

the formation of the united front and the process of unifying and strengthening the Communist Parties, does not understand the alphabet of the Communist International, and does not understand that, just as we must have strongly integrated parties if we are to be the banner bearers

on the united front, so also must we fight valiantly on behalf of the united front of the proletariat if we are to secure the existence of strongly integrated Communist Parties. (Loud Cheers). The session adjourned.

Erratum Bulletin 13.

Page 6, col 2, lines 4 and 13 instead of "Pawlowic" and "Nowakowic" read "Petrowic" and "Stanic."

BULLETIN

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Chairman: Comrade Kolaroff.

Contents.

Report on Fascism,—Comrade Bordiga. Discussion on Report. The Capitalist Offensive.

Speakers: Bordiga, Smeral, Pullman, Urbans.

The session opened at 12. 30 p. m.

Kolaroff: The session is now open. I call on comrade Bordiga to report on the question of Fascism.

Bordiga: Dear comrades, I regret that the present extraordinary conditions of communications between the delegation and the Party will not permit me to avail myself of all the documents upon this question.

A report was written on the subject by our Comrade Togliatti, but I have not had an opportunity of seeing it. It has not yet arrived, I would advise the comrades who desire to obtain exact information on the subject to read that report when it arrives, for as soon as it is received it will be translated and distributed here.

However, last night I was able to get additional information, as the special emissary of our Party has arrived in Moscow and furnished me with more detailed information on the impressions of our comrades in Italy in connection with the latest fascist events, and with these I will deal in the closing part of my report.

I will deal with the question raised by Comrade Radek yesterday as to the attitude of the Communist Party towards fascism.

Our comrade criticised the attitude of our Party on the question of fascism, which is the dominant political question in Italy. He criticised our point of view—our alleged point of view—which is supposed to consist of a desire to have a small party and to limit the consideration of all questions solely to the aspect of Party organisation and their immediate importance, without going any farther into the larger questions at issue.

I will try to be brief, on account of the time limit, with these few remarks I will start my report.

The Origin of the Fascist Movement.

The origin of fascist movement may be traced back to the years 1914—1915, to the period which preceded the intervention of Italy in the world war, when the foundation for this movement was laid down by the groups which supported intervention. From a political point of view, these groups were made up of several tendencies. There was a group of the right, led by Salandra and the big industrialists, which were interested in the war and which had even supported the war against the Entente before the decision to fight on the side of the Entente. On the other hand, there are also the tendencies of the left wing of the

bourgeoisie, the Italian radicals, i. e. the democrats of the left, the republicans who had been by tradition in favour of liberating Trieste and Trento. Finally, the interventionist movement included also certain elements of the proletarian movement: revolutionary syndicalists and anarchists. From a point of view of personalities, it is worth mentioning that the movement was joined by the leader of the Left Wing of the Socialist Party, Mussolini—the manager of "Avanti".

It may be stated approximately, that the Centre groups did not participate in the formation of the fascist movement, but returned to their traditional bourgeois political parties. The only groups which remained were those of the extreme Right and those of the extreme Left, i. e. the ex-anarchists, the ex-syndicalists and former revolutionary syndicalists.

These political groups which in May 1915 scored a big victory in forcing Italy into the war, against the will of the majority of the country and even of parliament lost their influence when the war was brought to a close. Already during the war one could foresee the inevitable waning of the influence of the interventionists.

They had represented the war as a very easy enterprise, and when the war became prolonged, they lost their popularity. Indeed, one might doubt whether they were even popular.

In the period that followed immediately after the war, we saw the influence of these groups reduced to the minimum.

From the end of 1918 to the first half of 1920, the period of demobilisation and slump, this political tendency was completely defeated owing to discontent caused by the consequences of the war.

Nevertheless, from a point of political organisation we may connect the origin of the movement which seemed so insignificant at first with the formidable movement which we see to-day.

The "fasci di combattimento", did not disband. Mussolini remained the leader of the fascist movement, and their paper "Il Popolo d'Italia", continued to be published.

At the elections in Milan in October 1919, the fascists were completely defeated, in spite of having their daily newspaper and their political chief. They

obtained a ridiculously low number of votes; nevertheless, they continued their activities.

The proletarian revolutionary and socialist movement which was considerably strengthened by the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses after the war, did not make full use of the favourable situation, for reasons I need not go into now.

