

THE FASCIST OFFENSIVE

UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS
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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS



P. Dumas.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
Collection "Foundations" #10
Contact – flpress@protonmail.com
<https://foreignlanguages.press>

Paris, 2020

ISBN: 978-2-491182-38-0



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**The Fascist Offensive and
the Tasks of the
Communist International
in the Fight for the
Unity of the Working Class
Against Fascism**

9th Day, 15th Session August 2, 1935

O. W. Kuusinen, presiding

Kuusinen: I call the session to order. We shall now proceed to the second point on the agenda—"The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Fight for the Unity of the Working Class Against fascism." Comrade Dimitrov has the floor.

[As Comrade Dimitrov steps up to the rostrum he is greeted by thunderous applause. All delegates rise, cheering enthusiastically. Clenched fists are raised in the *Red Front* salute. Greetings in many languages, shouts of "*Rot Front,*" "*Hurrah,*" "*Banzai.*" Voices from various parts of the hall: "*Long live Dimitrov!*" "*Long live the Communist International!*" "*Hail Dimitrov, the intrepid revolutionary fighter!*" etc. Renewed applause and prolonged cheering. All sing the *Internationale.*]

I. 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 revolutionisation 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 endeavouring 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.*

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, disorganised and paralysed 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 realisation 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 meth-

ods 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 as a result of the betrayal of the working class by Social-Democracy, which paved the way for fascism; it must also be regarded as a symptom of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, as a symptom of the fact that the bourgeoisie is already unable to rule by the old methods of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, and, as a consequence, is compelled in its home policy to resort to terroristic methods of administration—it must be taken as a symptom of the fact that it is no longer able to find a way out of the present situation on the basis of a peaceful foreign policy, as a consequence of which it 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 practised 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.

1. *Socialism Victorious*, pp. 11-12.

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 the lumpenproletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself. It is the organisation 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 demagoguery, 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 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 mobilising 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 recognise 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 inflames 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 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. 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 demagogy 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 organisations, plunders their social insurance 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 *non-manual 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 lip 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. Sterilisation 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.

I have before me a statistical summary drawn up by the International Red Aid—the international organisation for aid to revolutionary fighters—regarding the number of killed, wounded, arrested, maimed and tortured to death in Germany, Poland, Italy, Austria, Bulgaria, Jugoslavia. 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 organisations—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, Lutibrotsky and Voikov in Bulgaria—before the memory of thousands and thousands of Communists, Social-Democrats and non-partisan workers, peasants and representatives of the progressive intelligentsia who have laid down their lives in the struggle against fascism.

From this platform we greet the leaders of the German proletariat and the honorary chairman of our Congress—Comrade Thälmann. (*Loud applause, all rise.*) We greet Comrades Rakosi, Gramsci (*loud applause, all rise*), 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.” (*Loud applause, all rise.*)

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, overdo things, commit stupidities, take vengeance in advance on the Bolsheviki and endeavor to kill off (in India, Hungary, Germany, etc.) extra hundreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands of yesterday’s or tomorrow’s Bolsheviki. Acting thus, the bourgeoisie acts as all classes

doomed to destruction by history have acted. Communists should know that at all events the future belongs to them; and 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 convulsions of the bourgeoisie.²

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 organisationally 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 Bolsheviks, 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.*)

2. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder," pp. 100-101.

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 programme, 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 Schutzbund isolated from the broad masses and doomed the Austrian proletariat to defeat.

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 Reichsbanner³, with its nearly one million members, and have compelled Braun and Severing to arm both these organisations 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 defence 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 organisations, deprive them of their weapons, and so forth.

Furthermore, it should have secured the re-establishment and extension of all forms of social assistance and the 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 organisations of every political opinion, including the Communists and the Anarchists, and did they weld the working class into a united trade union organisation? 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

3. Reichsbanner—"The Flag of the Realm," a Social-Democratic semi-military mass organisation.—ED.

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 penalised popular movements, laws under which the heroic miners of 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 disorganising 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 democ-

racy. 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 mobilisation of the proletariat in the struggle against fascism more difficult.

One might also cite a number of instances in which Communists were caught unawares 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 realise the fascist nature of Pilsudski's *coup*, and trailed in the rear of events; Finland, where our Party based itself on a false conception of slow and gradual fascistisation 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 unawares.

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 metres 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 programme 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 popularise 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 paralyse the influence of fascism over the peasantry, the petit bourgeoisie of the towns, the youth and the intelligentsia, and would be able to neutralise 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.

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 unawares, 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 realised 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 demagoguery 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 revolutionise 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)—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 within 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 realise 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 demoralisation in its ranks.

The school of civil war, [*Lenin says*] does not leave the people unaffected. It is a harsh school, and its complete curriculum *inevitably* includes the victories of the counter-revolution, the debaucheries of enraged reactionaries, savage punishments meted out by the old governments to the rebels, etc. But only downright pedants and mentally decrepit mummies can grieve over the fact that nations are entering this painful school; this school teaches the oppressed classes how to conduct civil war; it teaches how to bring about a victorious revolution; it concentrates in the masses of present-day slaves that hatred which is always harbored by the downtrodden, dull-ignorant slaves, and which leads those slaves who have become conscious of

the shame of their slavery to the greatest historic exploits.⁴

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 counter-movement 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 organisations, 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 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 organisation 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

4. Lenin, "Inflammable Material in World Politics," Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 298.

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 realise 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 grave-diggers, the grave-diggers of capitalism. (*Applause.*)

II. 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 defence, but also of successful counter-offensive 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 organisations 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 unorganised workers, even on those who had temporarily become the victims of fascist demagogy.*

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 realisation of united action on the part of the proletariat on a national and international scale. The establishment of unity of action by all sections of the working class, irrespective of their party or organisational 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 realise 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 manoeuvre." But if it is a manoeuvre, we reply, why don't you expose the "Communist manoeuvre" 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 organisations 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 criticise those persons, those organisations, those parties which impede unity of action by the workers.

“We cannot form a united front with the Communists, since they have a different programme,” says a third group. But you yourselves say that your programme differs from the programme 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 recognise democracy, let them come out in its defence, 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 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 signalled 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 realised, 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 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 defence of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class, the defence 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' organisations of different trends for the defence 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 defence 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 *organisation 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, organisation and mobilisation 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 organisations 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 organisations 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 organisations 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 realisation of the united front will take *various* forms in various countries, depending upon the condition and character of the workers' organisations 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: co-ordinated 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; co-ordinated actions at *individual enterprises* or by *whole industries*; co-ordinated actions on a *local, regional, national* or *international* scale; co-ordinated actions for the organisation of the *economic* struggle of the workers; carrying out of mass *political* actions for the organisation of joint *self-defence* against fascist attacks; co-ordinated action in the rendering of *aid to political prisoners and their families*, in the field of struggle against *social reaction*; joint actions in the defence of the *interests of the youth and women*, in the field of the *co-operative, 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 organisations 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 realising 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) *non-partisan 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 unorganised 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 *organised* workers is the beginning, the foundation. But we must not lose sight of the fact that the unorganised masses constitute the vast majority of workers. Thus, in *France* the number of organised 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 organised, 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 non-partisan 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 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 mobilisation 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 defence 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 organisations 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 organisations, political as well as economic, are still under the influence of the bourgeoisie and follow it. The social composition of these parties and organisations 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 organisations 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 organisations 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' organisations, in Poland with the "Stronnictwo Ludowe," in Jugoslavia with the Croatian Peasants' Party, in Bulgaria with the Agrarian League, in Greece with the Agrarians, etc. But irrespective of whether there is any chance of attracting these parties and organisations 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 organisations 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 programme 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 organisation 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 course, will be *neither Socialist nor Communist*. But it *will have to be an anti-fascist party and not an anti-Communist party*. The programme 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 share-croppers 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 programme, 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 organising the party be allowed to pass to elements desirous of utilising 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 organisation 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 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 programme 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 co-operate 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 mobilising 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 of the Catholic church—that stronghold of all reaction. The most powerful fascist organisation, 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 organisational 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 organise 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 programme of the anti-fascist people's front to their urgent demands.

Fourth, to strengthen organisationally 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' organisations in France at present in existence.

