

The Present Situation In Germany

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I—HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

What Burdens Did the Versailles "Peace" Treaty Impose on Germany?

I SHALL commence by giving some historical data that will be of help in understanding the development of events in modern Germany.

After the imperialist war, France took Alsace-Lorraine, with its iron ore away from Germany and also the Saar coal basin. Alsace-Lorraine was taken "for good," while the Saar basin was to be under French control for fifteen years, after which time the population, we are assured, will be allowed to decide by referendum whether it wants to remain part of Germany or is willing to be transferred to France. Meanwhile, the French have taken the Saar coal mines as a pledge that Germany will fulfil the conditions of the Versailles treaty and pay reparations. This additional coal was very opportune for France, as it had seized the iron ore of Alsace-Lorraine.

Part of Germany's territory with an outlet to the sea was shaped into the "Polish Corridor," which now cuts off part of East Prussia from the remainder of the country. When a German travels from Berlin to Königsberg, he must pass through territory now belonging to Poland. He must either make the journey through that Polish territory in a sealed railway car or obtain a Polish visa. This greatly irritates the Germans.

As Poland had no outlet to the sea, she was permitted to construct a naval port (Gdynia) near the German City of Danzig, while the latter was converted into a "free city." The Poles began to lord it in Danzig as if it were their own town. Poland also obtained part of Upper Silesia (producing coal and iron). Lithuania received the port of Memel, though the majority of the inhabitants of Memel are Germans. The borders of Belgium were rectified at the expense of Germany.

Denmark, by the terms of the Versailles treaty, received Northern Schleswig.

The victors took away the German colonies and divided them among themselves. Simultaneously, German capital was squeezed out of the spheres of influence which it had seized before the war. Germany was forced to carry on the struggle for foreign markets under much more difficult conditions than its competitors.

The Versailles treaty forbids Germany to have an army or navy, permitting only 100,000 Reichswehr troops and a few warships. The old navy and air fleet were partly destroyed, partly confiscated. The Versailles treaty imposed reparations on Germany to the amount of 132 billion gold francs. When it became absolutely obvious that Germany was incapable of paying the installments due under the treaty, the victors, even before the beginning of the economic crisis, in their own interest twice lowered the reparation payments (the Dawes plan and later the Young plan). But even according to the Young plan, Germany was to pay 1,900 million marks yearly for a period of fifty-nine years. German official circles state that under the Versailles treaty, Germany has already paid 67 billion gold marks in money, kind, and confiscated property.

When Germany during the first few years did not pay the reparations due, the French, British and Belgians put the "sanctions" provided by the Versailles treaty into operation by occupying the Ruhr coal basin and the Rhine district. Germany had also to pay for the maintenance of the troops which occupied these territories.

In order to pay reparations and foreign debts, Germany had to force its exports. Even before the world economic crisis set in, Germany could do this only by intensifying the exploitation of the working class and by scaling wages lower than those prevailing in the other big capitalist countries. It is therefore not surprising that the world economic crisis burst upon Germany with greater force than upon France and the other victorious countries.

I have given this brief review of historical facts to show why in Germany jingoism found particularly fertile soil among the broad masses of the population. The Versailles system, which is squeezing the last drop of blood out of Germany, laid the foundations for the rise and growth of its fascism.

The Role of the Social-Democratic Party in Crushing the Revolution of 1918-19

I shall quote some further facts which will explain the precipitous disintegration of the old bourgeois and Social-Democratic parties in present-day Germany, with the attendant growth of the extreme wings—the National-Socialists on the one hand and the Communists on the other.

After the defeat in the war of 1914-18, a proletarian revolution broke out in Germany. Under the influence of the October Revolution in Russia, Soviets of workers', soldiers' and sailors' deputies began to spring up spontaneously in that country. Social-Democracy succeeded in seizing the leadership of the revolution and betraying it. The German Communist Party had not yet had time to form. There was only a small group of Spartacists who struggled during the war but were not linked up with the masses and suffered from a number of important shortcomings. It was only after the beginning of the revolution, late in December, 1918, that a congress took place at which the Communist Party of Germany was organized.

Having seized control of the revolution, the Social-Democratic Party, in agreement with the bourgeoisie, carried on a merciless struggle against the Communists and the revolutionary workers who were struggling to overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish a Soviet government in Germany. The Social-Democrats organized the defeat of the revolution and drowned it in blood. They had thousands of revolutionary workers shot, including their leaders, Karl Leibknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Instead of strengthening the power of the Soviets, they rushed through the congress of Soviets a decision to call a Constituent Assembly. The Social-Democratic Party did not even strive to establish a republic. The republic was proclaimed under pressure of the revolutionary masses which supported the slogans of the Spartacists to set up a Soviet republic.

Under the influence of the October Revolution, the workers compelled the government to pass laws introducing the eight-hour day, various forms of social insurance (with non-contributory unemployment insurance), the organization of factory committees without whose consent no dismissals of workers could take place, the compulsory conclusion of collective agreements between the employers and the trade unions, laws guaranteeing constitutional liberties, etc.

The Weimar Coalition Reduced the Toilers of Germany to Complete Impoverishment

In the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the Social-Democrats, though they were the strongest party, did not obtain an absolute majority. The republic came to be headed by a majority called the "Weimar Coalition,"* consisting of the Social-Democrats, the Catholic centre and the democrats.

In this coalition, the Social-Democratic Party was on harmonious relations not only with the bourgeoisie but with the Junkers and even the princes. It supported the grant of an annuity to the House of Hohenzollern, whose members had fled from Germany at the outbreak of the revolution.

Until the beginning of 1932 Germany was thus ruled by this coalition consisting of the three parties named in various combinations. Even in 1930, when the Social-Democrats were kicked out of the government and the Bruening cabinet was formed, the Social-Democratic Party nevertheless remained in power in Prussia. The Social-Democrats supported the Catholic centre in the Reichstag while the Catholic centre supported the Social-Democrats in the Prussian Landtag.

The economic crisis aggravated the precarious situation of bourgeois economy, so that the bourgeoisie and its government constantly redoubled its attack on the standard of living of the toilers. The Weimar coalition gradually deprived the toilers of all political rights. Parliament in fact lost the power to decide the most important questions, strikes were ruthlessly subdued, the Communist newspapers were suppressed, the organizations of the revolutionary workers (Red Front Fighters, Freethinkers' Leagues, etc.) were disbanded, meetings were broken up, revolutionary demonstrations were fired upon. Untrammelled government by emergency decrees and emergency courts began. The workers were forced to contribute to the social insurance fund. As the number of unemployed increased, the amount of relief per person was cut. Youth and women were dropped from the list of those entitled to relief. Disablement and sick benefits were pared down appreciably. Wages and the general standard of life of the working class sank lower and lower, especially if we

* i.e., the parties that secured the adoption of the constitution of the republic in the town of Weimar.

take into account the increasing number of unemployed in the various trades.

WEEKLY WAGES (IN GERMAN MARKS)

	Sept., 1931	Jan., 1932	Oct., 1932
Metal Workers	25.70	20.05	18.20
Chemical workers	29.45	22.65	22.45
Textile workers	18.70	16.15	15.60
Building workers	22.45	13.85	12.05
Printers	33.35	27.25	25.40

The average weekly wages of the German workers in 1929 were 42.2 marks; in 1932, 21.06 marks; while the official cost of living in 1932 was 38.4 marks a week.

In the first quarter of 1933, according to the figures of the Berlin Institute of Economic Research, the total amount paid out in wages and salaries to workers and employees fell by 6 per cent. compared with the fourth quarter of 1932. Wages were cut, but at the same time the intensity and productivity of labor increased. If we take 1913 as 100, then in 1928 the productivity of labor was 113; in 1929, 120; in 1930, 121, and in 1931, 127.

In January, 1932, the government issued an emergency decree ordering a universal cut of 10 per cent. of all wages, salaries and unemployment benefits. During the last two years of the crisis, the salaries of government employees have also been reduced.

In 1929, according to the figures of the Institute of Economic Research, the employers paid out 47.5 billion marks to the workers and employees, while in 1932 they paid out only 25.7 billion marks, i. e., 42.4 per cent. less.

The agrarian crisis brought on a specially big drop in the prices of agricultural products. If we take 1913 as 100, the average price of all agricultural products for 1928 was 132.5, but in January, 1933, only 80.75, i.e., 39.1 per cent. less than in 1928. Naturally, it was the poor and middle peasants who suffered most from this steep fall in prices.

In 1928-29, the income of agriculture from the sale of its chief products was slightly over ten billion marks, while in 1931-32 it was slightly over seven billion marks.

Thus the petty bourgeoisie also suffered from the Versailles treaty, the world economic crisis and the policy of the Weimar coalition, which was power.

The Bruening government gave the East Prussian landlords a gift of two billion marks in the form of a subsidy. It assumed the payment of bank deficits. It granted subsidies to capitalists, gave them cheap credit and in various forms exempted the bourgeoisie from taxes.

But all this was not enough to permit the bourgeoisie to ease the burdens of the crisis at the expense of the toilers. They demanded that ever greater pressure be used against the workers and peasants, insisted on ever greater exemptions for themselves.

The Social-Democratic Party and the Catholic Center, which were relying on the workers among whom the Communist Party of Germany had obtained growing influence, could not satisfy the steadily increasing demands of the bourgeoisie. It was then that the bourgeoisie drove out its lackeys, the more so as the Weimar coalition had already lost its influence among the broad masses.

In 1919 the parties of the Weimar coalition received 23,406,000 votes at the elections to the Constituent Assembly. The Independent Socialist Democratic Party, which also voted for the Versailles treaty, received 2,317,000 votes. Thus the Weimar coalition plus the Independent Socialist Party received 25,723,000 votes out of the total of 30,400,000 votes cast.

The parties which were against the Versailles treaty and against the Weimar constitution received 4,667,000 votes. The Communist Party did not take part in the elections for the Constituent Assembly.

In the elections of November, 1932, of these two groups of bourgeois parties, the Weimar parties received 13,314,000 votes and the anti-Weimar parties received 15,357,000 votes. The Communist Party, which carried on a struggle against the united bourgeois-Social-Democratic front and the Weimar coalition, polled 5,980,000 votes in November, 1932. Thus in 1932 the number of votes cast for the Weimar coalition was 13,314,000 and against it 21,337,000. The supporters of Weimar lost 12,409,000 while the anti-Weimar parties gained 16,670,000 votes. One of the three parties which formed the Weimar coalition, the Democratic Party, which had secured five million votes in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, received only 350,000 votes in the November elections of 1932!

This shows how rapidly the policy of the Weimar coalition, headed by Social-Democracy, was exposed in the eyes of the masses.

II—THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY BLAZED THE PATH FOR FASCISM

Fascist Demagogy and the Wave of Jingoism

The impoverishment and despair of the masses resulting from the unbearable burdens of the Versailles system and the world economic crisis, and the policy of an offensive against all the toilers pursued by the Weimar coalition enabled the National-Socialists to extend their influence to the broad masses. They kindled the flames of incredible jingoism among the masses. They averred that everything bad was the result of the Versailles treaty and not of the capitalist system. Their demagogy knew no bounds. With exceptional cynicism they changed their slogans to suit the particular audience they addressed. To the workers they held out promises of higher wages, to the unemployed—ample benefits or work; to the petty bourgeoisie they promised that they would expropriate the banks and liquidate big business; to the farm workers and small peasants they promised land. Quite naturally, they undertook to supply the bourgeoisie and landlords with the cheapest possible labor power, to secure subsidies, fiscal exemptions and prohibitive tariffs for them, to fix high prices for farm products, etc. The latter promises, of course, were not given at open meetings and not with any intention to deceive, but were made in negotiations conducted behind the scenes with the representatives of the bankers, the trusts and the Junkers, with every intention of really carrying them out.

At the time of the first big bank crash, that of the Danat Bank, when tremendous lines of small depositors formed in the streets and attacked the pay desks of this bank with demands to pay out money, the National-Socialists, it must be admitted, were the first to begin agitation in these queues. They tried to present the matter as if the failure of the bank was caused exclusively by the demands of foreign capitalists who had withdrawn their deposits, whereas a great many German capitalists had likewise taken out their deposits. Our Party, not to speak of the Social-Democrats, carried on no work in these queues. The Communist Party of

Germany reacted to these events only after a delay of a few days, although the bank failure had caused great uneasiness in the factories, as the workers feared that they would not receive their wages.

In 1928, the nationalists, together with the National-Socialists, declared that they wanted a referendum on the abrogation of the Young Plan. Before they could compel the Government to hold a referendum, 5,500,000 signatures had to be collected. All the other bourgeois parties, including the Social-Democrats, ridiculed the National-Socialists, assuring them that no one would take their appeal seriously. But our Party also failed to understand the entire situation. It declared: "We shall keep a tab on everyone who gives the signature to these fascists." *Rote Fahne* launched a slogan which was especially harmful in the situation which arose: "Hit the fascists wherever you meet them." What came of all this? The nationalists and National-Socialists collected 6,000,000 signatures even before the required date.

Our Party underestimated this movement. Once the *Rote Fahne* put out the slogan "Hit the fascists wherever you meet them," the masses which favor the abolition of the Young Plan might readily imagine that our Party was in favor of the Young Plan. The Communist Party did not take this into account, which was a serious error.

Even now we sometimes hear it said: if this slogan had not been withdrawn at that time and the Party members had really beaten up the fascists then, the fascists would not be in power now. (For that matter, there were plenty of affrays with the fascists even after the slogan had been withdrawn.) These statements are absolutely incorrect. It was a mistake for *Rote Fahne* to issue this slogan and for the Communist Party in general to underestimate the movement of the petty bourgeois masses against the Versailles treaty. In this way we made it possible for the National-Socialists to strengthen their position among the petty bourgeoisie, which believed that the former really intended to struggle for the abolition of the Young Plan and the Versailles system. However, when our Party made the proposal to the Reichstag to squash the Young Plan, the National-Socialists either left the hall or abstained from voting.