The revolutionary tendencies lacked the backing of a revolutionary organisation and of a party that would lend them permanence and stability, and thus the favourable psychological and objective circumstances were not utilised. I do not assert—as Comrade Zinoviev accused me of saying—that the Socialist Party could bring about the revolution in Italy, but at least it ought to have been capable of solidly organising the revolutionary forces of the working masses. It proved unequal to the task.

We have seen how the anti war socialist tendency has lost the popularity which it enjoyed in Italy.

To the extent that the Socialist movement failed to take advantage of the situation and the crisis in social life in Italy, the opposite movement of fascism began to grow.

Fascism benefited above all by the crisis which ensued in the economic situation and the influence of which was begun to be felt in the labour organisations.

Thus the fascist movement at a most trying period found support in the D'Annunzio expedition to Fiume. The Fiume expedition in a sense gave to fascism its moral support, and even the backing of its organisation and its armed forces, although the D'Annunzio movement and the fascist movement were not the same thing.

We have spoken of the attitude of the proletarian socialist movement; the International has repeatedly criticised its mistakes. The consequence of these mistakes was a complete change in the state of mind of the bourgeoisie and other classes. The proletariat became disorganised and demoralised. In view of the failure to win the victory that was within its grasp, the state of mind of the working class changed considerably. One might say that in 1919 and the first half of 1920 the Italian bourgeoisie

to a certain extent became resigned to the idea of having to see the triumph of the revolution. The middle class and the petty bourgeoisie were ready to play a passive part, not in the wake of the big bourgeoisie, but in the wake of the proletariat which was to march on to victory.

This state of mind has undergone a complete change. Instead of submitting to a victory of the proletariat, we see on the contrary how the bourgeoisie are organised for defence.

The middle class became discontented when it saw that the Socialist Party was unable to organise in such a manner as to gain the upper hand; and losing confidence in the proletarian movement, it turned to the opposite side.

It was then that the capitalist offensive of the bourgeoisie started. This offensive was to a certain extent the result of capable exploitation of the state of mind of the middle class. Fascism by reason of its heterogeneous character offered a solution of the problem, and for this reason it was chosen to lead this offensive of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism.

The Italian example is a classical one for the capitalist offensive. It represents, as Comrade Radek told us yesterday from this platform, a complex phenomenon which should be considered not only from the standpoint of reduced wages and longer hours, but also from the general standpoint of political and military action of the bourgeoisie against the working class.

In Italy during the period of the development of fascism we saw all the manifestations of the capitalist offensive.

Our Communist Party, from the moments of its inception, consistently criticised the situation and pointed out the necessity of united defence against the bourgeois offensive. It advocated a united proletarian plan of defence against this offensive.

To get a full view of the capitalist offensive, we must examine the situation on its various aspects, in the industrial as well as in the agrarian field.

In the industrial field the capitalist offensive in the first place exploits the direct effects of the economic crisis. The economic crisis caused the shutting down

of a number of factories, and the employers had the opportunity of discharging the more extreme elements of the organised workers. The industrial crisis furnished the employers with a good pretext for cutting down wages and taking back the disciplinary and moral concessions which they had been forced to make to the factory workers.

At the beginning of this crisis we saw in Italy the formation of a General Confederation of Industry, an association of the employing class which took the lead in this fight against the workers and submitted every individual employer to their discipline. In the large cities it is impossible to start the fight against the working class by the immediate use of violence. The workers of the cities are generally organised in groups; they can easily gather in a large mass and put up a serious resistance. The employers therefore started by provoking the proletariat into actions that were bound to end unfavourably for them, because the economic struggles, in the industrial field, was to transport the activity of the movement from the trade unions to the revolutionary domain, under the dictates of a political party which was really communist; but the Socialist Party was nothing of the sort.

At the decisive moment of the situation the Socialist Party proved incapable of giving a revolutionary lead to the action of the Italian proletariat. The period of the great success of the Italian labour organisation in the fight for the amelioration of the workers' conditions gave place to the new period in which the strikes became defensive strikes on the part of the working class, and defeats became the order of the day.

At the same time the revolutionary movement of the agrarian classes and what is of great importance, the agricultural labourers and other peasant elements which are not completely proletarian, compelled the ruling classes to seek a way, a means of combatting the influence acquired by the Red organisations in the rural districts.