Fifth, to secure by their pressure the disbanding and disarming of the fascist organisation, as organisations 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 defence of the republic and the

constitution, directed against those who want to utilise 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 deed—will carry out the programme of demands of the anti-fascist people's front, the Communists, *while remaining* the irrec- oncilable 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.*)

The United Front and the Fascist Mass Organisations

Comrades, the fight for the establishment of a united front in coun- tries where the fascists are in power is perhaps the most important prob- lem 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 fas- cist 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 realise more directly the necessity for a joint struggle with the Commu- nists 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 organisations, consists in a skilful combination of the struggle against the fascist dictatorship from without and its undermining from within, inside the fascist mass organisations and bodies. Special methods and means of approach suited to the con- crete 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 dictator-

ship. 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 valour; 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 realise that the workers who are convinced *of the possibility* of overthrowing the fascist dictatorship, and who are prepared, already to-day, to fight for it actively, are still in the minority—they consist of us, the 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 organisations, or have joined them through ignorance, to take part in *the most elementary movements* for the defence of their economic, political and cultural interests. It is for this reason that the Communists must work in these organisations, 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 organisations 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 realise 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 mobilised 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 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 generalised and applied in an organised and effective manner. We must very resolutely put an end to the tendency to underestimate work in the fascist mass organisations. 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 organisations, by putting work in the factories in contradistinction to work in the fascist mass organisations. 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 organisations 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 organisations. It has forced the fascist organisations upon them, and it is *there that the masses are* by compulsion, or to some extent voluntarily. These mass fascist organisations 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 defence of the day-to-day interests of the masses. In order to utilise these possibilities, Communists must strive to win elec-

tive posts in the fascist mass organisations, 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 organisations? 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 "*Labour Front*" in Germany, or the fascist trade unions in Italy. Is it not possible to demand that the functionaries of the "Labour 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 organisations; to address these demands, following a decision by the group, to the employer, to the "guardian of labor," to the higher bodies of the "Labour Front"? This is possible, provided the revolutionary workers really work within the "Labour Front" and try to obtain posts in it.

Similar methods of work are possible and essential in other mass fascist organisations also—in the Hitler Youth Leagues, in the sports organisations, in the *Kraft durch Freude* organisations, in the *Doppo Lavoro* in Italy, in the co-operatives, 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.

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 organisations 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 the 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 defence 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 skilfully 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 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 *re-arm 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 per cent 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 organisations 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 organisations 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 defence 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 militarisation*,” “*Make an end to the policy of delay in the question of unemployment insurance*,” “*Grant adequate old age pensions*,” “*Prohibit organisations like the ‘Munch’ corps*” (a fascist organisation), “*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 realised. 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 organisations to take joint action to *secure these demands advanced by the Social-Democratic Party*?

If we had succeeded in really mobilising the broad masses, in welding the Social-Democratic and Communist workers’ organisations 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 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 organisations of the Labor Party to organise 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 organisations, 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 realisation. 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 utilised 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 organisations for their actual realisation. 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 par-

ticular 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 realisation 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 realisation 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 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 per cent.; 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 light-heartedly supervise themselves.

The de Man plan also promises a number of other good things,

such as a “*shortening of the working day*,” “*normalisation of wages*,” “*a minimum wage*,” “*organisation 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 organisations 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 defence* 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 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 realisation of joint action with the Social-Democratic parties and organisation, 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 organisations 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 programme 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 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 organisations. 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 organisations.” 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 behaviour of individual leaders of the Amsterdam unions, no matter what difficulties their behaviour 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 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.⁵

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 organisational crisis in the Amsterdam unions, of the workers deserting the unions, but 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

5. Stalin, "The Results of the Work of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.," *Leninism*, Vol. I, p. 160.

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 per cent* 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 per cent 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 re-establishment 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 re-established only after the downfall of fascism." The Communists applied themselves to the *task of re-establishing the trade unions*. Each phase of that work was a bit of the living united front of the Austrian proletariat. The successful re-establishment 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 unity. The leaders of the General Confederation of Labor have hampered and still hamper in every way the realisation 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 re-establishment 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 organised 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 organisations 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 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 organisation, 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 organisations played in the victory of 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 utilised 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 organisations 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 organisation 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 organisations, 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. organisations 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 organising 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 co-operation of all *non-fascist* youth organisations 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.

The Young Communist Leagues must strive in every way to unite the forces of all non-fascist mass organisations of the youth, including the formation of various kinds of common organisations for the struggle against fascism, against the unprecedented manner in which the youth is being stripped of every right, against the militarisation 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 organisations.

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 mobilising 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 organisations for this purpose, wherever necessary. The preconceived notion that the women's organisations 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 co-operation in struggle between the revolutionary, Social-Democratic and progressive antiwar and anti-fascist women's organisations. 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.

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 recognise 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 organisational independence, they must carry on active work inside the organisations which take part in the Indian National Congress, facilitating the process of crystallisation of a national revolutionary wing among them, for the purpose of further developing the 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 organisation 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 centre in the struggle against the enslavement and partition of China by the imperialists, as a unifying centre which will rally all anti-imperialist forces for the national defence 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 organised 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. (*Loud applause, all rise.*) 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. (*Loud applause, all rise. The ovation lasts several minutes. Cheers from all delegates.*)

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 recognise 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 organisations 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 *disorganised* and *paralysed*, 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;

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 orientate also 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, recognised 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 govern-

ment 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.

Both were wrong, and we now emphasise, 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 emphasise 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 organised *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 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 organise the revolutionary mass movement of the workers. They behaved generally like 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 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 utilise 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 “saviour,” 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 capitalise 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 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 narrow-minded 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:

Are we enlightened Great-Russian proletarians impervious to the feeling of national pride? Certainly not! We love our language and our motherland; we, more than any other group,

are working to raise *its* laboring masses (i.e., nine-tenths of its population) to the level of intelligent democrats and Socialists. We, more than anybody, are grieved to see and feel to what violence, oppression and mockery our beautiful motherland is being subjected by the tsarist hangmen, the nobles and the capitalists. We are proud of the fact that those acts of violence met with resistance in our midst, in the midst of the Great-Russians; that *we* have given the world Radishchev, the Decembrists, the declassé revolutionaries of the seventies; that in 1905 the Great-Russian working class created a powerful revolutionary party of the masses... We are filled with national pride because of the knowledge that the Great-Russian nation, *too*, has created a revolutionary class; that it, *too*, has proven capable of giving humanity great examples of struggle for freedom and for Socialism; that its contribution is not confined solely to great pogroms, numerous scaffolds, torture chambers, great famines, and great servility before the priests, the tsars, the landowners and the capitalists.

We are filled with national pride, and therefore, we *particularly* hate *our* slavish past... and our slavish present, in which the same landowners, aided by the capitalists, lead us into war to stifle Poland and the Ukraine, to throttle the democratic movement in Persia and in China, to strengthen the gang of Romanovs, Bobrinskys, Purishkeviches that covers with shame our Great-Russian national dignity.⁶

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 defence 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 (*strong and continued 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

6. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 100-101.

heroic Bulgarian working class. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, proletarian internationalism must, so to speak, “acclimatise 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 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 organisations 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 realised 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 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 demagogy 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.*)

III. 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 organiser and the driving force of the united front of the working class.

The Communist Parties can ensure the mobilisation 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.

Consolidation of the Communist Parties

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 organisational 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 organisations 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 stabilisation and against any infection 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, under cover 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 realisation 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 stepping-stones.

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 revolutionised, 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*.⁷

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 revolutionisation 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 organisations and leaders has been underestimated, and when the masses did not break 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 condi-

7. Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*” p. 55.

tions 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 organisations has been neglected. The policy of the united front has frequently been replaced by bare appeals and abstract propaganda.

In no less a degree have 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 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.⁸

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 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 organisations 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

8. Stalin, "The Perspective of the Communist Party of Germany and Bolshevisation," *Pravda*, No. 27, February 3, 1925.

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;

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 recognised;

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 realisation 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 fas-

III. Consolidation of the Communist Parties and the Struggle for Political Unity

cism 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 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 manoeuvre, as it is for many Social-Democratic leaders, we insist on the realisation of unity of action as one of the most important stages in the struggle for political unity.

Why is it necessary to recognise 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 centralised 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, bold enough to lead the proletarians to the struggle for power, with sufficient experience to be able to orientate itself in the complicated problems that arise in a revolutionary situation, and sufficiently flexible to steer clear of any submerged rocks on the way to its goal.⁹

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

9. Stalin, "Foundations of Leninism," *Leninism*, Vol. I, p. 88.

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.)

Conclusion

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 organisations.

There are wisecracs 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.

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 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*, realising 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!

[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 Barricades,” the French “Carmagnole,” the Germans “Roter Wedding,” the Chinese “March of the Chinese Red Army.”]

Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism

Comrades, the very full discussion on my report bears witness to the immense interest taken by the Congress in the fundamental tactical problems and tasks of the struggle of the working class against the offensive of capital and fascism, and against the threat of imperialist war.

Summing up the eight-day discussion, we can state that all the principal propositions contained in the report have met with the unanimous approval of the Congress. None of the speakers objected to the tactical line we have proposed or to the resolution which has been submitted.

I venture to say that at none of the previous Congresses of the Communist International has such ideological and political solidarity been revealed as at the present Congress. The complete unanimity displayed at the Congress indicates that the necessity of revising our policy and tactics in accordance with the changed conditions and on the basis of the extremely abundant and instructive experience of the past few years, has come to be fully recognized in our ranks.