In order to get around the clauses of the Versailles treaty prohibiting Germany to arm, the government, then headed by Social-Democrats, encouraged the formation of semi-military organizations. It sanctioned the formation of the

Republican Flag, consisting chiefly of Social-Democrats; the *Steel Helmet*, composed of Nationalists; the *Storm Troops*, of National-Socialists; the *Bavarian Defense* of the Catholic centre. With such an abundance of semi-military organizations, the bourgeoisie did not dare, at first, to prohibit the *Red Front Fighters* organized by the Communist Party. But as soon as this body began to make wide inroads among the masses and to struggle against the fascists, it was forcibly disbanded. It was prohibited by none other than the Social-Democratic minister Severing.

As a result, the National-Socialists were enabled quite legally to build up their storm detachments, which besides received considerable supplies of arms from the government stores.

The fascists received generous financial aid from their bourgeoisie. Several coal barons even gave them a definite sum of money for every ton of coal raised. They were financed by Deterding and other foreign financial magnates. The fascists are now paying back for Deterding's aid by pillaging Soviet oil stores.

The fascists surrounded themselves by efficient people from the petty bourgeoisie and carried on mass agitation on a tremendous scale, organized far better than the agitation of the Communist Party. It was impossible to escape fascist agitation—at work or at home, this agitation followed you everywhere. Everywhere their speeches could be heard, everywhere their literature penetrated. They agitated very cleverly, taking advantage of all the mistakes of the Social-Democrats and the other parties, including our own. They threw sops to various sections of the unemployed, and those who joined the ranks of the storm troops were taken into their barracks, given boots, were fed, etc. They organized cheap dining rooms for the unemployed who sympathized with them. They received such lavish financial support from the bourgeoisie that they could afford to do this and thus were able to find their way even to the non-industrial proletariat and to the unemployed.

The fact that the influence of the fascists increased parallel with the discontent of the broad masses is proved by the following figures. The first time they put up their own candidates for the Reichstag was in May, 1924, during the inflation days, when economic ruin and discontent were widespread among the broad masses of the population. They

received 1,918,000 votes. In December of the same year, when partial stabilization began to make itself felt (above all, currency stabilization), the National-Socialists at one swoop lost 1,011,000 votes. But the influence of the Communist Party among the masses fell at the same time. In May, 1924, the Communist Party of Germany received 3,693,000 votes, but in December of the same year it lost 974,000 of these votes. The Social-Democratic Party on the contrary received 6,000,000 in May, 1924, and in December, 1924, when the factors making for partial stabilization were already at work, they obtained 7,881,000 votes.

When the National-Socialists first appeared on the political scene in May, 1924, they received 1,918,000 votes, but in June, 1932, they already received 13,732,000 votes.

They made use of the tremendous discontent of the masses, chiefly the petty bourgeoisie, to get into power.

The Source of Influence of the Social-Democratic Party

We often hear members of our Party ask: How do you explain the fact that the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, in spite of all its treachery, has such a hold on the laboring masses? Why does it still retain this influence? On the whole, the reply to this question is determined by the fact that *before the war the Social-Democratic Party was the only mass proletarian party*. At that time it advocated reforms in social legislation and an extension of the political rights of the proletariat. Before the war, in 1914, it had ninety newspapers, with a circulation of 1,288,092, and a membership of 1,085,905. At the elections to the Reichstag in 1912, when women and soldiers had no electoral rights, it received 4,236,000 votes. (All the bourgeois parties put together received 12,188,000 votes at that time). It led the mass trade unions (the trade unions before the war numbered 2,500,000 members), the mass workers' co-operative societies, the mass cultural and sporting organizations of the proletariat.

The Social-Democratic Party before the war enjoyed enormous authority among the working class. It utilized this authority during the war to support German imperialism, to drive the workers to the front and disrupt strikes. After the war it saved the bourgeoisie by defeating the revolution. But the broad masses of workers, not to speak of the vanguard, did not see this because, in addition to shooting down

revolutionary workers, the Social-Democrats, under the pressure of the revolutionary masses, which were under the influence of the October Revolution in Russia, passed social legislation which during the early post-war period improved the situation of the working class compared with pre-war times.

The broad masses thought that it was Social-Democracy itself that had given these reforms to the proletariat and not the revolution nor the revolutionary vanguard which had compelled Social Democracy to effect this legislation. Therefore, at first the broad working masses clung strongly to Social-Democracy not understanding that it had betrayed them during the war and during the revolution.

The mass trade unions, co-operative societies, sport organizations, the *Republican Flag* and the *Iron Front*, with millions of members as a counter-weight to the revolutionary front of the proletarian struggle were used by the Social-Democratic party to confuse the working class of Germany. In the apparatus of the state, the municipalities, the trade unions, the party apparatus, the co-operative societies, in the labor courts, insurance offices, in the factory committees, the Reichstag, the Landtags, municipalities, etc., the Social-Democratic Party had placed up to 400,000 of its members who were very well paid, and, as they rose from a working class environment, maintained contacts with the broad laboring masses. To this should be added the members of the Social-Democratic Party, the numerous owners of small restaurants in which the workers spent most of their spare time. Through all these the Social-Democratic Party influenced these masses.

The Social-Democratic trade unions were extremely centralized. The leaders decided strike questions. If the leaders were against a strike they did not permit strike benefits to be paid. However, for fifty years the German workers had been accustomed to receiving strike benefits when on strike. According to the factory committee law, workers could be dismissed from a factory only with the consent of the factory committee. Taking advantage of this, the reformist factory committees* gave their consent to the dismissal first of all

* In 1930, at enterprises employing a total of 5,900,000 workers, the reformist trade union had 135,689 factory committee members—89.9 per cent. of all factory committee members.

of the unorganized workers, while opposing the dismissal of organized workers (naturally, with the exception of Communists and members of the Red Trade Union Opposition whom the Social-Democrats themselves put on the list of workers to be dismissed). In this way they formed, in the factories, a strong core of trade union members who supported the trade union bureaucrats, and did not permit strikes and hindered the struggle when the R.T.U.O. or the Communist Party called for one.

The trade unions began to give relief to their members during unemployment and introduced relief for sickness and disability. The fund for these payments was made up chiefly of contributions from the members, but was of great importance in that it kept the workers from leaving the trade unions, although in most cases these unions did not protect their interests. The 1930 budgets of the trade unions showed that various sums were paid out as relief amounting to 123,500,000 marks, including 77,700,000 to the unemployed, in addition to what they received from the State insurance office.

During this period, the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucrats were able to manoeuvre very deftly with regard to the workers. They stated that they were prepared to struggle against wage-cuts, against emergency decrees. In fact, they carried out wage cuts and supported these emergency decrees. In their press they went as far as accusing the Communist Party of not struggling against the fascists, as if only they, the Social-Democrats, carried on this struggle. They prepared bills to find work for the unemployed, pointing out in detail where the money could be obtained from and widely advertising these plans at meetings and in the press. They even introduced some of these projects into the Reichstag, but they themselves proposed the dissolution of the Reichstag for an indefinite period to avoid discussion of their own bills. Then they told the workers that they, the Social-Democrats, could not carry these bills because parliament kept postponing them indefinitely. Thus the Social-Democrats prepared radical bills so as to hide their own treachery. Thus they deceived the working masses.

The trade union leaders also manoeuvred against the workers. Very often, behind the backs of the workers, the trade union bureaucrats entered into agreements with the employers calling for a reduction of wages. Then the fol-

lowing ensued: The employer would announce a wage-cut, say, of 12 per cent., while according to the compact already made with the trade union bureaucrats, this wage-cut was not to be quite so big. Then for the sake of appearances the bureaucrats would enter into the "fight" against the employers and would "secure a reduction" of only 8 per cent., announcing in the press, at meetings of trade union members, etc., that the trade unions had scored a victory as they had been able to save 4 per cent. of the wages. The trade union bureaucrats did this with much noise and ballyhoo. The Communist Party and the R.T.U.O. unfortunately were not always able promptly to expose these machinations.

The Participation of the Social-Democratic Party in the Offensive of the Bourgeoisie against the Workers

During the period of partial stabilization, the deception of the masses by Social-Democracy was made easier by the fact that, owing to the temporary economic boom consequent upon the partial stabilization, especially the exceptionally rapid growth of the productivity and intensity of labor on the basis of capitalist rationalization, the increased exploitation of the working class was largely concealed.

The worsening of the position of the working class and the gradual loss of all the post-war gains took place throughout the whole period and under the auspices of the Weimer coalition, but in other forms and at a different tempo from that prevailing in the period of crisis. Increased exploitation was not so much the result of the direct reduction of nominal wages as of the very rapid growth of the intensification of labor and the speeding-up of the production process, which made it possible for the bourgeoisie and the Social-Democratic economists to juggle the statistics and conceal the real situation from the workers. Taking advantage of this, the Social-Democrats were able to spread the illusion among the workers that their material situation depended directly on the increased ability of German industry to compete on the world market. In this matter, they pointed to the example of the U.S.A. which they claimed had discovered the "secret of high wages" on the basis of the rationalization of labor. The Social-Democrats created the theory of "industrial democracy," which in combination with the "already existing political democracy" professed to open a pain-

less path towards "the peaceful growth into socialism" on the basis of collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

The economic crisis shattered all these false theories. The growth of exploitation of the working class not only kept increasing, but took on a more open and obvious character, expressed in constantly increasing direct and indirect wage-cuts and in exceptional growth of unemployment which doomed the working class to hunger and partial extinction. Continuing to serve the bourgeoisie in the crisis period, Social-Democracy more openly participated in the merciless attack on the standard of living of the workers in all forms of merciless wage slashes and the abolition of social insurance. Social-Democracy not only tacitly supported the measures of the Brüning government to reduce wages and unemployment relief, but even agitated for them. In January 1932, when wages, salaries and relief benefits were cut 10 per cent. by law, the Social-Democrats supported this law. They promised the workers that if this law were passed, prices of prime necessities would also fall 10 per cent. Recently they had to admit that their forecast was not justified, adding that prices of mass consumption articles had fallen only 4 per cent. But even this was not true. The prices of some prime necessities even rose. However, their lie about the coming fall in prices enabled the Social-Democrats to thwart a fight by the working class to prevent wage-cuts.

At the last presidential elections, the Communist Party of Germany put forward the slogan: "A vote for Hindenburg is a vote for Hitler." To offset this, the Social-Democrats told the workers: "A vote for Thaelmann is a vote for Hitler." It is a fact that the Social-Democrats succeeded in getting Hindenburg elected by an enormous majority, that a large part of the working class followed them also in this question. The workers can now test the correctness of our slogan from their own bitter experience. The evil we warned them against has come. Unfortunately the Communist Party of Germany could not find a proper approach to the broad masses during the election campaign and could not convince them of the correctness of its slogan.

In spite of the treachery of Social-Democracy and the exposures of this treachery by the Communist Party of Germany, the Social-Democratic Party has continued to carry the majority of the working class with it. This must be frankly admitted. Of course this does not mean that the Social-Democratic Party has not lost influence among the

workers. The loss of this influence can be judged from the changes in the number of votes received at parliamentary elections by the Social-Democratic Party and the Communist Party respectively during the last thirteen years. In 1919, as mentioned above, the Social-Democratic Party together with the Independent Social-Democratic Party received 133,826,000 votes, whereas in November, 1932, they only received 7,237,000 votes. The reformist trade unions also lost members. After the war they had nine million members, but before the fascist coup they had hardly 4,000,000 including office employees. Nevertheless Social-Democracy was able to block the Communist Party in its efforts to organize real resistance at the time Hitler came to power.

III—ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY BEFORE GOING UNDERGROUND

The Growth of the Influence of the Party and the Chief Weak Spots in Its Work

As we already know, the Communist Party was organized at the end of 1918. At its first Congress a great mistake was made which strongly influenced the future development of the Party. At the First Congress the Party decided against participation in the parliamentary elections and against work in the reformist trade unions. Although this decision was rescinded by the next congress, nevertheless, in spite of all the decisions of both the Comintern and the C.P., the Party did not succeed in actually making all Party members join the reformist trade unions. There were no nation-wide trade unions organized by the Communist Party of Germany and there still are no such unions, and the Communists who were members of reformist trade unions in most cases did not carry on good and energetic work in these trade unions. This led to the circumstance that the reformists were able to carry on the policy of "the lesser evil" without resistance, without a struggle on the part of the Communists within the trade unions, much to the injury of the working class. This resulted in insufficient mass work by the C. P. although its influence on the working class was unquestionably increasing all the time, especially in recent years.

If we take the elections to the German Reichstag—and we have no better criterion—and compare the number of

votes cast for the Communist Party of Germany in 1920 and in November, 1932, we see that the influence of the Communist Party among the working class increased tremendously. In 1920 the Communist Party of Germany polled only 590,000 votes, while in November, 1932, it obtained 5,980,000 votes, which undoubtedly came from the workers.

But in the trade unions, i.e., in the very places where the question of fighting the offensive of the bourgeoisie against the standard of living of the working class was largely decided, we were weak. There the reformists were able to pursue their treacherous policy. This must be frankly admitted. All the attempts to form parallel trade unions in 1923, even when the workers were leaving the reformist trade unions in great numbers, did not lead anywhere, as the broad masses of workers did not enter these new unions. But without the participation of the Communists in the mass organizations, especially in the trade unions, the Communist Party of Germany could neither gain influence over the majority of the working class nor consolidate organizationally the influence it did have. This was shown by the events of 1923.

In order to extend and strengthen the influence of the Party in the reformist trade unions, a trade union opposition was formed, which was faced with the following tasks:

- (1) The independent organization and conduct of strikes by reason of the fact that the reformists prevent the organization of the strike struggle. Whenever the reformists, under the pressure of the masses, declared strikes and led them, they mostly always led them to defeat, or ended them by a compromise concluded behind the backs and at the expense of the workers.

- (2) Strengthening the work in the reformist trade unions, making certain that all members of the C.P. and other revolutionary workers actually join them. After consolidating their position within the reformist trade unions, our comrades must mobilize their members for the support of the struggle of the trade union opposition, which contained also unorganized workers, against the offensive of capital.