In a great part of Italy, the most important agricultural districts of the Po valley, a state of affairs prevailed which closely resembled a local dictatorship of the proletariat or of the groups

of agricultural labourers. The communes, captured by the Socialist Party at the close of 1920 carried on a policy of imposing local taxes on the agrarian bourgeoisie and the middle class. The trade unions flourished, very important co-operative organisations and numerous sections of the Socialist Party grew up. Even in those places where the movement was in the hands of men who were reformists, by instinct; the working class movement in the rural districts took a definite revolutionary trend. The employers were even forced to deposit sums of money to guarantee the carrying out of the agreements imposed by the trade union struggle.

A situation was reached when the agricultural bourgeoisie could no longer live on their estates and had to seek refuge in the cities.

Certain errors were committed by the Italian socialists, especially on the question of occupying the vacated lands and the tendency of the small farmers who after the war began to buy up land in order to become big proprietors.

The reformist organisations compelled these small farmers to remain somewhat the slaves of the movement of the agricultural labourers, and in this situation the fascist movement managed to find important support.

In the domain of agriculture there was no crisis of such dimensions that would enable the landed proprietors to wage a successful counter-offensive on the basis of the simple economic struggles of the labourers. It was here that the fascists began to introduce their methods of physical violence, of armed brutal force, finding support in the rural proprietor class and exploiting the discontent created among the agricultural middle classes by the blunders of the Socialist Party and the reformist. Fascism benefited also by the general situation which daily increased the discontent among all these groups of petty-bourgeois and petty-merchants, of petty proprietors and returned soldiers, of ex-officers disappointed in their lot after the glories of war.

All these elements were exploited and organised, and this was the beginning of this movement of destruction of the Red organisations in the rural districts of Italy.

The method employed by Fascism is rather peculiar. Having got together all the demobilised elements which could find no place for themselves in post-war society, it made full use of their military experience. Fascism began to form its military organisations, not in the big industrial cities, but in those which may be considered as the capitals of Italian agricultural regions, like, Bologna and Florence, thanks to support of the State authorities of whom we will yet speak later on. The Fascists possessed arms, means of transportation, assured immunity of the law, and they took advantage of these favourable conditions while they were still less numerous than their revolutionary adversaries.

The mode of action is somewhat as follows. They invade a little country place, they destroy the headquarters of the proletarian organisations, they force the municipal council to resign at the point of the bayonet, they would assault or murder those who opposed them or, at best, force them to quit the district. The local workers were powerless to resist such a concentration of armed forces backed by the police. The local fascist group which could not previously fight by themselves against the proletarian forces have now become the masters of the situation, because the local workers and peasants have been terrorised and were afraid of taking any action for fear that the Fascist expedition might return with even greater forces at their command.

Fascism thus proceeded to the conquest of a dominant position in Italian politics in a sort of territorial campaign, which might be traced on a map.

The Fascist campaign started out from Bologna, where in September—October 1922 a socialist administration was installed which was the occasion for a great mobilisation of the red forces.

Several incidents took place: the meeting of the municipal council was broken up by provocation from without. Shots were fired at the benches occupied by the bourgeois minority, probably by some agents-provocateurs.

That was the first grand attack made by the Fascists.

From now on militant reaction ran the country, putting the torch

proletarian clubs and maltreating their leaders. In their dastardly work they enjoyed the full backing of the police and the authorities. The terror started at Bologna on the historic date of November 21, 1920, when the Municipal Council of Bologna was prevented by violence from assuming its powers.

From Bologna Fascism moved along a route which we cannot outline here in detail, but we may say that it went in two chief geographical directions, on the one hand towards the industrial triangle of the North-West, viz. Milan, Turin and Genoa, and on the other hand towards Toscana and the Centre of Italy, in order to encircle and lay siege to the Capital. It was clear from the outset that the South of Italy could not give birth to a Fascist movement any more than to a great socialist movement.

Fascism is so little of a movement of the backward part of the bourgeoisie that it could not make its first appearance in Southern Italy, but rather in those districts where the proletarian movement was more developed and the class struggle was more in evidence.

Having just described the prime elements of Fascism, how are we to interpret the Fascist movement? Is it purely an agrarian movement? That we would not say, although the movement, originated in the rural districts. Fascism could not be considered as the independent movement of a single group of the bourgeoisie, as the organisation of the agrarian interests in opposition to the industrial capitalists. Besides, Fascism has formed its political as well as military organisation also in the large cities, even in those provinces where it had to confine its violent actions to the rural districts.

We have seen it in the Italian parliament, where the Fascists formed a parliamentary faction after having precipitated the parliamentary elections of 1921, which did not prevent the formation of an agrarian party independently of the Fascists.