This unanimity may undoubtedly be regarded as one of the most important conditions for success in solving the paramount immediate problem of the international proletarian movement, namely, *establishing unity of action of all sections of the working class in the struggle against fascism.*

The successful solution of this problem requires, first, that Communists skillfully wield the weapon of *Marxist-Leninist analysis*, while carefully studying the actual situation and the alignment of class forces as these develop, and that they plan their activity and struggle accordingly. We must mercilessly root out the weakness, not infrequently observed in our comrades, for cut-and-dried schemes, lifeless formulas and ready-made patterns. We must put an end to the state of affairs in which Communists, when lacking the knowledge or ability for Marxist-Leninist analysis, substitute for it general phrases and slogans such as “the revolutionary way out of the crisis,” without making the slightest serious attempt to explain what must be the conditions, the relationship of class forces, the degree of revolutionary maturity of the proletariat and mass of working people, and the level of influence of the Communist Party for making possible such a revolutionary way out of the crisis. Without such an analysis all these catchwords become “dud” shells, empty phrases

which only obscure our tasks of the day.

Without a concrete Marxist-Leninist analysis we shall never be able correctly to present and solve the problem of fascism, the problems of the proletarian front and the general People's Front, the problem of our attitude toward bourgeois democracy, the problem of a united front government, the problem of the processes going on within the working class particularly among the Social-Democratic workers, or any of the numerous other new and complex problems with which life itself and the development of the class struggle confronts us now and will confront us in the future.

Second, we need *live people*—people who have grown up from the masses of the workers, have sprung from their everyday struggle, people of militant action, whole-heartedly devoted to the cause of the proletariat, people whose brains and hands will give effect to the decisions of our Congress. Without Bolshevik, Leninist-Stalinist cadres, we shall be unable to solve the enormous problems that confront the toilers in the fight against fascism.

Third, we need people equipped with the compass of *Marxist-Leninist theory*, for people who are unable to make skillful use of this instrument slip into narrow, makeshift politics, are unable to look ahead, take decisions only from case to case, and lose the broad perspective of the struggle which shows the masses where we are going and whither we are leading the toilers.

Fourth, we need the *organization of the masses* in order to put our decisions into practice. Our ideological and political influence alone is not enough. We must put a stop to reliance on the hope that the movement will develop *of its own accord*, which is one of our fundamental weaknesses. We must remember that without persistent, prolonged, patient, and sometimes apparently thankless organizational work on our part, the masses will never make for the Communist shore. In order to be able to organize the masses, we must acquire Lenin's and Stalin's art of making our decisions the property not only of the Communists but also of the widest masses of working people. We must learn to talk to the masses, not in the language of book formulas, but in the language of fighters for the cause of the masses, whose every word, whose every idea reflects the

innermost thoughts and sentiments of millions.

It is primarily with these problems that I should like to deal in my closing speech.

Comrades, the Congress has welcomed the new tactical lines with great enthusiasm and unanimity. Enthusiasm and unanimity are excellent things of course; but it is still better when these are combined with a deeply considered and critical approach to the tasks that confront us, with a proper mastery of the decisions adopted and a real understanding of the means and methods by which these decisions are to be applied to the particular circumstances of each country.

After all, we have unanimously adopted good resolutions before now, but the trouble was that we not infrequently adopted these decisions in a formal manner, and we at best made them the property of only the small vanguard of the working class. Our decisions did not become flesh and blood for the wide masses; they did not become a guide to the action of millions of people.

Can we assert that we have already finally abandoned this formal approach to adopted decisions? No. It must be said that even at this Congress the speeches of some of the comrades gave indication of remnants of formalism; a desire made itself felt at times to substitute for the concrete analysis of reality and living experience some sort of new scheme, some sort of new, over-simplified lifeless formula, to represent *as actually existing* what we *desire*, but does *not yet exist*.

The Struggle Against Fascism Must be Concrete

No general characterization of fascism, however correct in itself, can relieve us of the need to study and take into account the special features of the development of fascism and the various forms of fascist dictatorship in the individual countries and at its various stages. It is necessary in each country to investigate, study and ascertain the national peculiarities, the specific national features of fascism and map out accordingly effective methods and forms of struggle against fascism.

Lenin persistently warned us against “stereotyped methods and mechanical leveling, against rendering tactical rules, rules of struggle, identical.” This warning is particularly to the point when it is a question

of fighting an enemy who so subtly and Jesuitically exploits the national sentiments and prejudices of the masses and their anticapitalist inclinations in the interests of big capital. *Such an enemy must be known to perfection, from every angle.* We must, without any delay whatever, react to his various maneuvers, discover his hidden moves, be prepared to repel him in any arena and at any moment. We must not hesitate even to *learn* from the enemy if that will help us more quickly and more effectively *to wring his neck.*

It would be a gross mistake to lay down any sort of universal scheme of the development of fascism, to cover all countries and all peoples. Such a scheme would not help but would hamper us in carrying on a real struggle. Apart from everything else, such a rule would result in indiscriminately thrusting into the camp of fascism those sections of the population which, if properly approached, could, at a certain stage of development, be brought into the struggle against fascism, or could at least be neutralized.

Let us take, for example, the development of fascism in France and in Germany. Some comrades believe that, generally speaking, fascism cannot develop as easily in France as in Germany. What is true and what is false in this contention? It is true that there were no such deep-seated democratic traditions in Germany as there are in France, which went through several revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is true that France is a country which won the war and imposed the Versailles system on other countries, that the national sentiments of the French people have not been hurt as they have been in Germany, where this factor played such a great part. It is true that in France the basic masses of the peasantry are pro-republic and anti-fascist, especially in the south, in contrast with Germany, where even before fascism came to power a considerable section of the peasantry was under the influence of reactionary parties.

But, comrades, notwithstanding the existing differences in the development of the fascist movement in France and in Germany, notwithstanding the factors which impede the onslaught of fascism in France, it would be shortsighted not to notice the uninterrupted growth there of the fascist peril or to underestimate the possibility of a fascist *coup d'état.*

Moreover, a number of factors in France favor the development of fascism. One must not forget that the economic crisis, which began later in France than in other capitalist countries, continues to become deeper and more acute, and this greatly encourages the orgy of fascist demagoguery. French fascism holds strong positions in the army, among the officers, such as the Nationalist-Socialists did not have in the Reichswehr before their advent to power. Furthermore, in no other country, perhaps, has the parliamentary regime been corrupted to such an enormous extent and caused such indignation among the masses as in France. Nor must it be forgotten that the development of fascism is furthered by the French bourgeoisie's keen fear of losing its political and military hegemony in Europe.

Hence it follows that the successes scored by the anti-fascist movement in France, of which Comrades Thorez and Cachin have spoken here and over which we so heartily rejoice, are still far from indicating that the toiling masses have definitely succeeded in blocking the road to fascism. I must emphatically stress once more the full importance of the tasks of the French working class in the struggle against fascism, of which I already spoke in my report.

It would likewise be dangerous to cherish illusions regarding the weakness of fascism in other countries where it does not have a broad mass base. We have the example of such countries as Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Finland, where fascism, although it had no broad base, came to power, relying on the armed forces of the state, and then sought to broaden its base by making use of the state apparatus.

Comrade Dutt was right in his contention that there was a tendency among us to contemplate fascism in general, without taking into account the specific features of the fascist movement in the various countries, erroneously classifying all reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie as fascism and going as far as calling the entire non-Communist camp fascist. The struggle against fascism was not strengthened, but rather weakened in consequence.

Even now we still have survivals of a stereotyped approach to the question of fascism. When some comrades assert that Roosevelt's "New Deal" represents an even clearer and more pronounced form of the devel-

opment of the bourgeoisie toward fascism than the “National Government” in Great Britain, for example, is this not a manifestation of such a stereotyped approach to the question? One must be very partial to hackneyed schemes not to see that the most reactionary circles of American finance capital, which are attacking Roosevelt, are above all the very force which is stimulating and organizing the fascist movement in the United States. Not to see the beginnings of real fascism in the United States behind the hypocritical outpourings of these circles “in defense of the democratic rights of the American citizen” is tantamount to misleading the working class in the struggle against its worst enemy.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries also, as was mentioned in the discussion, certain fascist groups are developing but, of course, there can be no question of the kind of fascism that we are accustomed to see in Germany, Italy and other capitalist countries. Here we must study and take into account the quite special economic, political and historical conditions, in accordance with which fascism is assuming, and will continue to assume, peculiar forms of its own.

Unable to approach the phenomena of real life concretely, some comrades who suffer from mental laziness substitute general, noncommittal *formulas* for a careful and concrete study of the actual situation and the relationship of class forces. They remind us, not of sharpshooters who shoot with unerring aim, but of those “crack” riflemen who regularly and unfailingly miss the target, shooting either too high or too low, too near or too far. But we, comrades, as Communists, active in the labor movement, as the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, want to be sharpshooters who unfailingly hit the target.