- (3) Organizing an apparatus parallel to the reformist trade unions, so that as soon as a broad wave of mass discontent makes its appearance, the trade union opposition could win new recruits and become independent trade unions.

In order to make it easier for the trade union opposition to enlarge its organizations from among the unorganized workers, the Fifth Congress of the R.I.L.U. decided to withdraw the slogan "Join the reformist trade unions" as far as Germany was concerned.

At the end of 1932 the trade union opposition had already 310,000 members. It conducted independent strikes, built up a parallel apparatus, but it did not work or worked badly and inadequately in the reformist trade unions.

The Communist Party was able to found a series of mass organizations—organizations of the unemployed, Workers' International Relief, sport organizations, the Freethinkers' League, the Tenants' League, etc. All this, of course, extended the mass influence of the Party, but the existence of all these organizations did not diminish the necessity of working in the reformist trade unions. Through the members of all these organizations it became possible for the Communist Party to increase the work inside the trade unions, for many of the members of these mass organizations were members of the reformist trade unions. But the Party did not utilize these possibilities, or utilized them insufficiently. The mere existence of mass organizations could not serve as a substitute for the necessary work in the reformist trade unions, work which remained woefully neglected.

Our Party scored great successes. In recent times it not only increased the number of its votes at the elections, but became a powerful force attracting the revolutionary workers. From January, 1931, to April, 1932, the Party almost doubled its membership. In January, 1931, it had 180,000 members, and a year later, in April, 1932, it already counted 332,000 members. The membership also increased in the mass workers' organizations which were under the influence of the Communist Party of Germany. However, a number of serious shortcomings still remained in its mass work. The chief of these was the great weakness of the work in the enterprises. Up to the present the Party has not been able to set up points of support in the enterprises, without which no Communist Party can carry on serious work. It is true that work in the enterprises encountered great difficulty, especially in recent years, during the crisis, when the revolutionary workers and especially members of the C.P. were weeded out first in the mass dismissals of workers. But a Bolshevik Party must learn to overcome all these difficulties. We are safe in saying that the number of Communists working in

the factories, and at that not even in the big factories, before the Hitler coup was not higher than 11 per cent of the total membership of the Party.

Work in the trade unions was also accompanied by quite a few difficulties, as the revolutionary elements were driven out here too. In this sphere, the Party likewise failed to show the necessary stamina in its work. Work in the trade unions was not organized satisfactorily. Until very recently, the R.T.U.O., like the Party, was not firmly connected with the factories. This was bound to have an adverse effect on the influence exercised by the Communist Party of Germany among the broad mass of workers and consequently also on the development of the revolutionary upsurge in Germany.

At the same time, the mass work methods of the Communist Party did not sufficiently take into account the necessity of convincing the Social-Democratic workers. Our agitational work was particularly inept in approaching the masses who were still under the influence of the bourgeoisie and their agents. We dealt largely with questions of politics, which, of course, is quite right. But the thing that was not right was that we did not simultaneously carry on genuine mass work. We called meetings which were attended by up to 25,000 persons, but were satisfied with the opportunity of gaining the ear of these masses. But who came to these meetings? Our own people, the revolutionary workers, who already were under our influence before the meeting.

What can we say about our press? Did it really penetrate the masses of the working class? Did it talk in a language they understood and did it deal with the questions of interest to them, that concerned their everyday struggle? Were the contents of our factory papers such as to draw the interest of all the workers of the given factory? No. These papers were published in a definite stereotyped form. The material was borrowed from the political daily press of the Party, was republished and presented in the form of a rehash. At the same time these factory papers did not reflect the life of the factories themselves, did not deal with the events taking place there, did not attract the rank and file workers to supply material and work on it.

The shortcomings in the mass work of the Communist Party of Germany permitted the reformists to hold the workers back from the struggle.

The pressure on the working class in Germany was stronger than in other big capitalist countries, yet the number of strikes during the period of the crisis was less. In Germany in 1929, 1930 and 1931 there were 1,304 strikes embracing 637,000 strikers who lost a total of 10,145,900 working days. During the same period in Great Britain there were 1,468 strikes, in which 1,404,400 workers took part who lost a total of 20,321,000 working days. In the U.S.A. during the same period of time there were 2,700 strikes, with the participation of 761,000 persons and a total loss of 20,934,100 working days. Even in France, where the crisis began much later, where at first the pressure on the workers was less, there were 3,601 strikes with the participation of 2,108,000 workers. The smallest number of strikes in Germany occurred in 1931.

The Improvement in Mass Work, the Leadership of Strikes, the Execution of the Tactics of the United Front

Beginning with the middle of 1932, mass work somewhat improved. Cases of the independent leadership of strikes by the Party and of the preparations for this struggle were more frequent. The miners' strikes in the Ruhr (January, 1932) and the transport workers' strike in Berlin (November, 1932) were led by the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition. The trade union bureaucrats used every means in their power to break these strikes, even calling in the police. The miners' strike in the Ruhr was crushed by force.

The struggle against the emergency decrees, which imposed new and especially onerous burdens on the workers, was carried on exclusively by the Communist Party and the trade union opposition, and met with resistance from both the Social-Democrats and the leaders of the reformist trade unions. The insolent emergency decree of Papen, which authorized employers to slash wages up to 50 per cent, was brought to nought by the struggle of the workers, organized exclusively by the Communist Party. Papen, who issued this decree, expected that the employers would be able to carry it out. All the previous decrees had been carried out without a struggle on the part of the workers, and the government expected that the same thing would happen this time. But the government was mistaken in its expectations. In issuing this decree Papen had to cancel precisely the collective agree-

ments on which the trade union bureaucrats relied when they disrupted and sabotaged all attempts of the trade union opposition and the Communist Party to organize strikes. As the decree made it possible for every employer to violate these collective agreements and cut wages by 50 per cent., it enabled the C.P. and the R.T.U.O. to conduct a struggle against this decree in several enterprises over the heads of the trade union bureaucrats. The C.P. and the R.T.U.O. took advantage of the situation created by the decree for the purpose of defeating it.

Owing to the fact that Papen could not pave the way for the enforcement of this decree, all the bourgeois parties, including the Social-Democrats, with the sole exception of the Nationalists voted against this decree and the Papen government in the Reichstag, whereupon Papen had to give way to Schleicher.

During the last period before Hitler came to power, the Communist Party succeeded in penetrating the broad masses and even in obtaining influence among the Social-Democrats, the members of the reformist trade unions and also the members of the *Republican Flag* (Reichsbanner) organization, for the very reason that it was able to organize the struggle against this emergency decree. The authority of the Party was greatly enhanced, and members of reformist trade unions began to participate in the strikes led by the R.T.U.O. and the Communists. Thus, besides Communists, members of reformist trade unions and even National-Socialists participated in the Berlin transport strike committee.

The first steps in the joint struggle of the Communists and the Social-Democratic workers against the fascists met with wide response among the Social-Democratic workers. While supporting the struggle of the unemployed and trying to organize this struggle on the basis of a wide united front, the Communist Party and the R.T.U.O. in April, 1932, appealed to all labor organizations to carry on a joint struggle against wage-cuts when new collective agreements would be signed. This proposal of the Communist Party and the R.T.U.O. received the hearty endorsement of the working masses. It was the first time for many years that the workers of all shades of opinion began to discuss this proposal openly, despite the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucrats. This laid the basis of a joint struggle of Social-Democratic and Communist workers on a fairly wide front.

The second step in this direction was the proposal made on July 20 by the C.P. to the reformist trade unions as represented by the A.D.G.B. (German Trade Union Congress) and to the C.C. of the Social-Democratic Party. This was on the occasion when Papen drove the Social-Democrats out of the Prussian government. The proposal was to declare a joint general strike for the repeal of the emergency decrees and the disbanding of the Storm Troops. The Social-Democratic Party replied that only provocateurs could call a general strike. Instead of participating in the strike, it proposed to the workers to vote Social-Democratic at the Reichstag election on July 31 and thus "remove the danger of fascism." Although the proposal of the Communist Party did not lead to a mass strike owing to this malicious sabotage on the part of the A.D.G.B. and Social-Democracy, nevertheless it was the correct tactics. The proposal of the Communist Party of Germany showed the Social-Democratic workers that although the Communists and all the revolutionary workers were opponents of the Social-Democratic Prussian government which served the bourgeoisie and crushed the labor movement, that although the Communists did not cease to expose the reformists and the Social-Democratic Party, nevertheless, inasmuch as the danger of fascism coming to power directly menaced the working class, the Communists were ready to carry on a joint struggle against the enemy.

The second proposal to organize a united front of struggle made a still greater impression on the Social-Democratic workers. The Communist Party made this proposal to the reformist trade unions and the Social-Democratic Party on January 30, 1933, when Hitler came to power. This growing influence can be gathered from the demagogy which the central organ of the Social-Democratic Party *Vorwaerts*, found it necessary to display to justify in the eyes of the workers its refusal to accept the proposal of the Communists.

Now, in contradistinction to July 20, *Vorwaerts* replied to the proposal of the Communist Party by a series of articles. Instead of the formation of a united front against fascism, *Vorwaerts* proposed the signing of a non-aggression pact between the Communists and Social-Democrats, which in reality would have meant a refusal to expose the treacherous tactics of Social-Democracy and its rapprochement to fascism. In the opinion of *Vorwaerts* to go on strike when Hitler had legally come to power would have been equivalent to shoot-

ing in the air. It will be a different matter, said the paper, if Hitler goes beyond the frame-work of the Weimar Constitution. Then—oh, then! Social-Democracy would start a "decisive struggle" against him.

This game of the Social-Democratic leaders caused a certain part of the Social-Democratic workers to vacillate and incline towards the Communist Party of Germany. This tendency was strengthened by the joint street fighting against the fascists, who began to beat up indiscriminately not only the Communists and revolutionary workers in general, but also the Social-Democratic workers. To the extent that the fascists began to raid and smash up not only the Communist but the Social-Democratic trade union and co-operative houses and institutions, the workers of all political views began here and there to come out into the streets and jointly beat off the fascists. Matters reached a point where the Communists even defended the *Vorwaerts* building against the fascists; this was the detested *Vorwaerts* building which the Spartacists captured in 1919 when they fought against the treachery of the Scheidemann government and for the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. This showed the advanced part of the Social-Democratic workers that it was possible to establish the united front proposed by the Communists, but that their leaders were frustrating this front. As a result, the united front of struggle to be set up between the Communists and the Social-Democratic workers began to be established in several places from below by the masses themselves despite the Social-Democratic leaders.

Whereas the call of the Communist Party for a general strike on July 20 did not meet with any response, the united front which began to be established from below after July 20 showed that it was attracting the masses of the workers to itself. This in turn led to the fact that when Hitler came to power, demonstrations were held in all the big towns of Germany at the call of the Communist Party and in a number of towns there were also strikes. Particularly large demonstrations and strikes were held on the occasion of the funerals of the victims of the fascist terror.

In these days, the united front movement developed to such an extent that the Social-Democrats could not cope with it by their former methods. They now stated that the united front against fascism was necessary, that it ought to be established, that it was only necessary to choose a suitable

moment. But the Social-Democratic leaders immediately added that the present moment was not suitable for declaring a general strike, that we must wait, perhaps a strike would be advisable later.

The Social-Democratic Party could no longer make shift with slanderous statements such as that only provocateurs could call strikes. It was compelled to use other methods in order to sabotage the united front of struggle. March 1, after the burning of the Reichstag, when the fascists unleashed their unprecedented terror against all toilers, the Communist Party of Germany again proposed to the Social-Democratic Party and the A.D.G.B. that they call out the workers on a general strike. The Social-Democrats and the trade union bureaucrats made no reply whatever to this proposal. After the elections on March 5, 1933, they stated that Hitler had come to power by lawful means. He had been appointed by Hindenburg and now his appointment had been confirmed by a majority of the people. It was possible for him to rule within the limits of the Weimar Constitution; we shall become the legal opposition and shall wait until the people again call us to power.

No one can deny that in recent years the Communist Party of Germany considerably enlarged its influence among the working class at the expense of the Social-Democrats. This can be verified if in no other way than by the results of the 1930 and 1932 elections. During these two years, Social-Democracy lost 1,338,000 votes while the Communist Party of Germany gained 1,384,000 votes. The losses of the Social-Democratic Party and the gains of the Communist Party of Germany were mainly in the big industrial centers of the country. The Communists grew at the expense of Social-Democracy. There can be no question about this. But they grew too slowly compared with the rate of growth of the fascist forces in Germany. The fact that the Communist Party of Germany began to win over the members of the reformist trade unions and of the Social-Democratic Party, that in a number of places, despite all counter-efforts of the Social-Democrats and the reformist trade union bureaucrats, it succeeded in establishing the united front of struggle and tearing Papen's emergency decree to shreds, raised its authority among the broad masses of workers. At the same time, in view of the tempestuous growth of fascism, hastened by the treacherous tactics of Social-Democracy, this gave rise to a blow against the Communist Party of Germany—the insinuation about the burning of the Reichstag

and the unprecedented terror against the Communists, the bloody extermination of the middle and lower activists of the local organizations of the Communist Party of Germany—a blow of such force that the working class was not ready to ward it off immediately.