During recent events we have seen that the industrial employers have supported the Fascists. A deciding factor in the new situation was furnished by a recent declaration of the General Confederation of Industry in favour of entrusting to Mussolini the formation of a new Cabinet. But a more striking phenomenon in

this respect is the appearance of Fascist Syndicalism.

The Fascists have taken advantage of the fact, which we already mentioned, that the socialists never had an agrarian policy and that the interests of certain elements of the country-side which are not purely proletarian are in opposition to those of the socialists.

Fascism was an armed movement which employed all methods of the most brutal violence. It also knew how to employ the most callous methods of demagoguery. The Fascisti endeavoured to form class organisations among the peasants and even among the agricultural labourers. In a certain sense it even opposed the landlords; we have examples of the syndicalist struggle, led by Fascisti, which resembled greatly the old methods of Red organisation.

We cannot consider this Fascist syndicalism, which works through the use of force and terror; as an anti-capitalist struggle, but neither can we on the other hand draw the conclusion that Fascism, in an immediate sense is a movement of the agricultural employers. The fact is that Fascism is a great united movement of the dominant class, which is capable of using for its final aims any and all means, martial interests, and the local interests of certain groups of employers, agricultural and industrial.

The proletariat has not properly understood the necessity of forming a united single organisation for the common struggle, by sacrificing the immediate interests of small groups. It has not yet succeeded in solving this problem. The Italian bourgeoisie profited by this fact by endeavouring to do this itself. It was indeed a formidable problem. The dominant class constructed an organisation which should defend its power; this organisation was completely in its hands and it followed the plan of the capitalist anti-proletarian offensive.

Fascism participated in unionism. Why? In order to take part in the class struggle? Never! The Fascisti took part in the union movement, saying all economic interests have the right to organise; one can form associations of workers, peasants, business men, capitalists, land owners, etc. They can organise on the same principle. But all organisations should, in their acti-

vities, be subordinate to the national interest, national production, national prestige, etc.

This is nothing but a class truce, and not a class struggle. All interests are directed towards a certain national unity. This national unity—is nothing more than the counter revolutionary conservation of the bourgeois state and its institutions. In the make-up of Fascism, I believe that we can count three principal factors: the state, the capitalist class, and the middle class. The State is the principal constituent of Fascism.

The news of the successive government crises in Italy have lead one to believe that the Italian capitalist class possessed a State apparatus which was so unstable that it could be made to fall at one blow.

This is not at all the case. Just at the period when its State apparatus was consolidated, the Italian bourgeoisie formed the Fascist organisation.

In the period immediately following the war, the Italian State underwent a crisis. Demobilisation was the obvious reason for this crisis. Numbers of those who had taken part in the war were suddenly thrown into the Labour market, and at this critical period, the State machine, which had previously been organised to its highest pitch to resist the foreign enemy, now had suddenly to transform itself into the defensive machinery guarding capitalist interests against internal revolution. This is a formidable task for the bourgeoisie. They could not solve this problem of the struggle against the proletariat in a military or technical manner; it had to be done by political means.

Therefore we see the radical government of the post-war period: that of Nitti and that of Giolitti.

It was just the policy of these two politicians which rendered the subsequent victory of Fascism, inevitable. They started by making concessions to the working class in the period when the Statemachanism had to be consolidated. Fascism came afterwards; the Fascist criticism of this government, which they accuse of cowardice in the face of the revolutionaries, is merely demagogic rhetoric.

As a matter of fact, the Fascist victory

has been possible precisely because of the first cabinets of the pre-war period.

Nitti and Giolitti made certain concessions to the working class. They acceded to certain demands of the Socialist Party: demobilisation, a democratic regime and amnesty for deserters. They made these concessions in order to gain time to re-establish their State on a solid basis. It was Nitti who organised the "Royal Guard" an organisation not purely of the police type, but of the new type, the militarists. One of the great errors of the reformist socialist was in not having considered a fundamental problem the question which they could even have presented on constitutional grounds, the fact that the State was forming an auxiliary army. This point was not grasped by the socialists who regarded Nitti as the man with whom they could very well collaborate in a Left Government. This is one more proof of the fundamental incapacity of this Party to understand the development of Italian politics.

Giolitti completed the labours of Nitti. It was Bonomi, Minister of War in the Giolitti cabinet who fostered the beginning of Fascism; he placed at the disposal of this young movement demobilised officers who, although re-entered into civil life, were still in receipt of a large proportion of their army salaries.