The United Proletarian Front and the Anti-Fascist People’s Front

Some comrades are quite needlessly racking their brains over the problem of *what to begin with—the united proletarian front or the anti-fascist People’s Front.*

Some say that we cannot start forming the anti-fascist People’s Front until we have organized a solid united front of the proletariat.

Others argue that, since the establishment of the united proletarian

front meets in a number of countries with the resistance of the reactionary part of Social-Democracy, it is better to start at once with building up the People's Front, and then develop the united working class front on this basis.

Evidently both groups fail to understand that the united proletarian front and the anti-fascist People's Front are connected by the *living dialectics of struggle*; that they are interwoven, the one passing into the other in the process of the practical struggle against fascism, and that there is certainly no Chinese wall to keep them apart.

For it cannot be seriously supposed that it is possible to establish a genuine anti-fascist People's Front without securing the unity of action of the working class itself, the *guiding force* of this antifascist People's Front. At the same time, the further development of the united proletarian front depends, to a considerable degree, upon its transformation into a People's Front against fascism.

Comrades! Just picture to yourselves a devotee of cut-and-dried theories of this kind, gazing upon our resolution and contriving his pet scheme with the zeal of a true pedant:

First, local united proletarian front from below;

Then, regional united front from below;

Thereafter, united front from above, passing through the same stages;

Then, unity in the trade union movement;

After that, the enlistment of other anti-fascist parties;

This to be followed by the extended People's Front, from above and from below;

After which the movement must be raised to a higher level, politicalized, revolutionized, and so on and so forth.

You will say, comrades, that this is sheer nonsense. I agree with you. But the unfortunate thing is that in some form or other this kind of sectarian nonsense is still to be found quite frequently in our ranks.

How does the matter really stand? Of course, we must strive every-

where for a wide People's Front of struggle against fascism. But in a number of countries we shall not get beyond general talk about the People's Front unless we succeed in mobilizing the mass of the workers for the purpose of breaking down the resistance of the reactionary section of Social-Democracy to the proletarian united front of struggle. Above all, this is how the matter stands in Great Britain, where the working class comprises the majority of the population and where the bulk of the working class follows the lead of the trade unions and the Labor Party. That is how matters stand in Belgium and in the Scandinavian countries, where the numerically small Communist Parties must face strong mass trade unions and numerically large Social-Democratic Parties.

In these countries the Communists would commit a very serious political mistake if they shirked the struggle to establish a united proletarian front, under cover of general talk about the People's Front, which cannot be formed without the participation of the mass working-class organizations. In order to bring about a genuine People's Front in these countries, the Communists must carry out an enormous amount of political and organizational work among the mass of the workers. They must overcome the preconceived ideas of these masses who regard their mass reformist organizations as already the embodiment of proletarian unity. They must convince these masses &t the establishment of a united front with the Communists mean a shift on the part of those masses to the position of the class struggle, and that this shift alone will guarantee success in the struggle against the offensive of capital and fascism. We shall not overcome our difficulties by setting ourselves much wider tasks here. On the contrary, in fighting to remove these difficulties we shall, in fact and not in words alone, prepare the ground for the creation of a genuine People's Front of battle against fascism, against the capitalist offensive and against the threat of imperialist war.

The problem is different in countries like Poland, where a strong peasant movement is developing alongside the labor movement, where the peasant masses have their own organizations which are becoming radicalized as a result of the agrarian crisis, and where national oppression evokes indignation among the national minorities. Here the development of the general People's Front of struggle will proceed parallel with

the development of the united proletarian front, and at times in this type of country the movement for a general People's Front may even outstrip the movement for a working class front.

Take a country like Spain, which is in the process of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Can it be said that, because the proletariat is split up into numerous small organizations, complete fighting unity of the working class must first be established here before a workers' and peasants' front against Leroux and Gil Robles is created? By tackling the question in this way we would isolate the proletariat from the peasantry, we would in effect be withdrawing the slogan of the agrarian revolution, and we would make it easier for the enemies of the people to disunite the proletariat and the peasantry and set the peasantry in opposition to the working class. Yet this, comrades, as is well known, was one of the main reasons why the working class was defeated in the October events of 1934.

However, one thing must not be forgotten: in all countries where the proletariat is comparatively small in numbers, where the peasantry and the urban petit-bourgeois strata predominate, it is all the more necessary to make every effort to set up a firm united front of the working class itself, so that it may be able to take its place as the leading factor in relation to all the toilers.

Thus, comrades, in attacking the problem of the proletarian front and the People's Front, there can be no general panacea suitable for all cases, all countries, all peoples. In this matter universalism, the application of one and the same recipe to all countries, is equivalent, if you will allow me to say so, to ignorance; and ignorance should be flogged, even when it stalks about, nay, particularly when it stalks about, in the cloak of universal cut-and-dried schemes.

The Role of Social-democracy and its Attitude Toward the United Front of the Proletariat

Comrades, in view of the tactical problems confronting us, it is very important to give a correct reply to the question of whether Social-Democracy at the present time is still the principal bulwark of the bourgeoisie, and if so, where?

Some of the comrades who participated in the discussion (Comrades Florin, Dutt) touched upon this question, but in view of its importance a fuller reply must be given to it, for it is a question which workers of all trends, particularly Social-Democratic workers, are asking and cannot help asking.

It must be borne in mind that in a number of countries the position of Social-Democracy in the bourgeois state, and its attitude toward the bourgeoisie, have been undergoing a change.

In the first place, the crisis has severely shaken the position of even the most secure sections of the working class, the so-called aristocracy of labor, which, as we know, is the main support of Social-Democracy. These sections, too, are beginning more and more to revise their views as to the expediency of the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

Second, as I pointed out in my report, the bourgeoisie in a number of countries is itself compelled to abandon bourgeois democracy and resort to the terroristic form of dictatorship, depriving Social-Democracy not only of its previous position in the state system of finance capital, but also, under certain conditions, of its legal status, persecuting and even suppressing it.

Third, under the influence of the lessons learned from the defeat of the workers in Germany, Austria and Spain, a defeat which was largely the result of the Social-Democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and, on the other hand, under the influence of the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union as a result of Bolshevik policy and the application of revolutionary Marxism, the Social Democratic workers are becoming revolutionized and are beginning to turn to the class struggle against the bourgeoisie.

The combined effect of all these things has been to make it increasingly difficult, and in some countries actually impossible, for Social-Democracy to preserve its former role of bulwark of the bourgeoisie.

Failure to understand this is particularly harmful in those countries in which the fascist dictatorship has deprived Social-democracy of its legal status. From this point of view the self-criticism of those German comrades, who in their speeches mentioned the necessity of ceasing to cling to the letter of obsolete formulas and decisions concerning

Social-Democracy, of ceasing to ignore the changes that have taken place in its position, was correct. It is clear that if we ignore these changes, it will lead to a distortion of our policy for bringing about the unity of the working class, and will make it easier for the reactionary elements of the Social-Democratic Parties to sabotage the united front.

The process of revolutionization in the ranks of the Social-Democratic Parties, now going on in all countries, is developing unevenly. It must not be imagined that the Social-Democratic workers who are becoming revolutionized will *at once* and on a mass scale pass over to the position of consistent class struggle, and will *straightway* unite with the Communists without any intermediate stages. In a number of countries this will be a more or less difficult, complicated and prolonged process, essentially dependent, at any rate, on the correctness of our policy and tactics. We must even reckon with the possibility that, in passing from the position of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie to the position of class struggle against the bourgeoisie, some Social-Democratic Parties and organizations will continue to exist for a time as independent organizations or parties. In such event there can, of course, be no thought of such Social-Democratic organizations or parties being regarded as a bulwark of the bourgeoisie.

It cannot be expected that those Social-Democratic workers who are under the influence of the ideology of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, which has been instilled in them for decades, will break with this ideology of their own accord, by the action of objective causes alone. No. It is our business, the business of Communists, to help them free themselves from the hold of reformist ideology. The work of explaining the principles and program of Communism must be carried on patiently, in a comradely fashion, and must be adapted to the degree of development of the individual Social-Democratic workers. Our criticism of Social-Democracy must become more concrete and systematic, and must be based on the experience of the Social-Democratic masses themselves.

It must be borne in mind that primarily by utilizing their experience in the joint struggle with the Communists against the class enemy will it be possible and necessary to facilitate and accelerate the revolutionary development of the Social-Democratic workers. There is no more

effective way for the Social-Democratic workers to outlive their doubts and hesitations than by participating in the proletarian united front.