Fascist Provocation and Terror Could Not Isolate the Communist Party from the Masses

The Communist Party of Germany expected to be banned by the fascist government which had come into power, and expected this to be done under cover of some act of provocation perpetrated by the government; but the Party did not foresee that the terror would at once assume monstrous proportions and that the act of provocation would be so barefaced. The plan for the burning of the Reichstag, which had been carefully prepared in advance by the fascists and the campaign of slander which was immediately launched to disseminate the idea that this piece of incendiarism had been perpetrated by the Communist Party of Germany, the suppression of the entire Communist press literally overnight, the closing of even the Social-Democratic press, the suppression of every bourgeois paper which dared to hint that the incendiarism had been organized by the fascists; the “discovery” of forgeries planted on the premises of Communist organizations when they were being searched, purporting to prove in detail that in preparing an immediate insurrection the Communists had intended to poison the water supply and were drawing up lists of people to be shot, etc.—all this in an atmosphere of brutal terror previously organized on an exceptional scale, with the terrorization and torture of prisoners callously mocked at, with a great number of people killed and savagely maimed “while attempting to escape”—such were the circumstances in which Hitler carried out his attack on the C.P.G. If we search the past for an example to match Hitler's provocation, we can compare it, but only conditionally and with great reservations, to the slander which was broadcast by the bourgeoisie in July, 1917, in Russia against the Bolsheviks and against Lenin, accusing them of having “sold themselves to the Germans.” However gross and foolish this provocation was, the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and S.R.s succeeded at that time, during the July days, in inciting the petty bourgeoisie against the Bolshevik Party for a short time, when the petty bourgeoisie excelled itself in violence. It required a self-

sacrificing, tireless, capable and fearless struggle, in short, Bolshevik mass work conducted by the entire Party under the brilliant leadership of the C.C. headed by Lenin, in order, within four months, in a revolutionary crisis, it is true, not only to beat back the provocation attacks of the bourgeoisie, but to enlarge and strengthen the influence of the Bolsheviks on the broad masses of the toilers, to win the majority of the working class and lead the masses of workers, soldiers and peasants to the armed uprising for the conquest of Soviet power.

What was the situation in Germany after the fascist provocation? The insinuation of the fascists did not cause confusion in the ranks of the Communists of Germany and the basic masses of the working class in general. And it should be borne in mind that in the July days in the Russia of 1917 there was no such unprecedented terror against the Communists and workers as that which began in Germany after the burning of the Reichstag.

Take the elections of March 5, 1933. Consider the conditions under which the workers had to vote. They did not simply hand in their ballot in a closed envelope as had always been the case before. Wherever Communists and revolutionary workers had to vote, i. e., in the workers' districts, the National-Socialist Storm Troops stood constant guard at the ballot-box for a special purpose. They personally knew the revolutionary workers of their districts, and when they came to vote, the fascists seized them, dragged them off to their barracks and brutally beat them up or even killed them. This was known to the workers during the elections, but in spite of this, according to the official figures, i. e., the figures of Hitler, the Communist Party of Germany received about 5,000,000 votes. Of course, the fascists stole votes from the Communist Party. It has already been proved that the Hitlerites surreptitiously added a great number of votes to the total vote cast for them. For example, in Pomerania, 62,000 more people “voted” than the total number of registered voters, while in East Prussia the percentage of voters going to the poll suddenly leaped to 97, whereas usually the number taking part in the elections in this district is five per cent, less than the average for Germany. Recently a comrade who came from East Prussia, where he had worked among the peasants, told how on one big estate which constituted a separate election district during the elections of November 1932, all the votes were cast for the Communist Party, although the laborers had been forced to

become members of the *Steel Helmet* organization. It was no secret that the three votes which were cast for the *Steel Helmet* candidate were those of the landowner, his wife and the inspector. And on March 5, 1933, this electoral district went National-Socialist to a man! If in such election districts one of the voters did not appear, a member of the Storm Troops voted in his place. This is the way the National-Socialists obtained their "seventeen million votes."

Thus the result of the elections shows that the part of the proletariat that followed the Communist Party of Germany and consequently looked up to it as its leader, will not desert but will fight under the banner of the Communist Party of Germany if that party does not make any major mistakes. This shows that the Communist Party is firmly linked up with the most class-conscious and most revolutionary part of the workers of Germany.

IV—WAS THERE A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION IN GERMANY IN JANUARY, 1933?

Conditions of a Revolutionary Situation

We know that Lenin defined a revolutionary situation as follows:

"It is not sufficient for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; for revolution, it is necessary that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule as of old. Only when the 'lower classes' do not want the old regime, and when the 'upper classes' are unable to govern as of old, then only can revolution succeed. This truth may be expressed in other words: *Revolution is impossible without an all-national crisis, affecting both the exploited and the exploiters.* [My emphasis,—O. P.] It follows that for revolution it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the conscious, thinking, politically active workers) should fully understand the necessity for revolution, and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; secondly, that the ruling class be in a state of government crisis, which attracts even the most backward masses into politics . . . weakens the government

and facilitates its rapid overthrow by the revolutionaries." (*"Left-Wing" Communism*, London, 1920, pp. 65-6.)

Had all these conditions matured in Germany in January 1933? No. The entire bourgeoisie, in the face of the menace of a proletarian revolution, in spite of the existence of discord among them, stood united against the revolutionary proletariat. The overwhelming majority of the petty bourgeoisie followed the bourgeoisie as represented by Hitler, who promised them the return of the "grand" old Germany in which the petty bourgeoisie had lived in more or less tolerable conditions. The proletariat was split by the Social-Democratic Party which was still followed by the majority of the workers. So the exploiters were still able to live and administer, were still able to exploit the working class as of old, although by new, fascist methods.

The Revolutionary Situation in 1923 and Opportunist Leadership

In 1923 there was a revolutionary situation in Germany. What was the position at that time?

The Executive Committee of the Comintern, which in January 1924, made a detailed analysis of the situation in Germany, in the second section of its resolution, entitled *Lessons of the German Events*, defined the signs of the then existing revolutionary situation as follows:

"The fact that a new revolutionary wave is rising in Germany is evident from the tremendous strikes and the struggle in the Ruhr in May and June, the strikes in Upper Silesia, the metal workers' strike in Berlin, the fighting in the Ertz mountains and Vogtland and the mass political strike of August 1923, which led to the fall of the Cuno government.

"The precipitous intensification of the situation was shown by the rise in prices, by inflation, the monstrous burden of taxes, the crisis of parliamentarism, the counter-attack of capital which followed the still weak attack of the proletariat, the food crisis, wage cuts, the gradual annulment of the social gains of the working class; then the growth of separatist and particularist movements, the growing impoverishment of the old and new middle class, the loss of influence of the democratic middle parties. All the burdens connected with resist-

ance in the Ruhr [the Ruhr was then occupied by Allied troops.—O. P.] were shifted to the proletariat and the increasingly proletarianized middle strata. The intensification of class contradictions went apace, keeping pace with the disintegration of German capitalist economics that had been torn loose from its points of support.

"In many of the provinces, people armed themselves and went by the hundreds out into the fields to get food. The broad middle strata, in despair, vacillated between the two poles which pointed to the way out of the situation—between the Communists and the fascists. In the big towns, matters would invariably end in plundering, looting, hunger demonstrations and bloody clashes.

"In the months preceding the winter of 1923, the relationship of class forces in Germany changed steadily in favor of the proletarian revolution. *Eighteen to twenty million proletarians from the very start of the occupation of the Ruhr remained indifferent to any kind of nationalist feelings.* [My emphasis.—O. P.] Among the six to seven million of the petty bourgeoisie in the towns and the four to five million of small peasants, settlers and tenant farmers, there was profound unrest.

"The policy of democratic coalitions was plainly bankrupt. The Social-Democrats, who shared government power with the bourgeois democratic parties, had to decide whether they would form a close *bloc* with the representatives of heavy industry and the reactionary war lords. They decided to do so.

"The Communist Party of Germany was faced with the task of taking advantage of the period of international complication caused by the Ruhr crisis—the internal and unprecedentedly severe crisis of German capitalism, of taking advantage of the process of liquidation of the Ruhr crisis for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"To this end, the Party had to mobilize the industrial proletariat for the struggle against heavy industry, and at the same time against French imperialism. Simultaneously it was faced with the task of at least neutralizing the middle sections of town and country, and of bringing them under its leadership as far as possible.

"The first task could only be solved by liberating the overwhelming mass of the proletariat from the influence of the Social-Democrats of all shades and by organizing them in such a way that they would be prepared to storm the capitalist positions.

"This task was solved in an insufficient degree, the reason for which will be examined later.

"The second task on the whole signified the smashing of the influence of the fascists, the transformation of nationalist sentiments into the determination to carry on a struggle in alliance with the proletariat against the German big capitalists and thereby against the French imperialists. The German Communist Party successfully undertook this task, the best proof of which was the anti-fascist day of July 29, 1923. Broad strata of the petty-bourgeois population even at that time sympathized with the C.P.G., which to a considerable extent was able to explain to these strata the hypocrisy of the 'social' propaganda of the fascists, their objective role as auxiliaries of the big bourgeoisie who were betraying the nation, and the coincidence of the interests of the petty bourgeoisie with those of the proletariat.

"Disintegration increased week by week in the camp of the bourgeoisie. Confidence in the Communist Party increased. It was necessary to organize this confidence and prepare all the forces for a decisive blow.

"In September the C.P.G. and the E.C.C.I. in conferences with representatives of the five biggest parties came to the conclusion that the revolutionary crisis in Germany had matured to such a degree that decisive clashes [for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat,—section 2.—O. P.] are questions of a few weeks."

The situation of the working class in 1923 was terrible. In spite of the fact that there were practically no unemployed, that everybody worked, inflation reduced the workers to utter destitution. Wages fixed at the beginning of a week had so depreciated in value by the end of the week that it was impossible to buy even a pound of potatoes with them. Besides, the Social-Democratic Party, which had 'really entered upon the formation of a close *bloc* with the representatives of heavy industry and the reactionary war lords,' had become so weak that its paid officials left it, as there was nothing to pay wages with. Matters fared still

worse with the reformist trade unions. They lost about five million members. The trade unions which had abandoned the class struggle were unable to help these members. Even the apparatus of the trade unions fell to pieces.

Such favorable conditions for a revolutionary party occur rarely in history. The strikes, demonstrations and anti-fascist days which were held in the spring and summer of 1923 left no doubt that the German proletariat wanted and would have embarked upon a more determined struggle. The working class would have entered upon the most desperate battle if a bold and non-opportunist leadership of the C.P. had led them to this struggle. Unfortunately in 1923, there was no such leadership in Germany. That revolutionary leadership could have organized a victorious revolt is shown by the fact that when the Brandlerite leaders sent out couriers with orders to begin the offensive (though they sent other messengers post-haste bearing dispatches which countermanded the original orders) the uprising in Hamburg (where the second messenger arrived too late) began at once and the Party organizations and the workers secured arms in very short time. If the insurrection had then spread to the industrial centers of Germany, the broadest laboring masses of the whole country would have joined it. There was also reason to believe that the sailors on the German warships could have been counted upon to make common cause with the working populace. The crews were in Hamburg during the 1923 uprising, but made no move against the rebels. They took up a waiting position.

At that time all the pre-conditions of a victorious insurrection were present, but bold revolutionary leadership and good contacts with the factories were lacking. The revolutionary situation was allowed to slip by.

The Relationship of Class Forces in January, 1933

Was there such a situation in January 1933? No, there was not. The Presidium of the C.I. dealt with this question in detail in its resolution on the present situation in Germany.

"Under these circumstances, the proletariat was in a position in which it could not organize and in fact failed to organize an immediate and decisive blow against the state apparatus, which, for the purpose of fighting against the proletariat, absorbed the fighting organiza-

tions of the fascist bourgeoisie: the Storm Troops, the Steel Helmets and the Reichswehr. The bourgeoisie was able without serious resistance to hand over the power of government in the country to the National-Socialists, who act against the working class by means of provocations, bloody terror and political banditry.

"In analyzing the conditions for a *victorious* uprising of the proletariat, Lenin said that a decisive battle can be considered as fully mature,

'if all the class forces which were hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, have sufficiently come to blows, have sufficiently weakened themselves by the struggle which is beyond their strength. If all the vacillating, hesitating, unstable, intermediate elements, i.e., the petty bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeois democracy as distinguished from the bourgeoisie, have sufficiently exposed themselves to the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves by their practical bankruptcy. If among the proletariat mass sentiment has begun, and is rising strongly in favor of supporting, the most decisive, supremely bold and revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie. Then the revolution has matured, and if we have properly taken into account all of the conditions mentioned above . . . and have properly selected the moment, our victory is assured.'

"The characteristic feature of the circumstances at the time of the Hitler coup was that these conditions for a victorious rising had not yet managed to mature at that moment. They only existed in an embryonic state.

"As for the vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist Party, not wishing to slip into adventurism, it of course, could not compensate for this missing factor by its own actions.

'It is impossible to win with the vanguard alone,' says Lenin. 'To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive fight while the whole of the class, the broad masses, have not occupied the position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of friendly neutrality towards it . . . would not only be foolish, but a crime.'

"Such were the circumstances which decided the retreat of the working class and the victory of the party of the counter-revolutionary fascists in Germany.

"Thus, in the last analysis, the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany is the result of the Social-Democratic policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie throughout the whole period of existence of the Weimar republic."

Why did the Presidium deal in such detail with the question of whether there was a revolutionary situation in Germany at the beginning of 1933? Because the legend is being spread here and there, without any attempt to give an analysis of the situation, that there was a revolutionary situation in Germany but that the Communist Party let it slip by. These foolish tales are of particular importance for the C.P. because in 1923 it really did make a gross mistake by not taking advantage of a revolutionary situation. The leaders of the C.C. of that period were quite properly removed. The aim of the foolish talk that the C.P. let a revolutionary situation slip by in 1933 is to sow distrust in the C.C. of the C.P.G. The above document of the Presidium will put an end to this absolutely mistaken and irresponsible view. The authority of the leaders of the C.P.G. at the present time must be upheld more than ever before. In particular, the present terror cannot be compared with the persecution of the Party in 1923, though the Party was illegal at that time, too. The persecution which the Communist Party had to bear in 1923 was child's play compared with what is taking place now. The fascists are not only arresting but are physically annihilating the Party cadres. The absolute authority of the Party leaders now takes on decisive importance. It would be a crime not to support these leaders who gave a correct estimate to the situation and applied correct tactics.