He placed at the disposal of the Fascist the State machine in as large a measure as possible. He gave them every possible facility for organising their fighting forces.

The government realised that it would be a formidable error to engage in a real struggle in the period when the armed proletariat occupied the factories and the agricultural proletariat showed signs of being about to seize the Crown lands.

This government which had done the preliminary organisation work of that reactionary force with which they desired one day to destroy the proletarian movement, was aided in its strategy by the treacherous leaders of the General Federation of Labour, who were then members of the Social Party. By conceding the law of Workers' Control, which has never been applied or even voted, the government was able to reestablish the stability of the bourgeois State.

The proletariat was seizing the workshops and the landed estates. The Socialist Party once more, failed to bring about united action of the industrial labourers and peasants. And it is precisely this inability to secure united action which enabled the master class to achieve counter revolutionary unity and so defeat the industrial workers on the one hand, and the agricultural workers on the other. As we see, the State has played the primary role in the development of the Fascist Movement.

After the Nitti, Giolitti and Bonomi governments, we had the Facta Cabinet. This was a type of government intended to cover up the complete liberty of action of Fascism in its expansion over the whole country. During the strike in August 1922, several conflicts took place between the workers and the Fascisti, which later were openly aided by the government. One can quote the example of Bari. During a whole week of fighting, the Fascisti, in full force, were unable to conquer the Bari workers, who had retired into the working class quarters of the old city and who defended themselves by armed force. The Fascisti were forced to retreat leaving several of their number on the field. But what did the Facta government do? During the night they surrounded the old town with thousands of soldiers and hundreds of carabinieri of the Royal Guard. In the harbour, a torpedo boat trained its guns, armoured cars and cannons. The workers were taken by surprise during their sleep; the proletarian leaders were assaulted; labour headquarters were occupied. This was the case all over the country. Wherever Fascism had been beaten back by the workers, the power of the State intervened; workers who resisted were shot down; workers, who were guilty of nothing but self-defence, were arrested and sentenced; while the magistrates systematically acquitted the Fascisti who were generally known to have committed innumerable crimes.

Thus, the State is the main factor. The second factor in the development of Fascism is, as I have already said, large-scale capitalism, the great capitalism, the great capitalists of industry, finance and commerce, and also the large landed proprietors, had an obvious inter-

est in the formation of a combative organisation which would support their attack upon the workers.

But a third factor has also had a very important influence on the formation of the forces of Fascism.

In order to form an illegal reactionary organisation outside of the State, one is compelled to recruit other elements than those belonging merely to the highest circles of the dominant class. They gained the help of these elements by appealing to those sections of the middle class of which we have spoken, and, in order to draw them into their ranks, endeavoured to express their interests. One must confess that Fascism has well understood how to do this, and has well succeeded in so doing. They gained the assistance of elements belonging to strata only just above the proletariat, and even among those suffering from the effects of the war,—all those petty bourgeois, semi-bourgeois, tradesmen, and above all those intellectual elements of the bourgeois youth which, in adhering to Fascism discovered in this struggle against the proletariat, a new energy and the exaltation of patriotism and Italian imperialism. They brought to Fascism a considerable contribution, in supplying it with those human elements necessary for its militaristic organisation.

These are the three factors which have permitted our adversaries to confront us with a movement of which we may denounce its ferocity and brutality but in which we must nevertheless recognise an organisational solidarity as well as the political intelligence of its leaders. The Socialist Party never understood the importance of this growing antagonistic movement. The "Avanti" never understood what the bourgeoisie were preparing by profiting from the criminal errors of the working class leaders. They did not wish to denounce Mussolini, fearing that by so doing they would be giving him advertisement.

We understand then, that Fascism is not a new political doctrine. It has, however, a strong political and military organisation, a considerable press conducted with a good deal of journalistic ability. But there is no idea of a programme; and now that they have arrived at the control of the State, they find

themselves confronted by concrete problems and are forced to apply themselves to the organisation of social economy. Now that they have to pass from negative to positive activities, despite the strength of their organisation they commence to show their weakness.

We have examined the historical and social factors influencing the birth of the Fascist movement. We shall now discuss the Fascist ideology and the programme by which this movement has drawn to it the various adherents following it.