We shall do all in our power to make it easier, not only for the Social-Democratic workers but also for those leading members of the Social-Democratic Parties and organizations who sincerely desire to adopt the revolutionary class position, to work and fight with us against the class enemy. At the same time we declare that any Social-Democratic functionary, lower official or worker who continues to uphold the disruptive tactics of the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders, who comes out against the united front and thus directly or indirectly aids the class enemy, will thereby incur at least equal guilt before the working class as those who are historically responsible for having supported the Social-Democratic policy of class collaboration, the policy which in a number of European countries doomed the revolution in 1918 and cleared the way for fascism.

The attitude to the united front marks the dividing line between the reactionary sections of Social-Democracy and the sections that are becoming revolutionary. Our assistance to the latter will be the more effective the more we intensify our fight against the reactionary camp of Social-Democracy that takes part in a bloc with the bourgeoisie. And within the Left camp the self-determination of its various elements will take place the sooner, the more determinedly the Communists fight for a united front with the Social-Democratic Parties. The experience of the class struggle and the participation of the Social-Democrats in the united front movement will show who in that camp will prove to be "Left" in words and who is really Left.

The United Front Government

While the attitude of Social-Democracy toward the practical realization of the proletarian united front is, generally speaking, the chief sign in every country of whether the previous role in the bourgeois state of the Social-Democratic Party or of its individual parts has changed, and if so, to what extent, *the attitude of the Social-Democrats on the issue of a united front government* will be a particularly clear test.

When a situation arises in which the question of creating a united front government becomes an immediate practical problem, this issue

will become a decisive test of the policy of Social-Democracy in the given country: either jointly with the bourgeoisie, that is moving toward fascism, against the working class; or jointly with the revolutionary proletariat against fascism and reaction, not merely in words but in deeds. That is how the question will inevitably present itself at the time the united front government is formed as well as while it is in power.

With regard to the character and conditions of formation of the united front government or anti-fascist People's Front government, I think that my report gave what was necessary for general tactical direction. To expect us over and above this to indicate all possible forms and all conditions under which such governments may be formed would mean to lose oneself in barren conjecture.

I would like to utter a note of warning against oversimplification or the application of cut-and-dried schemes in this question. Life is more complex than any scheme. For example, it would be wrong to imagine that the united front government is an *indispensable stage* on the road to the establishment of proletarian dictatorship. That is just as wrong as the former assertion that there will be *no intermediary stages* in the fascist countries and that fascist dictatorship is *certain to be immediately* superseded by proletarian dictatorship.

The whole question boils down to this: Will the proletariat itself be prepared at the decisive moment for the direct overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of its own power, and will it be able in that event to ensure the support of its allies? Or, will the movement of the united proletarian front and the anti-fascist People's Front at the particular stage be in a position only to suppress or overthrow fascism, without directly proceeding to abolish the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie? In the latter case it would be an intolerable piece of political short-sightedness, and not serious revolutionary politics, on this ground alone to refuse to create and support a united front or a People's Front government.

It is likewise not difficult to understand that the establishment of a united front government in countries where fascism is not yet in power is something *different* from the creation of such a government in countries where the fascist dictatorship holds sway. In the latter countries a united front government can be created *only in the process of overthrowing fascist*

rule. In countries where the *bourgeois-democratic revolution* is *developing*, a People's Front government may become the government of the democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry.

As I have already pointed out in my report, the Communists will do all in their power to support a united front government to the extent that the latter will really fight against the enemies of the people and grant freedom of action to the Communist Party and to the working class. The question of whether Communists will take part in the government will be determined entirely by the actual situation prevailing at the time. Such questions will be settled as they arise. No ready-made recipes can be prescribed in advance.

Attitude Toward Bourgeois Democracy

Here it was shown that “while mobilizing the masses to repel the onslaught of fascism against the rights of the toilers, the Polish Party at the same time had its misgivings about formulating positive democratic demands in order not to create democratic illusions among the masses.” The Polish Party is, of course, not the only one in which such fear of formulating positive democratic demands exists in one way or another.

Where does that fear come from, comrades? It comes from an incorrect, non-dialectical conception of our attitude toward bourgeois democracy. We Communists are unswerving upholders of Soviet democracy, the great example of which is the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union, where the introduction of equal suffrage, and the direct and secret ballot has been proclaimed by resolution of the Seventh Congress of Soviets, at the very time that the last relics of bourgeois democracy are being wiped out in the capitalist countries. This Soviet democracy presupposes the victory of the proletarian revolution, the conversion of private property in the means of production into public property, the adoption by the overwhelming majority of the people of the road to socialism. This democracy does not represent a final form; it develops and will continue to develop in proportion as further progress is made in socialist construction, in the creation of classless society and in the overcoming of the survivals of capitalism in economic life and in the minds of the people.

But today the millions of toilers living under capitalism are faced

with the necessity of deciding their attitude to *those forms* in which the rule of the bourgeoisie is clad in the various countries. We are not Anarchists and it is not at all a matter of indifference to us what kind of political regime exists in any given country: whether a bourgeois dictatorship in the form of bourgeois democracy, even with democratic rights and liberties greatly curtailed, or a bourgeois dictatorship in its open, fascist form. While being upholders of Soviet democracy, *we shall defend every inch of the democratic gains which the working class has wrested in the course of years of stubborn struggle, and shall resolutely fight to extend these gains.*

How great were the sacrifices of the British working class before it secured the right to strike, a legal status for its trade unions, the right of assembly and freedom of the press, extension of the franchise, and other rights! How many tens of thousands of workers gave their lives in the revolutionary battles fought in France in the nineteenth century to obtain the elementary rights and the lawful opportunity of organizing their forces for the struggle against the exploiters! The proletariat of all countries has shed much of its blood to win bourgeois democratic liberties, and will naturally fight with all its strength to retain them.

Our attitude to bourgeois democracy is not the same under all conditions. For instance, at the time of the October Revolution, the Russian Bolsheviks engaged in a life-and-death struggle against all political parties which, under the slogan of the defense of bourgeois democracy, opposed the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. The Bolsheviks fought these parties because the banner of bourgeois democracy had at that time become the standard around which all counter-revolutionary forces mobilized to challenge the victory of the proletariat. The situation is quite different in the capitalist countries at present. Now the fascist counter-revolution is attacking bourgeois democracy in an effort to establish the most barbaric regime of exploitation and suppression of the toiling masses. Now the toiling masses in a number of capitalist countries are faced with the necessity of making a *definite* choice, and of making it today, not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism.

Besides, we have now a situation which differs from that which existed, for example, in the epoch of capitalist stabilization. At that time

the fascist danger was not as acute as it is today. At that time it was bourgeois dictatorship in the form of bourgeois democracy that the revolutionary workers were facing in a number of countries, and it was against bourgeois democracy that they were concentrating their fire. In Germany, they fought against the Weimar Republic, not because it was a republic, but because it was a *bourgeois* republic that was engaged in crushing the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, especially in 1918-20 and in 1925.

But could the Communists retain the same position also when the fascist movement began to raise its head, when, for instance, in 1932, the fascists in Germany were organizing and arming hundreds of thousands of storm troopers against the working class? Of course not. It was the mistake of the Communists in a number of countries, particularly in Germany, that they failed to take account of the changes that had taken place, but continued to repeat the slogans and maintain the tactical positions that had been correct a few years before, especially when the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship was an immediate issue, and when the entire German counterrevolution was rallying under the banner of the Weimar Republic, as it did in 1918-20.

And the circumstance that even today we must still make reference to fear, in our ranks, of launching positive democratic slogans indicates how little our comrades have mastered the Marxist-Leninist method of approaching such important problems of our tactics. Some say that the struggle for democratic rights may divert the workers from the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. It may not be amiss to recall what Lenin said on this question:

It would be a fundamental mistake to suppose that the struggle for democracy can divert the proletariat from the socialist revolution, or obscure, or overshadow it, etc. On the contrary, just as socialism can not be victorious unless it introduces complete democracy, so the proletariat will be unable to prepare for victory over the bourgeoisie unless it wages a many-sided, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy.¹

1. V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. V, p. 268. - Ed.

These words should be firmly fixed in the memories of all our comrades, bearing in mind that in history great revolutions have grown out of small movements for the defense of the elementary rights of the working class. But in order to be able to link up the struggle for democratic rights with the struggle of the working class for socialism, it is necessary first and foremost to discard any cut-and-dried approach to the question of defense of bourgeois democracy.

A Correct Line Alone is not Enough

Comrades, it is clear, of course, that for the Communist International and each of its sections, the fundamental thing is to work out a correct line. But a correct line alone is not enough for concrete leadership in the class struggle.