The Necessary Conditions for a Victorious Insurrection

Why did the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. also deal specially with the question of whether the Party should have taken action even when there was no revolutionary situation and although it was known in advance that the vanguard of the proletariat would be smashed if it threw itself into the decisive fight alone? Because in any Communist Party, the German Party as well, when there has been a temporary

defeat, incorrect reasoning on this question is discovered. Even now some people ask why the Party which has the support of almost six million votes, for which about five million workers voted even at the most difficult moment—why such a Party did not offer armed resistance even when there was no hope of success.

It is for this reason that the document emphasized that under present conditions a call to armed revolt by the C.P.G. on March 1, 1933, would have been adventurism and a crime. The C.P.G. did everything in its power to mobilize the masses for energetic resistance to fascism, particularly when Hindenburg handed over power to Hitler. The C.P.G. quite correctly not only recommended the workers to beat off the attacks of the fascists and to arm themselves at the expense of the fascist gangs, but called on the workers to come out on a general strike. During the whole month of February and up to March 1, the members of the C.P.G., the Red Front Fighters and the revolutionary workers had energetically resisted the fascist gangs and had armed themselves with the weapons captured from the fascists. Such resistance is offered here and there to this very day.

At the same time the C.P.G. did everything to organize political strikes in various industrial centers. On March 1 the C.P.G. called for a mass political strike to draw the broad working masses into the revolutionary struggle against fascism. If the German proletariat had responded to this call, such a successful strike, drawing the unemployed into the struggle on a large scale, could under favorable circumstances have developed into an armed uprising. The Social-Democrats and T.U. bureaucrats succeeded in disrupting this strike, which showed that only a minority of the working class followed the C.P.G. While the relationship of forces between the C.P.G. and Social Democracy was such, it was impossible to carry out even a political strike, not to speak of an armed uprising. This meant that in January 1933, there was no revolutionary situation in Germany and that the C.P.G. could not prevent Hitler from coming to power. It is clear that at a time when the majority of the working class supported the Social-Democratic Party and the T.U. bureaucrats, when almost the whole of the petty bourgeoisie was hostile to the C.P.G. and pointed out the Communists and revolutionary workers to the fascists, helped the fascists catch them, betrayed to the fascists the houses where Communist literature was to be found, etc., when the armed storm detachments, the "Steel Helmets" and the Reichs-

wehr were ready to rush into battle against the insurgents—at such a time an armed insurrection would have been foredoomed to defeat. The call for an uprising under such conditions would have been fatal to the Communist Party of Germany, and consequently to the entire German proletariat. Some comrades who consider themselves “Lefts” assert that there was no reason for the C.P.G. to put off the armed uprising until it secured influence among a majority of the working class, on the ground that it could obtain this majority while the fight was going on. This is a dangerous and irresponsible point of view. It is true that the influence and strength of the Party grows and consolidates in the process of the struggle itself, in battle, but under what conditions? Only when the Party has correctly taken stock of the relationship of forces and correctly chosen the moment during the revolutionary crisis when the working class is to be led to the decisive struggle. Take the experience of the Bulgarian uprising in 1923 and the Estonian uprising in 1924. The Estonian comrades rushed into the struggle when the situation was not yet ripe for it. In Bulgaria, on the one hand, the appropriate moment for the uprising was missed in July, while on the other hand, when the uprising did occur, the Party organizations and working masses of the most important industrial centers of the country were not drawn into the struggle due to vacillations of some of the leaders. The working masses did not come over to the side of the insurrectionists, and the peasant masses, of course, did not support them at all. As a result, the Bulgarian and Estonian comrades suffered defeat.

Proclaiming an armed revolt in Germany at the beginning of 1933 would have meant the destruction of the proletarian vanguard which would have rushed ahead without being supported by the masses and would have caused the revolutionary movement to be thrown back for years. We see now that the Communist Party is regaining its feet and is beginning to carry on extensive work among the masses. This proves that the tactics of the Party were correct. This is why the resolution of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. begins by emphasizing the *correctness of the political line, the tactics and the organizational policy of the Communist Party of Germany.*

The C.P.G. could not and should not have called to arms if it wished to preserve its fighting capacity, which the working class needs right now.

This fighting capacity will be needed still more in proportion as the temporary calm in Germany passes away, in proportion as the workers begin more and more to leave the Social-Democratic Party, in proportion as the petty bourgeoisie of town and country becomes convinced that the National-Socialists have deceived them. Those elements which criticized the C.P.G. on the ground that it did not call to arms on March 1, 1933, and which claim that they are “revolutionaries”, unlike the “opportunist” leaders of the Communist Party of Germany, are really playing into the hands of the fascists.

The Social-Democratic Workers Must Be Told the Whole Truth

Speaking of the treachery of the Social-Democratic leaders, who deliberately and intentionally sabotaged all the proposals of the Communists to form a united front for the struggle against fascism, against the capitalist offensive, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that the bulk of the Social-Democratic workers did not accept the Communist proposal for a united front. The resolution of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. speaks of this in unmistakable language. This perplexes some of our comrades and therefore needs to be explained further. The point is that the C.P.G. at one time carried on a struggle against the “Lefts”, which was absolutely correct. These so-called “Lefts” are phrasemongers who identify the leaders of Social-Democracy with the mass of members. And it is difficult for the comrades who have learned by rote the truth that you cannot consider the leaders of Social-Democracy identical with its members to understand why the E.C.C.I. Presidium resolution now makes such a grave charge against the Social-Democratic workers. Not all comrades understand as yet that the tactics of the Bolsheviks must be flexible, that a change in the situation requires a corresponding change of tactics, that what is correct in one case will not always be appropriate in a different situation.

The E.C.C.I. and the Communist Party of Germany at one time concentrated their blows against this identification of the Social-Democratic workers with their treacherous leaders, because in a number of countries, including Germany, “Left” phrase-mongering which dealt with the Social-Democratic workers in the factories, labor exchanges, etc., as if they were “little Zoergiebels” or “fascists” was widely cur-

rent. These tactics kept the Social-Democratic workers from approaching the Communists and made it more difficult to set up the united front of revolutionary struggle. The C.P.G. came out against such methods of "mass work," they were right in doing so; and still are right. But does this mean that we must ignore the new factors which characterize the latest events in Germany? The document issued by the Presidium of the E.C.C.I., in estimating these events, stated the whole truth such as it is. Is it true that the Communists always called upon the Social-Democratic workers to join the united front? Yes, it is true. Moreover, whenever the Social-Democratic workers began a struggle, the Communists could be seen in the front ranks of the fighters, they took on themselves the hardest blows of the class enemy. Should the Communists say what actually took place, namely, that they called the Social-Democratic workers to form a united front but that the bulk of the latter did not accept this proposal? Absolutely they should. At the same time, this document of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. explains *why* the bulk of the Social-Democratic workers did not respond to the Communist proposal to form a united front. It was because they were bound hand and foot by their leaders, because they blindly believed in these leaders.

The Comintern resolution explains to the Communists and the revolutionary workers what caused the temporary retreat of the Communist Party of Germany and why the counter-revolutionary fascists were victorious. The chief reason was that the Social-Democratic workers still followed their leaders, who, as they were supporting the reactionary front of the bourgeoisie, opposed the acceptance of the Communist proposal to form a united revolutionary front. The Communist Party of Germany could not organize a successful struggle against the fascists, for the Social-Democratic Party, having split the working class, was able to keep its members from forming this united front with the Communists. Who is directly responsible for the temporary victory of the fascists? Of course, the Social-Democratic leaders who deliberately betrayed the struggle of the workers in the interests of the bourgeoisie. But can we say that the bulk of the Social-Democratic workers bear no political responsibility for the actual refusal to participate in the united front of struggle against fascism? No, we cannot. The Communists must tell this frankly to the Social-Democratic workers. While increasing their agitation among the Social-Democratic workers, the Communists must frankly point out their seri-

ous mistakes which had such grave consequences for the working class. This must be done all the more because the Social-Democratic leaders may still launch some "Left" maneuvers and create "illegal" organizations with the aim of deceiving the Social-Democratic workers anew for the purpose of keeping them from going over to the Communist Party of Germany.

V—WILL THE HITLER GOVERNMENT MAINTAIN ITSELF IN POWER?

Why Did the Bourgeoisie Call Hitler to Power?

This government is the government of the most relentless attack on the working class, unprecedented in the extent and degree of its ferocity. It has been stated above that the fascist government of Papen fell because it could not ensure increased pressure on the working class. After calling Schleicher to power, a man who relied on the Reichswehr, the bourgeoisie calculated that he would be able to form a mass basis for carrying out Papen's program. Schleicher, who was known as a "social" general, attempted to come to terms with the Catholic centre and the reformist trade unions, and to bring about a split in the National-Socialist Party, through the agency of Gregor Strasser. He did not succeed. There was nothing left for the bourgeoisie to do but to hand power over to the National-Socialists. It did not proceed to do this at once, not being convinced that the Nazis would be able to carry through a program of still greater pressure on the working class and the toilers in general without at the same time accelerating the maturing of the revolutionary crisis.

Even before Hitler's *coup*, Funk, a theoretician of the National Socialist Party, speaking in the Nobles' Club, where he had no need to conceal his program, defined the tasks of his party as follows: Fixing the lowest possible wage rates, smashing the collective agreement system and forcing exports, no matter how this would affect the standard of living of the toiling masses.

The Abolition of the Collective Agreements

As far as forcing exports is concerned, the bourgeoisie can rest assured that even with the help of fascism this will not be so easy to carry into practice as it may have thought.

But the scrapping of collective agreements is going on at full speed. In Kottbus, for example, the so-called N.S.B.O. (the National-Socialist Factory Organization) concluded a collective agreement with the employers for the builders according to which the previous system of collective agreements is abolished and wages both higher and lower than those stipulated in the agreements are permitted. The new form of fascist "collective agreements" in Kottbus thus specifies the wages of every worker individually, while the collective agreement hitherto concluded between the trade unions and the employers had applied not only to the organized but also the unorganized workers, and breaches of agreement were punished by law. Evidently the fascists intend to apply the Kottbus experiment to the entire country.

Rote Fahne, when already illegal, reported that at the Gumm and Mueller Works in Berlin there was a strike against a 10 per cent. wage-cut, and that the workers of every shade of opinion struck in unison, including the National-Socialists. The 54th detachment of Storm Troops appeared at the meeting of the strikers and demanded in the name of the leaders of the "National-Socialist Factory Organization" that the strike be called off. On receiving a reply in the negative, the Storm Troops began to beat up the workers, including members of their own party, after which the latter stated that they were leaving the National-Socialist Party. There have been many such cases in a number of factories.

The Abolition of Social Insurance and the Militarization of the Unemployed

On June 22, 1932, *Vorwaerts* published a statement of the minimum program worked out by the fascists. At that time the fascists attempted to impeach the accuracy of the statement that had appeared in *Vorwaerts*. The document in question contained the following points, among others:

"The toiling population must be enlightened quite definitely on this point: that the idea of receiving social benefits . . . that the human bent to be lazy is not to receive any further encouragement . . . and that the effects of the idea of receiving social insurance have had a corrupting and fatiguing effect upon the German people."

According to these published data, invalids were to receive benefits at the rate of 60 pfennings or 15 cents a day, and

even that meagre pittance would be given only to those who would pass a commission set up by the National-Socialists.

Even before Hitler came to power, unemployed benefits in Germany had been greatly reduced. In 1928, 60 per cent. of all the unemployed received relief, while in 1932 this number fell to 29 per cent. In March 1933, under the fascists only 12 per cent. of the officially registered unemployed received relief. The relief itself was cut down 50 per cent. even before the fascists came to power. Formerly relief was given for 48 weeks, but now only for six weeks. When the six weeks are up a means test was applied which in practice deprived all who came before the commission of relief.

However, we know that unemployment in Germany is on the increase. In January 1933, the number of those employed in industry fell from 42.1 per cent. to 40.2 per cent., compared with December 1932. Those still at work in January 1933, worked 33.3 hours a week instead of the 36.1 hours a week in December 1932.

Before the elections on March 5 the National-Socialists increased unemployment relief by 2 marks a month. The fascists wished to show in this way that their government was the only one of those in power since 1928 which not only did not reduce unemployment relief but increased it somewhat. This had a certain influence on the non-class-conscious part of the unemployed. The aim of the fascists was in this way to introduce dissensions among the unemployed and prepare for the abolition of social insurance. Thus they will give a bountiful present to the employers—one billion marks a year. In Germany, both the employers and the workers contribute to the insurance fund while the government also adds its share. Now the fascists want to replace unemployment insurance by compulsory labor service, forced labor for the unemployed. The chief aim of the camps for the unemployed, which are being built is to form an army from the unemployed there. As Germany under the Versailles treaty cannot have more than 100,000 men in the Reichswehr, the fascist government wishes to train a large army by drilling the youth in the camps and by forced labor for the unemployed. Expecting to organize in one year the military training of 600,000 young unemployed of conscription age, the fascists hope to form an army of 1,200,000 men in the course of two years. Up to the present they have not been able to carry out this plan because they could not obtain anywhere the funds required to organize these camps.

While on the one hand forming an army in case of war under the pretext of helping the unemployed, the fascists are already contracting out the unemployed to the big landowners, and are removing them from the "voluntary labor camps" which had previously been organized by the municipal councils. Thus a source of exceptionally cheap labor power is being provided for the landlords. These unemployed workers do the work which used to be performed by construction workers, pick and shovel gangs, wood cutters, etc., but receive much lower pay. According to "contract" they are to receive 38 pfennings per day in cash and a further 24 pfennings not paid out but booked as "savings." The town councils which finance these camps give 1.79 marks per day for each unemployed worker for a six-hour day plus several hours of drill. In reality, only 1.73 marks are spent daily on the unemployed, as the camps charge 1.23 marks per day for food, 18 pfennings for the cot in the barracks and 23 pfennings for working clothes. This means that 9 pfennings are left for payment in cash and for "savings." Even if we figure 1.79 marks a day, these wages are less than half the pay received by unskilled workers at the end of 1932.

