of our struggle, and relying on the degree of consolidation in our ranks already achieved, primarily the question of the united front and of the approach to Social-Democracy, the reformist trade unions, and other mass organizations.

There are wiseacres who will sense in all this a digression from our basic positions, some sort of turn to the Right of the straight line of Bolshevism. Well, in my country, Bulgaria, they say that a hungry chicken always dreams of millet. (*Laughter, Loud Applause*) Let those political chickens think so. (*Laughter, Loud Applause*)

This interests us little. For us it is important that our own Parties and the broad masses of the whole world should correctly understand what we are striving for.

We would not be revolutionary Marxists, Leninists, worthy pupils of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, if we did not reconstruct our policies and tactics in accordance with the changing situation and the changes occurring in the labour movement.

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We would not be real revolutionaries if we did not learn from our own experience and the experience of the masses.

We want our Parties in the capitalist countries to come out and act as *real political parties of the working class*, to become in actual fact *a political factor* in the life of their countries, to pursue at all times *an active Bolshevik mass policy and not confine themselves to propaganda and criticism, and bare appeals to struggle for proletarian dictatorship*.

We are enemies of all cut-and-dried schemes. We want to take into account the concrete situation at each moment, in each place, and not act *according to a fixed, stereotyped form* anywhere and everywhere; not to forget that in *varying* circumstances the position of the Communists cannot be identical.

We want soberly to take into account all stages in the development of the class struggle and in the growth of the class consciousness of the masses themselves, to be able to locate and solve at each stage the concrete problems of the revolutionary movement *corresponding* to this stage.

We want to find a *common language* with the broadest masses for the purpose of struggling against the class enemy, to find ways of finally overcoming the *isolation of the revolutionary vanguard* from the masses of the proletariat and all other toilers, as well as of overcoming the fatal *isolation of the working class itself* from its natural allies in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, against fascism.

We want to draw increasingly wide masses into the revolutionary class struggle and lead them to proletarian revolution, *proceeding from their vital interests and needs as the starting point, and their own experience as the basis*.

Following the example of our glorious Russian Bolsheviks, the example of the leading Party of the Communist International, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, we

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want to combine the *revolutionary heroism* of the German, the Spanish, the Austrian, and other Communists *with genuine revolutionary realism*, and put an end to the last remnants of scholastic tinkering with serious political questions.

We want to equip our Parties from every angle for the solution of the most complex political problems confronting them. For this purpose, we want to raise ever higher their *theoretical level*, to train them in the spirit of live Marxism-Leninism, and not dead doctrinairism.

We want to eradicate from our ranks all *self-satisfied sectarianism*, which above all blocks our road to the masses and impedes the carrying out of a truly Bolshevik mass policy. We want to intensify in every way the struggle against all concrete manifestations of *Right opportunism*, realizing that the danger from this side will increase precisely in the practice of carrying out our mass policy and struggle.

We want the Communists of each country promptly to draw and apply *all the lessons* that can be drawn from their own experience as the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. We want them *as quickly as possible to learn how to sail on the turbulent waters of the class struggle*, and not to remain on the shore as observers and registrars of the surging waves in the expectation of fine weather. (*Applause*)

This is what we want!

And we want all this because only in this way will the working class at the head of all the toilers, welded into a million-strong revolutionary army, led by the Communist International and possessed of so great and wise a pilot as our leader, Comrade Stalin (a storm of applause), be able to fulfil its historical mission with certainty—to sweep fascism off the face of the earth and, together with it, capitalism!

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[The entire hall rises and gives Comrade Dimitrov a rousing ovation. Cheers coming from the delegates are heard on all sides and in various languages: "*Hurrah! Long live Comrade Dimitrov!*"

The strains of the "*Internationale*" sung in every language fill the air. A new storm of applause sweeps the hall.

Voices: "*Long live Comrade Stalin, long live Comrade Dimitrov!*" "*A Bolshevik cheer for Comrade Dimitrov, the standard-bearer of the Comintern!*"

Someone shouts in Bulgarian: "*Hurrah for Comrade Dimitrov, the valiant warrior of the Communist International against fascism!*" The delegates sing in succession their revolutionary songs—the Italians "*Bandiera Rossa,*" the Poles "*On the Baricades,*" the French "*Carmagnole,*" the Germans "*Roter Wedding,*" the Chinese "*March of the Chinese Red Army.*"



THE PARTY OF COMMUNISTS USA

The Party of Communists USA (PCUSA) traces its roots to the dropped clubs from the revisionist Communist Party USA (CPUSA). The PCUSA is the political party of the working class and is dedicated to the interests of all working and oppressed peoples. Its aim is a socialist society, on the road to building communism.

The PCUSA is dedicated to upholding of Marxism-Leninism, scientific socialism, proletarian internationalism, and socialism-communism. Our focus is on class struggle, workers' rights, and creating the conditions for a socialist revolution. The PCUSA follows the model created by Comrade Lenin of the *Party of a New Type*, adhering to the principles of Democratic Centralism.





LEAGUE OF YOUNG COMMUNISTS USA

The League of Young Communists USA (LYCUSA) is the communist youth organization of the PCUSA. The League is politically united with the PCUSA, and yet is organizationally autonomous with our own constitution, membership, and publications. We call for a stronger, more active, and more united youth and student movement.

The purpose of our communist youth organization is to prepare young cadre to become full members of the PCUSA. The LYCUSA's main task is to give our members the most learning and experience possible. However, the LYCUSA is specifically tasked with creating a generation of Marxist-Leninists, dedicated to internationalism, scientific socialism, and the class struggle to build socialism into communism.





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The PSMLS is the current manifestation in the long line of Party-sponsored schools in the US. Today, the People's School continues the task of ideologically educating workers, including those who are unemployed, oppressed peoples, women, and youth in the science of Marxism-Leninism and its application in various struggles.





US FRIENDS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE

US Friends of the Soviet People is dedicated to supporting struggles to restore socialism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. USFSP is the US affiliate of the International Council for Friendship and Solidarity with the Soviet People.

USFSP acts as a unifying force to help consolidate and coordinate the anti-imperialist forces of the world with the ongoing movement to restore the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as socialist states. The people of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe themselves will choose their paths toward socialism.