Our criticism leads us to the conclusion that in reality Fascism has added nothing new to the ideology and traditional programme of bourgeois politics. Its superiority and originality consist only in its organisation, its discipline and its leadership. Behind this formidable political and militarist apparatus, there looms a problem which it cannot solve, namely the economic crisis which will continually renew the reasons for revolution. It is impossible for Fascism to reorganise the bourgeois economic machine. They do not know how to find the way out from the economic anarchy of the capitalist system. And they endeavour to carry on another fight, which is the struggle against political anarchy, the anarchy of the organisation of the master class in political parties. The stratification of the Italian master class has always thrown up certain political groups, which did not base themselves on soundly organised parties, and which have been continually engaged in struggles among themselves. This was above all the political reflex of the private and local interests, competition between professional politicians in the field of parliamentary backstairs and intrigue. The bourgeois counter-revolutionary offensive has dictated to the bourgeois class the necessity of achieving unity of action in the social struggle and the parliamentary field. Fascism is the realisation of this. Placing itself above all the traditional bourgeois parties, it is gradually sapping their membership, replacing them in their functions and — thanks to the mistakes of the proletarian movement — is including in its political crusade the human elements of the middle class. But it cannot construct an ideology, nor a concrete programme of social reforms, which shall

surpass that of the traditional bourgeois policies, which have been bankrupted a thousand times.

The critical part of Fascist doctrine has not any great value. It is anti-socialist and also anti-democratic. So far as anti-socialism is concerned, it is obvious that Fascism is the movement of all anti-proletarian forces, and that it must therefore declare itself against all socialist or semi-socialistic tendencies, without being able to present any new justification of the system of private ownership unless it be the well-used one of the alleged failure of communism in Russia. But their criticism of the democratic regime — that it has not been able to combat revolutionary and anti-national tendencies — and that therefore it should be replaced by the Fascist State, is nothing more than a senseless phrase.

Fascism — is not a tendency of the Right wing bourgeoisie, which, basing itself upon the aristocrats, the clergy, and the high civil and military functionaries, to replace the democracy of a constitutional monarchy by a monarchic despotism. In reality, Fascism conducts a counter-revolutionary struggle by means of an alliance of all bourgeois elements, and for this reason it is not absolutely necessary for it to destroy democratic institutions. From the Marxian point of view, this fact need by no means be considered paradoxical, as we know well that the democratic system is nothing more than a scaffolding of false guarantees erected in order to hide the domination of the ruling class over the proletariat.

At the same time, Fascism uses both reactionary violence and those demagogic sophistries by which the liberal bourgeoisie have always deceived the proletariat while assuring the supremacy of capitalist interests.

When the Fascisti turned from their alleged criticism of liberal Democracy to proclaim to us their positive conception inspired by patriotic exultation and a conception of a historical mission of the country, they based it upon a historical myth which has no basis in fact. It considers the gravity of the economic crisis which exists in this Italy, falsely called "the victorious". In their method of influencing the mob, we see nothing more than an imitation of the electoral

attitude of bourgeois democracy: the conception that all interests must be subordinated to that of national supremacy, which is nothing more than the collaboration of classes, and is a means of protecting bourgeois institution against the revolutionary attacks of the proletariat.

A new feature which Fascism has revealed, is the organisation of the bourgeois governmental machine. Recent Italian Parliamentary development would make us believe that one was in the presence of such a crisis in the evolution of the bourgeois State machine that one more blow would have shattered it. In reality we were only faced by a critical period of change in bourgeois governmental matters, due to the importance of the old political groupings and of the traditional Italian politicians in conducting the counter revolutionary struggle in a profoundly disturbing situation.

Fascism has constructed the organ capable of fulfilling this role, if placed at the head of the state.

But when the Fascisti wish to place, side by side with their negative anti-proletarian campaign, a positive programme and concrete proposals for the reorganisation of the economic life of the country and the administration of the State, they were only able to repeat the banal platitudes of traditional democracy and even of social-democracy. They have furnished us with no trace of an original and co-ordinated programme.

For example, they have always said that the Fascist programme advocates a reduction of the State bureaucracy, starting from above, with a reduction in the number of ministers, and extending into all the branches of the administration. Now it is true that Mussolini has withdrawn the special train usually allotted to the Premier, but on the other hand he has augmented the number of cabinet ministers and of the assistant secretaries of the State, in order to give jobs to his legionaries.

Fascism, after having temporarily adopted republicanism finally rallied to the most strict monarchist loyalism; and after having loudly and constantly cried out against parliamentary corruption, it has now completely accepted conventional parliamentary procedure.