Such is the pay of the unemployed in the "voluntary labor camps." How will things be in Hitler's labor service camps? The fascists propose to maintain these camps chiefly for military training and to spend only two hours a day on productive work. This, of course, does not prevent them from trying to use this army as strike-breakers. This is what the fascists wish to put in place of unemployment insurance. Before the introduction of labor service, the German fascist government initiated sharp cuts in unemployment relief in a number of provinces. These caused great unrest among the unemployed in many places.

The draft of the minimum program provided further for the removal of civil service employees who are not members of the National-Socialist Party. This point has already been carried out in full. The Nazis have thrown not only the Social-Democrats out of their government or municipal post, but also the supporters of the Catholic centre, Democrats and non-partisans.

The Fascization of the Trade Unions and the Policy of the Whip

The same source states further: The economic part of the constitution shall provide for national corporations wherein

employers and employees shall be represented on a basis of parity. . . . These corporations shall take the place of the now existing bodies. The fascists have already seized the apparatus of the trade unions. They intend to amalgamate all the trade unions into a "single trade union." Although the Social-Democratic leaders of the reformist trade unions gave in to them in every way, the fascists nevertheless drove many of them out of these unions and even arrested them.

The unions of office employees have already disbanded of their own accord. Many leaders of the reformist trade unions have resigned, and by arrangement with the National-Socialists, new fascist leaders were immediately elected. The reformist leaders did not hesitate to wreck the trade unions which they had maintained even during the war.

In the statement on the National-Socialist program there is also a point regarding the press. It provides that in Berlin all newspapers more radical than the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, one of the most venal and despicable of newspapers, must be suppressed. This has already been carried out. Even a paper like the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the most popular German newspaper abroad, continues to "exist" only because it has gone over to the fascists.

This document also contains a point which specified that the Communist Party of Germany would be smashed and the Karl Liebknecht House turned into a barracks for the Storm Troops. The Karl Liebknecht House is at present occupied by the fascist political police. Thus the "material for preparing the minimum program" was turned into a program which the fascists have carried into effect with but slight changes. It is this program which determines the character of the government.

Sops to the Petty Bourgeoisie

Even before the elections, the fascists began to restrict the imports of agricultural products. Import duties were raised as much as five-fold on some farm products, especially on those consumed by the broad masses of the people, such as frozen meat from Argentina, vegetable oil, lard, etc. This was done by the fascists to get the vote of the rural population at election time. These measures are of advantage chiefly to the big estate owners, and partly the rich and middle peasants. The fascists really won the majority of the villagers to their side.

Can the government continue in future to bribe the peasants by a system of import restrictions and customs tariffs which will maintain artificially high prices on agricultural products while the wages of the workers and the salaries of the employees are lowered all the time, when relief for the unemployed is cut down more and more, when increasing masses of the unemployed receive no unemployment relief at all? No, it cannot. This system is already causing other governments to take counter-measures, and more such counter-measures will be taken in the future. On the other hand, the high prices of food products are rousing and will continue to rouse discontent among the urban petty-bourgeoisie, the mainstay of the National-Socialists in the towns.

In order to swing the rural population their way, primarily the big landlords and the rich and independent farmers, the bourgeoisie declared a moratorium on agricultural debts until October 1933. Part of the bourgeoisie was against the moratorium, especially the banks, but they agreed to it temporarily out of political considerations. The moratorium brings a temporary improvement into the situation of the peasants also, as it stops forced sales of the property of peasants for delinquency in the payment of taxes, interest, etc. These measures helped the Hitlerites to obtain a firm foothold in the countryside. But the banks are exerting great pressure as they are not receiving payment even from those debtors who could pay. The moratorium on agricultural debts will hardly last till October 1933. The peasants are already asking what they will do when the moratorium will be rescinded.

What can the Hitlerites do for the petty bourgeoisie in the towns? Can they supply all the unemployed of the petty bourgeoisie—office employees, officials, ex-army officers, etc., with government and communal posts out of the vacancies created through the dismissal of the Social-Democrats, the supporters of the Catholic centre, and the Democrats? No, they cannot. There is a tremendous number of people anxiously looking for berths, while the number of available posts is limited. The fascists will give these posts chiefly to their immediate supporters. In Germany there are six million office employees and officials, 42 per cent. of whom are unemployed. The bourgeoisie demand a further reduction in the salaries of these employees, and the Hitlerites will have to consent to this. The petty bourgeoisie of the towns cannot get anything from the Hitler government. It

is not surprising that here and there a "sobering up" process can already be noted among some sections of the fascist electors. Thus, in Wetzlar near Frankfurt-on-Main, the National-Socialists received 2,683 votes at the communal elections in the middle of March compared with the 4,092 votes which they received at the parliamentary elections on March 5, 1933.

There is no need to prove that all the Hitler regime can offer the working class is only the dismal prospect of hunger, cruel exploitation and blood-stained servitude.

The Intensification of the Economic and Financial Crisis

At the same time, the economic and financial situation in Germany is becoming catastrophic. If we take industrial production in 1928 as 100, the index for 1929 would be 101, but for 1932 only 57.4, i. e., a reduction of 43.6 per cent.

Industrial enterprises in January 1933, worked at 23.3 per cent. of capacity.

From July 1931 to July 1932, 1,711 limited companies representing an aggregate capital investment of 17.2 billion marks published their reports out of a total of 10,000 such companies with an aggregate capital of 24.5 billion marks. These reports show that in a single year they had a deficit of 1,256,000,000 marks. The remainder did not publish any reports, as their financial position was evidently still worse.

Industry, agriculture, urban real estate owners and the individual provincial governments and municipalities of Germany carry an internal long-term indebtedness amounting to 63.1 billion marks and a short-term indebtedness amounting to 28.1 billion, or a total of 91.2 billion marks.

The foreign debt of Germany, not counting reparations, is estimated at 15 billion marks.

The deficit of the German state budget grows year by year. In 1932-33 this deficit reached 1,808 million marks including the deficits carried over from previous years. In reality, there is an "invisible" as well as a visible deficit. Brechter, an authority on financial matters in the Reichstag estimates in an article in *Vossische Zeitung* that this "invisible" deficit amounted to 2 billion marks.

Taxes received from the bourgeoisie are constantly declining and yet the government will increase the already unbearable tax burden of the toilers. The policy of fas-

cism is to plunder the toilers in every way. This policy cannot be carried out without a further intensification of unbridled terror.

But no government can long stay in power by terror alone, not even in the most backward agrarian countries, let alone in Germany, where there are fifteen million proletarians who have gone through a proletarian revolution and possess a Communist Party that has been tested in battle.

Their Foreign Policy of Adventure and Catastrophe

In the sphere of foreign policy, the measures of the government fixing quotas for imports caused the countries which import German goods to retaliate.

There was a sharp drop in German exports, which had already fallen considerably during the crisis years. Imports also receded greatly. Here are some figures: In 1928, Germany exported goods to the value of 14 billion marks, but in 1932 this fell to 5,739 million marks. Germany in 1928 imported goods to the value of 12.2 billion marks; this figure is now only 4,677 billion marks. In December 1932, merchandise imports amounted to 423 million marks and exports to 491 million marks. Thus the balance in favor of Germany amounted to 68 millions. In February 1933, imports were 347 millions and exports 374 millions. In two months foreign trade had fallen 193 million marks. Last February the balance in favor of Germany was only 27 million marks, while Germany has to pay 100 million marks a month in interest alone on its foreign indebtedness. The usual spring revival did not greatly improve the foreign trade situation. In March, 426 million marks worth of goods were exported and 362 million marks worth were imported, yielding a balance of 64 million marks in favor of Germany. April, however, again brought a sharp drop in foreign trade. Imports fell to 321 million marks—which is 41 million marks or 11 per cent less than March, while exports totalled 382 million marks, which is 44 million marks or 10 per cent. less than March.

By their aggressiveness in foreign policy, their demand of the right to arm and the feverish arming which is going on without awaiting leave, by the demonstration of their readiness to present their neighbors with the accomplished fact of "rectified" frontiers, etc., the fascists have greatly strained the relations between Germany and France, Czechoslovakia,

Rumania, Yugoslavia and Poland. By their provocations and unprecedented terror against all toilers, against intellectuals and the national minorities, especially the Jews, they are drawing down upon themselves well-deserved hatred throughout the whole world. Never did the workers of the world, irrespective of their political views, act so determinedly and unanimously as against Hitler fascism. The fascists may sally forth on adventures. They may try to annex Austria to Germany in spite of the protests of stronger imperialist robbers, but they are hardly likely to see their way clear at present to go to war, not to speak of the fact that by their barbarous conduct they have isolated themselves even from those who were against the Versailles plunder and advocated equal status for Germany. But in order to obtain this "equal status" in present conditions, fascist Germany has no other choice but war, and this course could only result in catastrophe for it. Ten years the fascists have been promising the petty bourgeoisie a return to pre-war Germany, powerful and a peer among the nations. The helplessness of the fascists in the sphere of foreign policy will disintegrate the petty bourgeoisie which so fervently supported the fascists up to the present.

Discord in the Camp of the Fascists

The great dissensions that arose in the government bloc between the Nationalists and the Hitlerites, between the Steel Helmet and the Storm Troops, reflect the divergence of interests in the camp of the bourgeoisie. Before Hitler came to power, the National-Socialists and the Nationalists clashed sharply and openly. However, in view of the seriousness of the situation, the bourgeoisie insisted that these two parties "make peace," work out a joint program and execute it. And, indeed, at the time they took power, the two parties seemed to have concluded a bargain. But even then both contracting parties intended to trick and destroy one another. As early as March 5, when the elections were held, the National-Socialists, intoxicated with their successful provocation in burning the Reichstag and the consequent destruction of the workers' organizations, intended to oust the Nationalists and assume sole power. But the Nationalists, having gotten wind of the blow which was being prepared against them, had brought in their troops from the provinces and on election day 25,000 Steel Helmets marched through the streets of Berlin. This delayed the expulsion

of the Nationalists from the government. The further Hitler's government went in carrying out its program, the sharper grew the dissensions between the National-Socialists and the Nationalists. An open conflict broke out in Brunswick, where the leaders of the Steel Helmets were arrested. One thousand two hundred persons who had come to apply for membership in the Steel Helmet were arrested. Among these 1,200 were Social-Democratic workers, most of them members of the "Republican Flag" organization. In the streets, the crowd beat up National-Socialists, and shouts of "Long live Moscow; down with Hitler!" rang through the air. There were similar clashes in Thuringia. In reply to this, Goering prohibited the swearing in of the new members of the Steel Helmet in Berlin. It is interesting to note that part of the workers, evidently under the influence of the Social-Democrats, select the "lesser evil"—enter the Steel Helmet, which looks better to them than the fascist storm detachments. This idea is mainly current among members of the Social-Democratic "Republican Flag" organization who evidently think they will be able to take advantage of the "legal" possibilities in the Steel Helmet.

Whatever may have been the nature of the "truce" between the Hitlerites and the Nationalists, between the Storm Troops and the Steel Helmets, at any particular stage, that does not check the inevitable intensification of the mutual struggle in the camp of the "victors." There are differences between the various groups of capitalists that cannot be ironed out. Thus the interests of capitalists working for export and those working for the home market, etc., are at variance. Likewise the interests of the capitalists and the landlords, of the landlords and the banks, clash. These differences which were temporarily forced into the background by the menace of proletarian revolution are again rearing their heads with renewed vigor now that this danger has temporarily subsided, while on the other hand the financial and economic crisis in Germany is becoming more critical.

To sum up: Hitler came to power on the crest of a towering crisis. His party cannot offer the toilers anything. On the contrary, the screws put on them by the bourgeoisie will be brutally tightened by the fascists. Jingoism, which raised Hitler to prominence, will turn against him when the petty bourgeois masses become convinced that the fascists have deceived them by promising to bring back pre-war Germany. The masses will inevitably desert the fascists

and act against them. The decisive factor in this respect will be the increase in the radicalization of the working class and the change in the relationship of forces between the Communist Party and the Social-Democratic Party. Hitler's party cannot save the German bourgeoisie. On the contrary, the fascists will only hasten its doom. They will bring down catastrophe upon the heads of the German bourgeoisie.

VI—SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY UNDER HITLER

Why Do the Fascists Strike at the Social-Fascists?

It is not difficult to understand why the National-Socialists on coming to power strike at the Social-Democrats, why Hitler has not only closed down the Social-Democratic press but is putting pressure on the Trade Union bureaucrats. For ten years the Nazis have been opposing the Social-Democratic Party because it stood at the head of the revolution of 1918-19, though they did so with the aim of betraying it, and because, by clinging to the Weimar constitution, the Social-Democrats prevented them from coming to power sooner. The fascists needed for their own supporters the 400,000 soft jobs occupied by Social-Democrats. It was no easy task even for the fascists to throw out the Social-Democratic officials and police officers who had zealously defended the bourgeoisie for so many years. In order that this might be achieved, it was necessary to implicate the Social-Democrats in the Van der Lubbe affair, even if but for a few days, so as to provide the fascists with a pretext for closing down their press during the excitement—for they might possibly think of exposing the outrageous fascist provocation—and for expelling the Social-Democrats from the government and municipal offices. At the same time the fascists made use of the Social-Democrats to penetrate through them into the working class, and this could be done much more easily if they thrashed them soundly first. The fascists know that the rougher they handle the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, the more rapidly and willingly will they knuckle under to the fascists. The fascists were not mistaken in their calculations.

The fascists needed the trade unions. If they got hold of the trade unions it would be easier for them to carry out their program of blood-stained enslavement of the workers. The Social-Democratic leaders and trade union bureaucrats

fell on their knees before the fascists and helped them to lay hands on the trade unions. Before the fascist *coup*, the trade union bureaucrats transferred abroad the coppers collected from the workers in the form of membership dues. The fascists ordered them to have this money transferred back again, hinting that if they did so they would be left in the trade unions. Without asking the opinion of the workers, the trade union bureaucrats had the money transferred back. And now that the money has fallen into the hands of the fascists, they have kicked out their reformist lackeys.