For that, a number of conditions must be fulfilled, above all the following:

First, *organizational guarantees* that adopted decisions will be carried out in practice and that all obstacles in the way will be resolutely overcome. What Comrade Stalin said at the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union about the conditions necessary to carry out the line of the Party can and should be applied also, in its entirety, to the decisions which our Congress adopts. Comrade Stalin said:

Some people think that it is sufficient to draw up a correct Party line, proclaim it from the housetops, enunciate it in the form of general theses and resolutions and carry them unanimously in order to make victory come of itself, automatically, so to speak. This, of course, is wrong. Those who think like that are greatly mistaken. Only incorrigible bureaucrats and office rats can think that. As a matter of fact, these successes and victories were obtained, not automatically, but as a result of a fierce struggle to carry out the Party line. Victory never comes by itself—it has to be dragged by the hand. Good resolutions and declarations in favor of the general line of the Party are only a beginning; they merely express the desire to win, but it is not victory. After the correct line has been given,

after a correct solution of the problem has been found, success depends on the manner in which the work is organized, on the organization of the struggle for the application of the line of the Party, on the proper selection of workers, on supervising the fulfillment of the decisions of the leading organs. Without this the correct line of the Party and the correct solutions are in danger of being severely damaged. More than that, after the correct political line has been given, the organizational work decides everything, including the fate of the political line itself, *i.e.*, whether it is fulfilled or not.²

It is hardly necessary to add anything to these striking words of Comrade Stalin, which must become a guiding principle in all the work of our Parties.

Another condition is the *ability to convert decisions of the Communist International and its sections into decisions of the widest masses themselves*. This is all the more necessary now, when we are faced with the task of organizing a united front of the proletariat and drawing very wide masses of the people into an anti-fascist People's Front. The political and tactical genius of Lenin and Stalin stands out most clearly and vividly in their masterly ability to get the masses to understand the correct line and the slogans of the Party through their own experience. If we trace the history of Bolshevism, that greatest of treasure houses of the political strategy and tactics of the revolutionary labor movement, we can see for ourselves that the Bolsheviks never substituted methods of leading the Party for methods of leading the masses.

Comrade Stalin pointed out that one of the peculiarities of the tactics of the Russian Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for the October Revolution consisted in their ability correctly to determine the path and the turns which naturally lead the masses to the slogans of the Party, to the very "threshold of the revolution," helping them to sense, to test and to realize from their own experience the correctness of these slogans. They did not confuse leadership of the Party with leadership of the masses, but clearly saw the difference between leadership of the first kind

2. Socialism Victorious, pp. 78-79. - Ed.

and leadership of the second kind. In this way they worked out tactics as the science not only of Party leadership, but also of the leadership of the millions of toilers.

Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that *the masses cannot assimilate our decisions unless we learn to speak the language which the masses understand*. We do not always know how to speak simply, concretely, in images which are familiar and intelligible to the masses. We are still unable to refrain from abstract formulas which we have learnt by rote. As a matter of fact, if you look through our leaflets, newspapers, resolutions and theses, you will find that they are often written in a language and style so heavy that they are difficult for even our Party functionaries to understand, let alone the rank-and-file workers.

If we reflect, comrades, that workers, especially in fascist countries, who distribute or only read these leaflets risk their very lives by doing so, we shall realize still more clearly the need of writing for the masses in a language which they understand, so that the sacrifices made shall not have been in vain.

The same applies in no less degree to our oral agitation and propaganda. We must admit quite frankly that in this respect the fascists have often proven more dexterous and flexible than many of our comrades.

I recall, for example, a meeting of unemployed in Berlin before Hitler's accession to power. It was at the time of the trial of those notorious swindlers and speculators, the Sklarek brothers, which dragged on for several months. A National-Socialist speaker in addressing the meeting made demagogic use of that trial to further his own ends. He referred to the swindles, the bribery and other crimes committed by the Sklarek brothers, emphasized that the trial had been dragging for months and figured out how many hundreds of thousands of marks it had already cost the German people. To the accompaniment of loud applause the speaker declared that such bandits as the Sklarek brothers should have been shot without any ado, and the money wasted on the trial should have gone to the unemployed.

A Communist rose and asked for the floor. The chairman at first refused, but under the pressure of the audience which wanted to hear a Communist he had to let him speak. When the Communist got up on

the platform, everybody awaited with tense expectation what the Communist speaker would have to say. Well, what did he say?

“Comrades,” he began in a loud and strong voice, “the Plenum of the Communist International has just closed. It showed the way to the salvation of the working class. The chief task it puts before you, comrades, is *‘to win the majority of the working classes.’*...The Plenum pointed out that the unemployed movement must be ‘politicalized.’ The Plenum calls on us to raise it *to a higher level.*” He went on in the same strain, evidently under the impression that he was “explaining” authentic decisions of the Plenum.

Could such a speech appeal to the unemployed? Could they find any satisfaction in the fact that first we intended to politicalize, then revolutionize, and finally mobilize them in order to raise their movement to a higher level?

Sitting in a corner of the hall, I observed with chagrin how the unemployed, who had been so eager to hear a Communist in order to find out from him what to do concretely, began to yawn and display unmistakable signs of disappointment. And I was not at all surprised when toward the end the chairman rudely cut our speaker short without any protest from the meeting.

This, unfortunately, is not the only case of its kind in our agitational work. Nor were such cases confined to Germany. To agitate in such fashion means to agitate against one’s own cause. It is high time to put an end once and for all to these, to say the least, childish methods of agitation.

During my report, the chairman, Comrade Kuusinen, received a characteristic letter from the floor of the Congress addressed to me. Let me read it:

In your speech at the Congress, please take up the following question, namely, that all resolutions and decisions adopted in the future by the Communist International be written so that not only trained Communists can get the meaning, but that any working man reading the material of the Comintern might without any preliminary training be able to see at once what the Communists want, and of what service Communism is to mankind. Some Party leaders forget this. They must be

reminded of it and very strongly, too. Also that agitation for Communism be conducted in understandable language.

I do not know exactly who is the author of this letter, but I have no doubt that this comrade voiced in his letter the opinion and desire of millions of workers. Many of our comrades think that the more high-sounding words, and the more formulas and theses unintelligible to the masses they use, the better their agitation and propaganda, forgetting that the greatest leaders and theoreticians of the working class of our epoch, Lenin and Stalin, have always spoken and written in highly popular language, readily understood by the masses.

Every one of us must make this a law, a Bolshevik law, an elementary rule:

When writing or speaking always have in mind the rank-and-file worker who must understand you, must believe in your appeal and be ready to follow you! You must have in mind those for whom you write, to whom you speak.

Cadres

Comrades, our best resolutions will remain scraps of paper if we lack the people who can put them into effect. Unfortunately, however, I must state that the problem of *cadres*, one of the most important questions facing us, received almost no attention at this Congress. The report of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was discussed for seven days, there were many speakers from various countries, but only a few, and they only in passing, discussed this question, so extremely vital for the Communist Parties and the labor movement. In their practical work our Parties have not yet realized by far that *people, cadres, decide everything*. They are unable to do what Comrade Stalin is teaching us to do, namely, to cultivate cadres “as a gardener cultivates his favorite fruit tree,” “to appreciate people, to appreciate cadres, to appreciate every worker who can be of use to our common cause.”

A negligent attitude to the problem of cadres is all the more impermissible for the reason that we are constantly losing some of the most valuable of our cadres in the struggle. For we are not a learned society

but a militant movement which is constantly in the firing line. Our most energetic, most courageous and most class-conscious elements are in the front ranks. It is precisely these front-line men that the enemy hunts down, murders, throws into jail, puts in the concentration camps and subjects to excruciating torture, particularly in fascist countries. This gives rise to the urgent necessity of constantly replenishing the ranks, cultivating and training new cadres as well as carefully preserving the existing cadres.

The problem of cadres is of particular urgency for the additional reason that under our influence the mass united front movement is gaining momentum and bringing forward many thousands of new working class militants. Moreover, it is not only young revolutionary elements, not only workers just becoming revolutionary, who have never before participated in a political movement that stream into our ranks. Very often former members and militants of the Social-Democratic Parties also join us. These new cadres require special attention, particularly in the illegal Communist Parties, the more so because in their practical work these cadres with their poor theoretical training frequently come up against very serious political problems which they have to solve for themselves.

The problem of what shall be the *correct policy with regard to cadres* is a very serious one for our Parties, as well as for the Young Communist Leagues and for all other mass organizations—for the entire revolutionary labor movement.

What does a correct policy with regard to cadres imply?

First, *knowing one's people*. As a rule there is no systematic study of cadres in our Parties. Only recently have the Communist Parties of France and Poland and, in the East, the Communist Party of China, achieved certain successes in this direction. The Communist Party of Germany, before its underground period, had also undertaken a study of its cadres. The experience of these Parties has shown that as soon as they began to study their people, Party workers were discovered who had remained unnoticed before. On the other hand, the Parties began to be purged of alien elements who were ideologically and politically harmful. It is sufficient to point to the example of Celor and Barbe in France who, when put under the Bolshevik microscope, turned out to be agents of the

class enemy and were thrown out of the Party. In Poland and in Hungary the verification of cadres made it easier to discover nests of provocateurs, agents of the enemy who had sedulously concealed their identity.