They departed so far from the tenden-

cies of pure reaction, that they even made use of syndicalism. In their congress at Rome in 1921, where they made almost ridiculous attempts at formulating their doctrines, they endeavored to explain Fascist syndicalism theoretically as being the supremacy of the movement of the more intellectual categories among the workers. But even this theory has been fully denied by their practice, which basing their trade union organisation upon the use of physical violence and the "closed shop" sanctioned by the employers, with the object of breaking up the revolutionary trade unions. Fascism has not been able to extend its power in those organisations where there is the least amount of that technical specialisation of labour which facilitates the control of the job. Their methods have had some success among agricultural workers and certain sections of the less skilled city workers, such as for example, the dock workers, without having attained success in the more advanced and intelligent sections of the proletariat. It has not even given a new impulse to the organisation of office workers and metal workers. There is no substantial theory of Fascist syndicalism. The Fascist programme is a confused mixture of ideas and of bourgeois and petty bourgeois demands; and the systematic use of violence against the proletariat does not prevent them from making use of the opportunist methods of social democracy.

One proof of this is contained in the attitude of the Italian reformists, whose policy, during a certain time, appeared to be dominated by an anti-Fascist principle and by the illusion of forming a bourgeois-proletarian coalition government against the Fascisti, but who at present have rallied to the support of triumphant Fascism. This combination is not paradoxical; it has been produced by a series of events, and there were many early incidents which made it easy to foresee this alliance. One may mention for instance, the d'Annunzio movement, which on the one side is related to Fascism, and on the other, endeavor to attract to itself working class organisations on the basis of the programme of Vienna which claimed to have a labour, or even socialistic, basis.

I should like to deal with a few more

points which I consider very important in connection with the Fascist phenomenon. However, my time is up, and perhaps the other Italian comrades will fill in the gaps during the discussion. I endeavoured to leave out the sentimental side of the question, because this side does not seem to me the fundamental element of the question.

I have still to deal with the recent events in Italy on which the Congress expects to be thoroughly informed.

Recent events. Our delegation left Italy before the last events took place, and up till now has not received proper information about them.

Last night a comrade delegated by the Central Committee, arrived here and gave us the necessary information. I vouch for the bona fide character of the news which we received, and I will put them before you.

As previously stated the Facta Government enabled the Fascists to carry out their policy on a very large scale. I will only give one illustration of this: viz—the fact that the popular Italian Catholic Peasant's Party which was strongly represented in the Cabinets that followed each other in rapid succession did not prevent the Fascists from continuing a struggle against the organisations' the members and the institutions of this Party. The existing government was only a sham government which did nothing to prevent the advance of Fascism towards power, an advance which we have defined as purely territorial and geographical.

In fact the government was preparing the ground. However, the situation was developing. Another ministerial crisis arose. Facta's resignation was demanded. The last elections had resulted in a Parliamentary situation which made it impossible to secure a working majority by the old methods of the traditional bourgeois parties. It was always said that the "Giant Liberal Party" was in power in Italy. It was not a Party in the true sense of the world, and it never existed as an actual Party, it had no party organisations, and was only a conglomeration of cliques grouped around certain politicians, of the North or of the South, or of cliques of the industrial or agricultural bourgeoisie in the hands of professional politicians. The ensemble of

these parliamentarians was in fact the centre of all the parliamentary combinations.

Well, the time had come when Fascism had to choose between putting an end to the situation or experiencing a very serious internal crisis. The question of organisation had also to be considered. Means had to be found to provide for the needs of the Fascist movement and to keep it up financially. These means were to a great extent provided by the employing class, and as it seems, also by foreign governments. France has given money to the Mussolini group. At a secret session of the French Chamber a budget was considered which comprised considerable sums of money handed over to Mussolini in 1915. Documents of that kind came to the notice of the Socialist Party, which did not care to take any notice of them at the time, saying that Mussolini was a beaten man.

The Italian Government has facilitated the task of the Fascists, for instance, by allowing its bands to use the railways free of charge. Nevertheless, the enormous expense in connection with the Fascist movement compelled its leaders to assume power as the real government of the country. They could not wait for new elections in spite of the certainty of success.

The Fascists have already a strong political organisation. They number 300,000, and claim even larger numbers. They could have conquered through "democracy", if they had not been obliged to accelerate the process.

On October 24th a National Fascist Council was held in Naples. Everyone knows at present that this event, which was advertised in the entire bourgeois press, was only a manoeuvre to divert the general attention from the "Coup d'Etat". At a given moment the parliamentarians were told: "Cut short your debates, there are more important things to do, every man to his post"! This was the beginning of the Fascist mobilisation. It was October 26th, and everything was still quiet in the Capital.