Now the leaders of the reformist trade unions in Germany are no longer able, as a matter of fact, to decide the question whether they ought to quit the Amsterdam International or not, because, in the main, they have already been driven out of the trade unions by the fascists, after they have helped the fascists through all their actions to lay hold of the property and funds of the trade unions. Besides, the trade unions in their previous form no longer exist at all. Their place has been taken by the "labor front" to which also the employers belong. But the fascists appoint the leadership of this "labor front."

The Social-Democratic Party of Germany in actual fact has already left the Second International. The bureau of the Amsterdam International of trade unions has fled from Berlin where its headquarters were previously located. The Social-Democratic leaders of the trade unions will demand this of them. The entire Social-Democratic press of the countries opposed to a revision of the Versailles Treaty now fiercely attack German Social-Democracy, but only because the socialists of the Entente, like the German Social-Democrats, support the imperialist policy of their own bourgeoisie. Just as in 1914-18 so now the Social-Democrats are definitely split into two hostile camps—into supporters of the German orientation and supporters of the Versailles Treaty.

The Social-Democratic and bourgeois press of the Entente pretends not to be able to understand how this Social-Democratic Party which had such strong trade unions and other mass proletarian organizations not only offered no resistance to Hitler, but so precipitately went to meet him half way. For us, Communists, this came not unexpectedly. We told the workers that German Social Democracy was a bourgeois party both at the time of the November revolution in 1918 and afterwards, until Hitler came to power. It still re-

mains a bourgeois party. It has helped the bourgeoisie in all the difficult moments of its existence. Now, when a bourgeois bloc has formed around the fascist party, Social-Democracy cannot but be where the bourgeoisie is, because it has always carried out the policy of the bourgeoisie.

Has the Social-Democratic Party Already Been Destroyed in Germany?

Will this new treachery of Social-Democracy and the trade union bureaucrats remain unpunished? Of course not. A struggle within Social-Democracy is inevitable. The symptoms of this struggle already exist. In Wedding, a workers' section of Berlin, the Social-Democrats still had 9,000 members after the *coup*. In this district it had 150 groups divided into 12 sub-districts. The young members of the Social-Democratic Party, pointing to the fact that the organization had to go underground, elected new leaders, drove the old functionaries from their leading positions in all 12 sub-districts, and from the leadership in 63 groups. The same took place in Lichtenberg and other districts where the Social-Democratic Rank and File organizations are electing new leaders. The Berlin committee of the Social-Democratic Party had forbidden the calling of party meetings and the carrying on of any discussion on the pretext that this would give the fascists an excuse for dissolving the Social-Democratic Party. As a matter of fact, the Social-Democratic leaders prohibited discussions and meetings because they feared the tremendous discontent which exists in the lower organizations. There have been cases when Social-Democratic organizations got into contact with Communist organizations, with nuclei, thus obtained information on what was going on in Berlin; in some places they participated in the production of manifestoes issued by the Communists against fascism. Under the influence of Communists, the lower trade union organizations are beginning to resist fascization in some places. With each day such phenomena will undoubtedly multiply.

Commensurate with the development of this process, the number of Social-Democratic workers who are dissatisfied with the treacherous policy of their leaders and who will leave the ranks of Social-Democracy, is constantly increasing. Some of them, believing the "radical phrases" of the "left" hypocrites, will try to form new Social-Democratic organizations, possibly even illegal ones. The really revolu-

tionary workers however will come over from the Social-Democratic Party to the Communist Party.

But it would be a great mistake to think that the Social Democratic Party has already been destroyed in Germany. Gradually the fascists will let it have its press back and will then permit it to continue the demagoguery which it carried on before Hitler came to power. At present the fascist dictatorship is still too weak to adopt such a dangerous maneuver unless the necessity is extremely urgent, but it is not so weak that it cannot stay in power without it. As events develop a situation will arise when fascism will be unable to maintain its power without a coat of "left" paint, and then it will make use of Social-Democracy as a "left" party to prevent the workers from going over to the Communists. The C. P. G. will have to put in a great deal of work to convince the Social-Democratic workers that the Social-Democrats are responsible for the fact that the fascists came to power in Germany. Any one who thinks that the objective conditions will themselves do this work without systematic, bold and self-sacrificing effort on the part of the C.P.G. is making a great mistake.

VII—REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE IN FASCIST GERMANY

The Communist Party at Work

Only one of the leaders of the Communist Party—Comrade Thaelmann—has been captured by the fascists.

It was the lower activists who suffered mainly, as they had argued and fought with the fascists face to face and were therefore personally known to them. The middle party activists also suffered in part.

However serious these losses, the central and district leadership of the Communist Party has not been disorganized.

Contact between the center and the district committees, and further down with the local committees and through them with the street and factory nuclei has already been restored to a considerable extent. The Party organizations, especially the lower ones, have begun to function independently, showing great activity in this work, particularly in the publication of leaflets and newspapers. Never before have so many leaflets been issued by the lower Party or-

ganizations as of late, which naturally is caused above all by the absence of newspapers. Though the leaflets are not always published well from the technical point of view (not always printed), they can always be read. The activity among the Party members is great and widespread. Only a very small number of non-reliable members have left the Party in spite of the dangers involved. On the contrary, the Party has drawn to itself all the revolutionary elements from the Social-Democratic workers. *Rote Fahne*, the central organ of the C. P. of Germany, has begun to come out. The first copy distributed had a circulation of 300,000 copies. As we know, the legal daily *Rote Fahne* had an average circulation of only 36,000 copies, the total circulation of Communist papers in Germany before the suppression having been 180,000. We must see that the illegal *Rote Fahne* comes out periodically and really reaches the workers.

Foreign correspondents state it was possible to obtain the first issue of the *Rote Fahne* without difficulty. There were places where the paper was sold openly in the streets. While the Social-Democratic Party has no newspaper and does not even try to publish illegal literature, the C.P.G. systematically speaks to the workers in leaflets and newspapers, despite the fact that people are sent to prison for many years and even killed on the spot for distributing Communist literature.

Besides the central organ *Rote Fahne*, a number of other Communist papers have begun to come out—in Hamburg, the *Hamburger Volkszeitung*, in the Ruhr industrial district, the *Ruhr Echo*, in Baden, the *Rote Fahne* for Baden and the Palatinate; in Wurttemberg, the *Sued-Deutsche Arbeiterzeitung*.

Besides these district papers, newspapers appear in various districts, sub-districts and at the factories.

Four newspapers and four pamphlets have recently been issued in the sixth district of Hamburg.

In a number of sections of the Baden Palatinate district (Mannheim, Neckarau, Rheinau, Lindenhof, Waldhof, etc.) local newspapers have been published.

The sub-district committee of Wandsbeck has already issued three copies of its paper with circulation increasing.

In Bränfeld a paper appears three times a week. Its circulation is three times as great as the legal press in this sub-district.

At the paper factory in Feldmuehle, the paper *Rote Volkswacht* was restarted as a factory paper. The circulation of the first copy was 300, the second—500, the third—1,000. Examples like these are very numerous indeed.

In spite of the fact that the fascists threatened to have everyone discharged from work who did not appear at the May First demonstration, and in spite of their very strict check-up to ascertain who came and who did not, the bulk of the workers in the big factories stayed away from Hitler's "festival of labor."

Without the systematic work of the C.P.G. and the R.T.U. O., such mass resistance by the workers to the fascist May First demonstration would have been impossible.

According to information at hand, a maximum of 25 per cent of the workers at the big factories of Berlin took part in the fascist May Day exercises.

Besides the passive resistance offered by the Communist Party of Germany, it succeeded in organizing independent demonstrations on May First. Thus, in Berlin three of the demonstrations under the leadership of the Communists began at the points designated by the fascists. When the fascist columns had gone by, the Communists also began to march with flying banners and posters, singing the International. Thirteen thousand workers took part in these three demonstrations.

There were serious clashes. Big demonstrations took place even in Spandau. Demonstrations on May First were organized by the Party organizations of the C.P.G. in many districts: Wasserkante (Hamburg), Helle-Merseburg, Saxony, Thuringia, Wurtemberg, the Lower Rhine and the Ruhr. Under Communist influence workers at many factory meetings adopted resolutions against participation in the Fascist First of May holiday.

This could not help but lift the authority of the C.P.G., among the masses to a very high level.

Recently the underground work of the C.P.G. has grown stronger. This is shown by the demonstrations, which are certainly still small ones, organized by the C.P.G., by the more frequent issue of newspapers, factory papers, leaflets, posters with slogans, etc. Leaflets are again being distributed in the houses. The Party slogans are shouted in chorus in the court yards and afterwards the International is sung. Communist speakers make their appearance on all sorts of occasions.

Communist propaganda is already assuming a more concrete character. The propaganda of the C.P.G. in the enterprises is directed towards struggle against lower wages, for the defence of collective agreements, defence of the trade unions against the Fascists, throwing the Fascist spies out of the factory committees. Agitation is carried on in the street markets among the housewives. It is directed against the raising of prices on foodstuffs. In the houses agitation is carried on against the policy of the Fascist landlords, etc.

The C.C. of the C.P.G. besides personal instruction and control over the fulfillment of decisions is issuing printed materials in the shape of information letters. In these letters a general estimate of the situation is given; they contain concrete directives on the preparation and conduct of strikes and demonstrations and the experience gained in the process of work is exchanged.

In its instructions the C.C. concretely raised the question of winning the majority of the working class, of carrying out the united front, of Party work in the factories, work in the trade unions, among the agricultural workers, peasants, etc.

The C.C. of the Y.C.L. of Germany also works energetically. It has been able to organize a series of strikes of the unemployed youth in the camps of the "voluntary" labor service.

Resistance to Fascism Is Growing

The German proletariat is gradually recovering from the fascist blows. The facts show that resistance to the fascists is on the increase. For the sake of illustration, we shall give a few of these facts.

In Coblenz as the result of searches several hundred workers were arrested. With the aim of protesting against these arrests, the workers stopped work in many factories and together with their wives and children demonstrated in front of the prison, demanding the immediate release of the prisoners. The demonstrators stubbornly resisted the fascist auxiliary police for a long time and in the end a great part of the prisoners had to be released.

In Plauen, after the fascists had seized the trade union building, the workers declared a strike, and together with the unemployed stormed that building and drove out the fascists.

In Berlin, at the A.E.G. (General Electric Co.) plant in Henningsdorf, about 3,000 Communist leaflets were distributed. Seventy National Socialist Storm Troops and 80 police came to the factory to arrest the distributors. The factory committee demanded that the factory management immediately remove the National Socialist Storm Troops and the police. The workers stated that if these demands were not carried out in 10 minutes they would down tools. The joint action of several thousand workers compelled the factory management to remove the obnoxious police and Storm Troops. At this same factory the Storm Troops tried to distribute their leaflets, but the workers refused to take them. When the Storm Troops began to threaten with their revolvers, the self-defence detachment of the workers chased them, as well as three detachments which came to reinforce the Storm Troops, out of the premises. Thereupon the police arrested several members of the factory committee. A delegation of Communists, Social-Democrats and non-party workers went to the police station and demanded the release of the prisoners. When the police refused to grant this demand, the workers replied by stopping work and thus compelled the release of the members of the factory committee.

On the night of March 19th, the fascist emblem was cut out of the flag which floated over the Communist Party building which had been seized by the fascists (the Karl Liebknecht House) and again the red flag waved over this building.

In Maelnfelden near Frankfurt, where the Communists have a majority in the municipal council, there was firing between the working population and a band of fascist Storm Troops which arrived.

In Altona near Hamburg a proclamation of the Communist Party was distributed. The National-Socialists opened fire on those who were distributing the proclamation. The Communists returned the fire, drawing the fascists into the workers' district where the population came to the help of the Communists and drove off the police and the auxiliary police. A real battle took place.

At the Osram factory the trade union opposition put up its candidates despite the prohibition of the fascists against nominating an oppositional ballot. The opposition received 768 votes and five seats, while the reformists obtained 875 votes and the fascists 336 votes. To realize the full sig-

nificance of this election result, it must be remembered that a reign of terror raged in the factory at the time. All the workers on the opposition ticket were arrested.

In Dresden at the Enidze cigarette factory, a National-Socialist was taken on as foreman. The women workers stopped work. After a two hours' strike the National-Socialist foreman quit his job. In general in Dresden and all throughout Saxony there have been a series of actions against the National-Socialists including many major clashes which have never been reported in the press.

In Stuttgart, according to the statements of the Dutch Communist press, the National-Socialists with the support of the Tramway Company organized a general meeting of tramway workers. In spite of the preliminary campaign, only 500 persons attended the meeting, and the speeches of the National-Socialists met with an unsympathetic response. A worker who spoke at the meeting proposed a resolution for the immediate release of all political prisoners, giving as his reason the fact that the revolutionary members of the factory committees who had been arrested by the Hitlerites had always defended the interests of the workers. In order to prevent this resolution from being voted on, the speaker promised that "an investigation would be made regarding the arrested members of the factory committee." However, under pressure of the meeting, the resolution was put to a vote and was adopted unanimously.

At a rubber factory in Berlin, a short protest strike was held with the demand for the release of Comrade Thaelmann. In the manifesto issued the workers called on other factories to follow their example.

The personnel of a Berlin oleo-margarine trust elected a delegation which applied to the police president for the release of arrested workers.

In Hamburg recently, during a demonstration of workers, the chief of the police, a National-Socialist, ordered his men to shoot. However, the police began to fire in the air instead of at the demonstrators, at which the police chief threatened to shoot the policemen. This is evidence of discontent among the police themselves. Since the elections, anywhere up to eighty police officers have been arrested in Hamburg.

One hundred strikes were recorded from March 25 to April 10; the majority of these were successful. These strikes were against wage cuts, against the abolition of col-

lective agreements, against repression, against the introduction of Nazis into the factories, etc. The strikes were all led either by the Communist Party or the R.T.U.O.