Second, *proper promotion of cadres*. Promotion should not be something casual, but one of the normal functions of the Party. It is bad when promotion is made exclusively and on the basis of narrow Party considerations, without regard to whether the Communist promoted has contact with the masses or not. Promotion should take place on the basis of the ability of the various Party workers to discharge particular functions, and of their popularity among the masses. We have examples in our Parties of promotions which have produced excellent results. For instance, we have a Spanish woman Communist, sitting in the Presidium of this Congress, Comrade Dolores. Two years ago she was still a rank-and-file Party worker. But in the very first clashes with the class enemy, she proved to be an excellent agitator and fighter. Subsequently promoted to the leading body of the Party, she has proved herself a most worthy member of that body.

I could point to a number of similar cases in several other countries, but in the majority of cases promotions are made in an unorganized and haphazard manner, and therefore are not always fortunate. Sometimes moralizers, phrasemongers and chatterboxes who actually harm the cause are promoted to leading positions.

Third, *the ability to use people to best advantage*. We must be able to ascertain and utilize the valuable qualities of every single active member. There are no ideal people; we must take them as they are and correct their weaknesses and shortcomings. We know of glaring examples in our Parties of the wrong utilization of good, honest Communists who might have been very useful had they been given work that they were better fit to do.

Fourth, *proper distribution of cadres*. First of all, we must see to it that the main links of the movement are in the charge of strong people who have contacts with the masses, have sprung from the very depths of the masses, who have initiative and are staunch. The more important districts should have an appropriate number of such militants. In capitalist countries it is not an easy matter to transfer cadres from one

place to another. Such a task encounters a number of obstacles and difficulties, including lack of funds, family considerations, etc., difficulties which must be taken into account and properly overcome. But usually we neglect to do this altogether.

Fifth, *systematic assistance to cadres*. This assistance should take the form of careful instruction, comradely control, rectification of shortcomings and mistakes and concrete, everyday guidance.

Sixth, *proper care for the preservation of cadres*. We must learn promptly to withdraw Party workers to the rear whenever circumstances so require and replace them by others. We must demand that the Party leadership, particularly in countries where the Parties are illegal, assume paramount responsibility for the preservation of cadres. The proper preservation of cadres also presupposes highly efficient organization of secrecy in the Party. In certain of our Parties many comrades think that the Parties are already prepared for underground existence even though they have reorganized themselves only formally, according to readymade rules. We had to pay very dearly for having started the real work of reorganization only after the Party had gone underground, under the direct heavy blows of the enemy. Remember the severe losses the Communist Party of Germany suffered during its transition to underground conditions! Its experience should serve as a serious warning to those of our Parties, which today are still legal but may lose their legal status tomorrow.

Only a correct policy in regard to cadres will enable our Parties to develop and utilize all available forces to the utmost, and obtain from the enormous reservoir of the mass movement ever fresh reinforcements of new and better active workers.

What should be our *main criteria* in selecting cadres?

First, *absolute devotion* to the cause of the working class, *loyalty to the Party*, tested in face of the enemy—in battle, in prison, in court.

Second, the closest possible *contact with the masses*. The comrades concerned must be wholly absorbed in the interests of the masses feel the life pulse of the masses, know their sentiments and requirements. The prestige of the leaders of our Party organization should be based, first of all, on the fact that the masses regard them as their leaders, and are convinced through their own experience of their ability as leaders, and of

their determination and self-sacrifice in struggle.

Third, *ability independently to find one's bearings* and not to be afraid of *assuming responsibility in making decisions*. He who fears to take responsibility is not a leader. He who is unable to display initiative, who says: "I will do only what I am told," is not a Bolshevik. Only he is a real Bolshevik leader who does not lose his head at moments of defeat, who does not get a swelled head at moments of success, who displays indomitable firmness in carrying out decisions. Cadres develop and grow best when they are placed in the position of having to solve concrete problems of the struggle independently, and are aware that they are fully responsible for their decisions.

Fourth, *discipline* and *Bolshevik* hardening in the struggle against the class enemy as well as in their irreconcilable opposition to all deviations from the Bolshevik line.

We must place all the more emphasis on these conditions which determine the correct selection of cadres, because in practice preference is very often given to a comrade who, for example, is able to write well and is a good speaker but is not a man or woman of action, and is not as suited for the struggle as some other comrade who perhaps may not be able to write or speak so well, but is a staunch comrade, possessing initiative and contacts with the masses, and is capable of going into battle and leading others into battle. Have there not been many cases of sectarians, doctrinaires or moralizers crowding out loyal mass workers, genuine working-class leaders?

Our leading cadres should combine the knowledge of *what* they must do—with *Bolshevik stamina, revolutionary strength of character, and the will power to carry it through*.

In connection with the question of cadres, permit me, comrades, to dwell also on the very great part which the International Labor Defense is called upon to play in relation to the cadres of the labor movement. The material and moral assistance which the I.L.D. organizations render to our prisoners and their families, to political emigrants, to prosecuted revolutionaries and anti-fascists, has saved the lives and preserved the strength and fighting capacity of thousands upon thousands of most valuable fighters of the working class in many countries. Those of us who

have been in jail have found out directly through our own experience the enormous significance of the activity of the I.L.D.

By its activity the I.L.D. has won the affection, devotion and deep gratitude of hundreds of thousands of proletarians and of revolutionary elements among the peasantry and intellectuals.

Under present conditions, when bourgeois reaction is growing, when fascism is raging and the class struggle is becoming more acute, the role of the I.L.D. is increasing immensely. The task now before the I.L.D. is to become a genuine mass organization of the toilers in all capitalist countries (particularly in fascist countries where it must adapt itself to the special conditions prevailing there). It must become, so to speak, a sort of "Red Cross" of the united front of the proletariat and the anti-fascist People's Front, embracing millions of working people the "Red Cross" of the army of the toiling classes embattled against fascism, fighting for peace and socialism. If the I.L.D. is to perform its part successfully, it must train thousands of its own active militants, a multitude of I.L.D. workers of its own, answering in their character and capacity the *special purposes* of this extremely important organization.

And here I must say as categorically and as sharply as possible that while a *bureaucratic* approach and a soulless attitude toward people is despicable in the labor movement taken in general, in the sphere of activity of the I.L.D. such an attitude is an evil bordering on the *criminal*. The fighters of the working class, the victims of reaction and fascism who are suffering agony in torture chambers and concentration camps, political emigrants and their families, should all meet with the most sympathetic care and solicitude on the part of the organizations and functionaries of the I.L.D.

The I.L.D. must still better appreciate and discharge its duty of assisting the fighters in the proletarian and anti-fascist movement, particularly in physically and morally preserving the cadres of the labor movement. The Communists and revolutionary workers who are active in the I.L.D. organizations must realize at every step the enormous responsibility they bear before the working class and the Communist International for the successful fulfillment of the role and tasks of the I.L.D.

Comrades, as you know, cadres receive their best training *in the*

process of struggle, in surmounting difficulties and with standing tests, and also from *favorable* and *unfavorable* examples of conduct. We have hundreds of examples of splendid conduct in times of strikes, during demonstrations, in jail, in court. We have thousands of instances of heroism, but unfortunately also not a few cases of pigeon-heartedness, lack of firmness and even desertion. We often forget these examples, both good and bad. We do not teach people to benefit by these examples. We do not show them what should be emulated and *what* rejected. We must study the conduct of our comrades and militant workers during class conflicts, under police interrogation, in the jails and concentration camps, in court, etc. The good examples should be brought to light and held up as models to be followed, and all that is rotten, non-Bolshevik and philistine should be cast aside.

Since the Leipzig trial we have had quite a number of our comrades whose statements before bourgeois and fascist courts have shown that numerous cadres are growing up with an excellent understanding of what really constitutes Bolshevik conduct in court.

But how many even of you delegates to the Congress know the details of the trial of the railwaymen in Romania, know about the trial of Fiete Schulz who was subsequently beheaded by the fascists in Germany, the trial of our valiant Japanese comrade Itikawa, the trial of the Bulgarian revolutionary soldiers, and many other trials at which admirable examples of proletarian heroism were displayed?

Such worthy examples of proletarian heroism must be popularized, must be contrasted with the manifestations of faintheartedness, philistinism, and every kind of rottenness and frailty in our ranks and the ranks of the working class. These examples must be used most extensively in educating the cadres of the labor movement.

Comrades: Our Party leaders often complain that *there are no people*; that they are short of people for agitational and propaganda work, for the newspapers, the trade unions, for work among the youth, among women. Not enough, not enough—that is the cry. We simply haven't got the people. To this we could reply in the old yet eternally new words of Lenin:

There are no people—yet there are enormous numbers of people.

There are enormous numbers of people, because the working class and the most diverse strata of society, year after year, advance from their ranks an increasing number of discontented people who desire to protest, who are ready to render all the assistance they can in the fight against absolutism, the intolerableness of which is not yet recognized by all, but is nevertheless more and more acutely sensed by increasing masses of the people. At the same time we have no people, because we have no leaders, no political leaders, we have no talented organizers capable of organizing extensive and at the same time uniform and harmonious work that would give employment to all forces, even the most inconsiderable.³

These words of Lenin must be thoroughly grasped by our Parties and applied by them as a guide in their everyday work. There are plenty of people. They need only be discovered in our own organizations, during strikes and demonstrations, in various mass organizations of the workers, in united front bodies. They must be helped to grow in the course of their work and struggle; they must be put in a situation where they can really be useful to the workers' cause.

Comrades, we Communists are people of action. Ours is the problem of practical struggle against the offensive of capital, against fascism and the threat of imperialist war, the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. It is precisely this *practical* task that obliges Communist cadres to equip themselves *with revolutionary theory*. For, as Stalin, that greatest master of revolutionary action, has taught us, theory gives those engaged in practical work the power of orientation, clarity of vision, assurance in work, belief in the triumph of our cause.

But real revolutionary theory is irreconcilably hostile to all emasculated theorizing, all barren play with abstract definitions. *Our theory is not a dogma, but a guide to action*, Lenin used to say. It is such a theory that our cadres need, and they need it as badly as they need their daily bread, as they need air or water.

Whoever really wishes to rid our work of deadening, cut and- dried

3. V. I. Lenin, "What is to be Done?" Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 142. - Ed.

schemes, of pernicious scholasticism, must burn them out with a red-hot iron, both by *practical*, active struggle waged together with and at the head of the masses, and by *untiring effort* to master the mighty, fertile, all-powerful teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

In this connection I consider it particularly necessary to draw your attention to the work of our *Party schools*. It is not pedants, moralizers or adepts at quoting that our schools must train. No! It is practical front-rank fighters in the cause of the working class that must leave their walls—people who are front-rank fighters not only because of their boldness and readiness for self-sacrifice, but also because they see further than rank-and-file workers and know better than they the path that leads to the emancipation of the toilers. All sections of the Communist International must without any dillydallying seriously take up the question of the proper organization of Party schools, in order to turn them into *smithies* where these fighting cadres are forged.

The principal task of our Party schools, it seems to me, is to teach the Party and Young Communist League members there how to apply the Marxist-Leninist method to the concrete situation in particular countries, to definite conditions, not to the struggle against an enemy “in general” but against a particular, definite enemy. This makes necessary a study of not merely the letter of Leninism, but its living, revolutionary spirit.

There are two ways of training cadres in our Party schools:

First method: teaching people abstract theory, trying to give them the greatest possible dose of dry learning, coaching them how to write theses and resolutions in literary style, and only incidentally touching upon the problems of the particular country, of the particular labor movement, its history and traditions, and the experience of the Communist Party in question. Only incidentally!

Second method: theoretical training in which mastering the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism is based on a practical study by the student of the key problems of the struggle of the proletariat in his own country. On returning to his practical work, the student will then be able to find his bearings independently, and *become an independent practical organizer and leader capable of leading the masses in battle against*

the class enemy.

Not all graduates of our Party schools prove to be suitable. There are a great deal of phrases, abstractions, book knowledge and show of learning. But we need real, truly Bolshevik organizers and leaders of the masses. And we need them badly this very day. It does not matter if such students cannot write good theses (though we need that very much, too) but they must know how to organize and lead, undaunted by difficulties, capable of surmounting them.

Revolutionary theory is the generalized, *summarized experience* of the revolutionary movement. Communists must carefully utilize in their countries not only the experience of the past but also the experience of the present struggle of other detachments of the international labor movement. However, correct utilization of experience does not by any means denote *mechanical transposition* of readymade forms and methods of struggle from one set of conditions to another, from one country to another, as so often happens in our Parties.

Bare imitation, simple copying of methods and forms of work, even of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in countries where capitalism is still supreme, may with the best of intentions result in harm rather than good, as has so often actually been the case. It is precisely from the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks that we must learn to apply effectively, to the specific conditions of life in each country, the *single international line*; in the struggle against capitalism we must learn pitilessly to cast aside, pillory and hold up to general ridicule all *phrase-mongering, use of hackneyed formulas, pedantry and doctrinairism.*

It is necessary to learn, comrades, to learn always, at every step, in the course of the struggle, at liberty and in jail. To learn and to fight, to fight and to learn. We must be able to combine the great teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin *with Stalinist firmness* at work and in struggle, *with Stalinist irreconcilability on matters of principle* toward the class enemy and deviators from the Bolshevik line, *with Stalinist fearlessness in face of difficulties, with Stalinist revolutionary realism.*

* * *

Comrades! Never has any international congress of Communists

aroused such keen interest on the part of world public opinion as we witness now in regard to our present Congress. We may say without fear of exaggeration that there is not a single serious newspaper, not a single political party, not a single more or less serious political or social leader that is not following the course of our Congress with the closest attention.

The eyes of millions of workers, peasants, small townspeople, office workers and intellectuals, of colonial peoples and oppressed nationalities are turned toward Moscow, the great capital of the *first* but not *last* state of the international proletariat. In this we see a confirmation of the enormous importance and urgency of the questions discussed at the Congress and of its decisions. The frenzied howling of the fascists of all countries, particularly of German fascism, foaming at the mouth, only confirms us in our belief that our decisions have indeed hit the mark.

In the dark night of bourgeois reaction and fascism, in which the class enemy is endeavoring to keep the toiling masses of the capitalist countries, the Communist International, the international Party of the Bolsheviks, stands out like a beacon, showing all mankind the one way to emancipation from the yoke of capitalism, from fascist barbarity and the horrors of imperialist war.

The establishment of unity of action of the working class is a *decisive* stage on that road. Yes, unity of action by the organizations of the working class of every trend, the consolidation of its forces in all spheres of its activity and at all sectors of the class struggle.

The working class must achieve the *unity of its trade unions*. In vain do some reformist trade union leaders attempt to frighten the workers with the specter of a trade union democracy destroyed by the interference of the Communist Parties in the affairs of the united trade unions, by the existence of Communist fractions within the trade unions.

To depict us Communists as opponents of trade union democracy is sheer nonsense. We advocate and consistently uphold the right of the trade unions to decide their problems for themselves. We are even prepared to forego the creation of Communist fractions in the trade union if that is necessary in the interests of trade union unity. We are prepared to come to an agreement about the independence of the united trade unions from all political parties. But we are decidedly opposed to any

dependence of the trade unions on the bourgeoisie and do not give up our basic point of view that it is impermissible for trade unions to adopt a neutral position in regard to the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The working class must strive to secure the *union* of all forces of the working class youth and of all organizations of the antifascist youth, and win over that section of the working youth which has come under the demoralizing influence of fascism and other enemies of the people.

The working class must and will achieve unity of action in all fields of the labor movement. This will come about the sooner, the more firmly and resolutely we Communists and revolutionary workers of all capitalist countries apply in practice the new tactical line adopted by our Congress in relation to the most important urgent questions of the international labor movement.

We know that there are many difficulties ahead. Our path is not a smooth, asphalt road; our path is not strewn with roses. The working class will have to overcome many an obstacle, including obstacles in its own midst; it faces the task above all of rendering completely harmless the disruptive role of the reactionary elements of Social-Democracy. Many are the sacrifices that will be exacted under the hammer blows of bourgeois reaction and fascism. The revolutionary ship of the proletariat will have to navigate among a multitude of submerged rocks before reaching the haven of salvation.

But the working class in the capitalist countries is today no longer what it was in 1914, at the beginning of the imperialist war, nor what it was in 1918, at the end of the war. The working class has behind it twenty years of rich experience and revolutionary trials, bitter lessons of a number of defeats, especially in Germany, Austria and Spain.

The working class has before it the inspiring example of the Soviet Union, the country of socialism victorious, an example of how the class enemy can be defeated, how the working class can establish its own government and build socialist society.

The bourgeoisie no longer holds *undivided* dominion over the whole expanse of the world. Now *the victorious working class* rules over one-sixth of the globe, and Soviets control a vast stretch of territory in the

great land of China.

The working class possesses a firm, well-knit revolutionary vanguard, the Communist International. It has a tried and recognized, a great and wise leader—Stalin.

The whole course of historical development, comrades, favors the cause of the working class. In vain are the efforts of the reactionaries, the fascists of every hue, the entire world bourgeoisie, to turn back the wheel of history. No, that wheel is turning forward and will continue to turn forward until a worldwide Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall have been established, until the final victory of socialism throughout the whole world.

There is but one thing that the working class of the capitalist countries still lacks—unity in its own ranks.

So let the clarion call of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the battle cry of the Communist International, ring out all the more loudly from this platform to the whole world:

Workers of all countries, unite!

[The delegates burst into an ovation lasting twenty minutes, cheering and singing in their native languages.]

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