These strikes were of short duration and did not include any considerable numbers of participants. But they made the fascists uneasy because they broke out in almost all parts of the country. Here are some concrete examples:

In Hamburg at a wood-working shop a strike of 1,500 workers was declared in protest against the conduct of a member of the factory committee, a fascist, who had threatened them with a revolver.

At an oil works in Hamburg, 600 workers struck against the arrest of a revolutionary member of the factory committee. The strike was successful.

In some repair shops at Pankov, 1,300 workers drove out a fascist band.

In Kiel at the "Germania" docks, after the arrest of the Red factory committee, the workers struck and secured the release of the prisoners.

In Solingen four factories struck against the fascist terror. In Rheinscheid the workers of three factories struck against the arrest of the factory committees and for the release of Comrade Thaelmann.

There were similar strikes at some factories of Wuppertal and Hefelsberg, in Duesseldorf, at the big "Phoenix" works and in many other places.

On May 5th, the Hagen Battery Works in Westphalia struck when a wage cut was announced.

The strikes in May were of a more aggressive character than those in April.

A very big strike in May was that at the Berlin newspaper printshops. On May 12th, the workers of the Ullstein, Mosse, Scherl (newspaper publishers) and some other printshops struck as a protest against mass repression, the deterioration of the conditions of labor, against control by the fascist commissars and for the reinstatement of the dismissed workers. The workers presented the following demands: (1) lowering the salaries of the directors; (2) withdrawal of the 10 per cent. wage cut carried out last year; (3) the dismissal of the higher officials who were members of the National-Socialist Party and who were distinguished for their impudent conduct towards the workers.

In order to hide the real nature of these strikes, the fascist leaders announced that the strikes were directed against the Jewish employees of the newspaper firms and demanded the dismissal of the Jews.

As a result of these strikes, fifty well-known oppositional Berlin printers were arrested.

Cases in which workers offer resistance to the fascists in spite of the incredible terror increase daily.

VIII—THE TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GERMANY IN THE NEW CONDITIONS

The Initiative of the Lower Organizations

The Communist Party of Germany had to reorganize itself on an illegal basis. This has already been done. The C.P.G. had to develop the wide initiative of the local party organizations. It has already begun to carry out this task. Formerly the Party organizations would wait until the center sent leaflets, until the leaders decided what stand to take in any event, until instructions were received on all questions and material forwarded to the speakers. Now it is impossible to wait and put off matters. The central and district leadership cannot send leaflets, materials for speakers, instructions, etc., quickly enough. This was impossible, particularly in the first period after the Party was driven underground, as one link (the middle and lower activists) was temporarily almost paralyzed and contact with the local groups and nuclei had been lost. Precisely in these difficult circumstances the nuclei (street and factory) proved that they themselves could show the finest initiative. This initiative should be welcomed, should be developed and improved in every way. This will enable the C.P.G. to activate the entire Party. This is particularly necessary now, when the course of events itself has made the question of mass work the chief task of the Communist Party. We must extend and strengthen the positions of the Party in the enterprises, carry on work among the members of the trade unions, develop concrete agitation among the Social-Democratic workers, strengthen the struggle against the fascist terror, without letting a single opportunity slip by to mob-

ilize the masses for the struggle for the everyday demands against the political and economic offensive of capital—and this in the circumstances of the unceasing brutal terror of fascism and the open desertion of Social-Democracy to its side. These tasks can be successfully solved only if there is self-sacrificing activity on the part of every member of the Party in the factory, in the trade union, at the labor exchange, etc.; only if there is quick, correct and independent reaction on the part of the lower Party organization to the events which take place.

Work at the Enterprises

The decision to strengthen the work in the enterprises must not remain a paper resolution which, unfortunately, it has been up to now. Why have we not been able so far to carry out the decision that there should be a well functioning nucleus at every enterprise? On this matter there have been many excuses, such as that it would cost too many sacrifices, that a Communist cannot keep his job in a factory, etc. But these "arguments" now lose their force. The German Communists have shown that they know no fear. They go out into the streets. They allow their names to be openly put forward as candidates at factory committee elections, in spite of fascist terror, etc. In 1923 the C.P.G. was defeated because among other things it had weak contacts with the masses of workers in the enterprises and because it did not know the moods of the masses. Unfortunately the Communist Party even now, although its work in the factories has gone ahead, has not improved very much. If only half or even a third of the heroism which the Communists of Germany display in the street fighting against the fascists were exhibited also in the work in the enterprises and the trade unions, the C.P.G. would already have the majority of the working class behind it. Moreover, at the present time, in the conditions of the fascist dictatorship, the Communists cannot keep their contacts with the broad masses if they do not concentrate on work in the enterprises. The fascists are already sending their best agitators and organizers to the enterprises to form their organizations there. In the conditions of the growing crisis and increasing unemployment, some of the workers join the factory organizations of the National-Socialists, hoping in this way to keep their jobs. If the Communists now do not hurry to make up for lost time in their work in the enter-

prises, if they do not nip the influence of the fascists in the bud, if the Communists do not explain to the workers in a sensible, logical and popular way why they should not enter the National-Socialist factory organizations, the fascists may temporarily entrench themselves in the factories with the aid of terror and demagoguery.

While widely developing its work in the enterprises, the Communist Party must send the most reliable comrades, and, moreover, comrades who are not known at the given enterprise, into the National-Socialist factory organizations, so as to disintegrate them from within, so as to expose the fascists in their own organizations. If the Communists do not make the greatest efforts to carry this out, they will miss an exceedingly important point. The work in the enterprises at present assumes still greater importance than before and all the efforts of the Communists must be concentrated on solving this task. They must strive by every means to penetrate the enterprises and entrench themselves there, in particular by adapting the street nuclei to this basic goal. The dual experience of 1923 and 1933 should convince the German Communists that unless they entrench themselves in the enterprises they will not carry out the principal task necessary for the organization of their forces, and aimed at overthrowing fascism and consummating the victorious proletarian revolution.

The Trade Union Tactics of the C.P.G. under the New Conditions

What has been said above applies also to the work in the trade unions. At present every member of the C.P.G. sees what harm was caused to the working class by the fact that the reformist trade unions were left in the hands of the trade union bureaucrats. The Communists must fight within the lower trade union organizations against their fascization. But this does not mean that the Communists can renounce the task of organizing illegal trade unions. How this question is to be decided depends on the concrete conditions. Events in Germany are gathering such momentum, the situation of the trade unions is changing so rapidly, that the Communists must needs have flexible tactics and must apply them according to the changing conditions. If Hitler succeeds in fully fascizing the trade unions, as Mus-

solini did in Italy, i.e., if every worker is compelled to enter a fascist trade union and the "membership dues" are automatically deducted from his wages by the employer, the Communists will have to remain in these unions into which all the workers have been driven and must work in them. Without doubt the German Communists will work in these trade unions better than the Italian comrades did in theirs. For five years the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. were unable to convince the Italian comrades of the necessity of working in the fascist trade unions. When they at last commenced, experience showed that it was possible to score some successes.

But a situation is possible in Germany in which, either the fascists who have seized the unions will not be able to foist upon the workers a system of compulsory union membership and deduction of membership dues from wages, or, the lower trade union organizations will not offer sufficient resistance to fascization, and they too will be put in charge of fascist commissaries. In either case it is possible that, considering the remaining conditions and as dependent upon the relationship of forces, we shall say to the masses of workers: Leave the fascist trade unions, organize your own illegal trade unions. But before the Communists decide to adopt these tactics, they must mobilize the broadest possible strata of workers for the struggle against the fascization of the trade unions. This is the main task of our trade union work at the present day.

But in case illegal trade unions are organized, the Communists must work among the workers who remain in the fascist unions, in order that not all the revolutionary elements be taken out of them. At the same time, we shall be able to set ourselves the task of organizing the broad masses in the illegal trade unions. This possibility is not excluded for the future.

If our first experiences should show that our illegal trade unions are able to conduct strikes, form mutual aid funds during strikes, display militant activity, carry the masses with them, would we not make every effort to enlarge them? Of course, we would. Germany in 1933 is not like Italy in 1922. The Italian fascists came to power at the beginning of relative stabilization, and in the first few years of their dictatorship in some cases they found it possible for demagogic purposes to give aid to the workers in their struggle against the employers. But the situation in Germany now

is different. German fascism came to power because the bourgeoisie cannot see any other way out of the crisis than a further merciless onslaught against the standard of living of the workers. This means that the struggle of the workers in Germany against the fascists is bound to grow more intense. Under these conditions, it is quite possible that the C.P.G. will have the opportunity of forming illegal and semi-legal trade unions which will fight for the interests of the workers as an offset to the fascist trade unions, the more so as the latter will be unable to conceal that they are the apparatus of the employer. This does not mean that we must immediately begin to form illegal trade unions or launch the slogan: "Leave the fascist trade unions." We must weigh all these possibilities and frame our tactics according to the further course of events.

Communists and members of the R.T.U.O. must make every effort to prevent the fascization of the lower trade union organizations. In those lower trade union organizations where commissars are appointed, the Communists and members of the R.T.U.O. must propose that the members of the lower trade union organizations elect their own leaders who will work legally, semi-legally or even illegally if necessary. The members of the trade unions must pay trade union dues precisely to their anti-fascist committee and not to the fascist commissars.

The Exposure of the Fascists

It is extremely important for the Communists to develop without delay energetic oral and written agitation aimed at exposing the fascists. The fascists use all possible provocations and intrigues to cause disintegration and confusion in the ranks of the Communist Party. Thus they state that the Comintern has dismissed Comrade Thaelmann and appointed Comrade Neumann in his place. The fascists know that Comrade Neumann at one time was removed from work in Germany because factional activity had been discovered in the Party. By their false statements the fascists hope to stir up this struggle anew in the ranks of the C.P.G.

By mobilizing all revolutionary forces, the Communist Party must extend its influence to all strata of the toilers and penetrate the masses of the peasants and petty bour-

geoisie. It must build up its peasant committees as basic points in the countryside.

It is also necessary to work skilfully among the Storm Troops, which contain a sprinkling of honest workers who have been deceived by National-Socialist demagoguery. The National-Socialists have been able to set them, not against capital in general, nor even against Jewish capital, but against the Jewish petty bourgeoisie—office employees, doctors, lawyers, technicians, etc., pretending that their pogrom incitement of slander against the bourgeoisie is a struggle against the bourgeoisie. The Communists can and must win these workers away from the fascists.

Communists must strengthen their work in the Reichswehr, where discontent against the fascist government will undoubtedly take root.

Conditions of work in Germany are already changing, and in future they will change still further for the better. The petty bourgeoisie, now run amuck and betraying the Communists to the Storm Troops, will soon be convinced that they have been tricked and will turn to us, will offer us the use of their flats and render other services. As for the workers, the fascist dictatorship by its deeds is making them see day by day that we were right in our political estimate of the situation, in our tactics and in our organizational work. Every day's news shows and will continue to show to the workers that the Communist Party is the only party which really defends the interests of the proletariat and which organizes it for victory over the bourgeoisie and the building of socialism. The Communist Party of Germany showed after the coup d'état that it knows how to organize the working class in the struggle for power.

The Organization of Victory

It does not follow from the fact that the slogan of armed uprising as a slogan of *action* would have had fatal results for the proletarian vanguard in March 1933, and that it is still more out of the question at the present moment, that we should abandon the line of preparing for the armed uprising. These are two absolutely different things. When the revolutionary crisis in the country shall have matured, the process of the revolutionization of the masses may grow very rapidly. Remember July of 1917 in Russia. It may

be that the Bolsheviks at that time had a majority in Petrograd, but they had no majority throughout the country. In Moscow, at the beginning of July, the Bolsheviks could not hold a demonstration, but in August they conducted a general strike at the time of the Moscow State Conference, despite the decision of the Plenum of the Moscow Soviet which urged the proletariat not to strike at the call of the Bolsheviks. But during the October Revolution, the vast majority of the proletariat were on the side of the Bolsheviks. Yet only a few months separated the October armed insurrection from the July days. Naturally I am not comparing July 1917 (a revolutionary situation) with April 1933, when there is no revolutionary situation in Germany as yet. Nevertheless, it may thus come to pass in Germany, and the more the revolutionary crisis matures, the greater the masses that will go over to the C.P.G.

The temporary retreat of the working class, to deny which would be self-deception, does not, however, imply the collapse of the process of the maturing of the revolutionary crisis. The working class in Germany, owing to the correct tactics of the Communist Party, has not yet joined in decisive battle with the bourgeoisie. Its vanguard, the Communist Party, has not been smashed up and has not isolated itself from the masses. The Communist Party of Germany is alive. It has entered the struggle under new conditions, it is showing its maneuvering powers, its staunchness and spirit of self-sacrifice in this struggle. The influence and authority of the Communist Party among the working masses is growing parallel with complete political and moral decline and degradation in the camp of Social-Democracy. On the other hand, in the chapter *Will Hitler's Government Stay in Power?* the objective factors were set forth which make inevitable fascism's domestic and foreign adventurist policy which will bring it nearer to catastrophe. Like an animal which has been wounded, though not yet fatally, the German bourgeoisie twists and turns from side to side in its effort to escape the hunter, and falls straight into his hands. The revolutionary crisis will bring nearer the end of German fascism.

In winning to their side the majority of the working class, concentrating on work in the principal factories and most important industries, in endeavoring to bring about a change in the mood of the petty bourgeoisie and wrenching it away from fascism, finally in trying to take advantage of the dis-

cords in the bourgeoisie itself, the Communists do not conceal the fact that they are steering toward the armed overthrow of the fascist dictatorship. In proportion as the Communist Party of Germany liberates the majority of the workers from the influence of Social-Democracy and leads them to the struggle against the fascists, the conditions will mature under which armed insurrection will be converted from a slogan of propaganda into a slogan of action, under which the Party will pass on to the direct realization of this slogan.

The proletarian revolution in Germany is inevitable. The Communist Party of Germany must do all in its power to win the majority of the working class to its side and then organize the revolution, lead it and carry it to complete victory.

Published by WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS

P. O. Box 148, Station D (50 East 13th St.), New York City

November, 1933