Facta had declared his determination not to resign before at least another meeting of the Chamber, in order not to offend against the traditional procedure. However, in spite of this declaration, he handed in his resignation to the King.

pourparlers were started for the purpose of forming a new Cabinet. The Fascists were marching on Rome, the centre of their activity. They were especially active in the centre, in Tuscany. They were not interfered with.

Salandra was summoned to form a new Cabinet. In order to countenance Fascism he was expected to refuse to form a Government.

At this time it was quite possible that the Fascist armies would have behaved like brigands and would have pillaged and destroyed everything in the towns as well as in the rural districts even against the will of their chiefs, if satisfaction had not been given them by calling Mussolini to power.

Then there came a period when public opinion was rather perturbed. The Facta Government decided to proclaim Martial Law. Martial law was proclaimed, and a collision between the forces of the State and the Fascist forces was expected to take place. For a whole day, public opinion awaited developments. Our comrades were very sceptical about such a possibility.

The Fascists did not meet with any serious resistance anywhere, but there was a certain feeling in the army which was inimical to the Fascists. The soldiers were ready to fire at the Fascists while most of the officers were for them.

The King refused to sign the proclamation of martial law, which was tantamount to accepting the conditions of the Fascists who wrote in the "Popolo D'Italia": "In order to obtain a legal solution, it is only necessary to ask Mussolini to form a new Cabinet". If this is not done, we shall march on Rome". A few hours after the declaration of martial law was revoked, it was known that Mussolini was on the way to Rome. The military defences were already prepared, advance forces were concentrated and the town was surrounded with barbed wire entanglements. However, an agreement was arrived at, and on October 31st the Fascists entered Rome triumphantly and peacefully.

Mussolini formed the new Cabinet, whose composition you know. The Fascist Party which had only 35 seats in Parliament, had an absolute majority in this Government.

Mussolini reserved for himself the position of President of the Council and the portfolios of the Ministry of the Interior and of Foreign Affairs.

The other important portfolios were divided among the members of the Fascist Party.

In the other Ministries the Fascists occupied important posts.

However, as the severance from the traditional parties was not complete, the Cabinet comprised also two representatives of the Social Democracy, viz. Left bourgeois elements and also liberals of the Right and one adherent of Giolitti. During the war, we had General Diaz, Admiral Thaon de Revel at the Admiralty, both of them representatives of the monarchy.

The popular party which carried great weight in the Chamber, was very clever in its compromise with Mussolini. Under the pretext that the official organs of the Party could not meet in Rome, it deputed to a semi-official assembly of some of the Party's parliamentarians, the responsibility to accept Mussolini's offers.

Some concessions were at least obtained from the latter, and the press of the popular party was able to announce that the new Government had not produced many changes in the electoral system and in parliamentary representation.

The compromise was extended to the Social democrats. At one time it was thought that the reformist socialist Baldazi would join the Cabinet. Mussolini was clever enough to approach him through one of his lieutenants, and after Baldazi had declared that he would be very pleased to occupy such a post, Mussolini represented the whole affair as a personal demarche of one of his friends, for which he would not take any responsibility. This is how it came about that Baldazi did not enter the Cabinet.

If Mussolini had not accepted a representative of the reformist General Federation of Labour, it is principally because the Right elements in the Cabinet are opposed to it. But Mussolini thinks that he must eventually have a representative of this organisation in his "great National Coalition" now that he has become independent of all revolutionary political parties.

We can see in those events a compromise between the traditional political cliques and various sections of the dominant class, landed proprietors, financial and industrial capitalists, who are rallying to the new State regime, which has been established by the Fascisti, and assured of the support of the petty bourgeoisie.

We believe that Fascism is, to some extent, a method of ensuring, by every resource at the disposal of the ruling class, their maintenance of power, even by the utilisation of the lessons of the first Proletarian revolution,—the Russian Revolution. When there is a crisis in the economic structure, the State is not sufficient to preserve the power of the master class. There must also be a united party, a unit of counter revolutionary organisation. The Fascist Party is, in relation to the bourgeoisie, somewhat like the Russian Communist Party is in its relation to the proletariat—an organ of the direction and control of the State machine, solidly organised and disciplined. The Fascist Party in Italy has placed its political agents in every important branch of the State. It is the bourgeois organ for the control of the State during the period of capitalist decadence. This is, from my point of view, a sufficient historical interpretation of Fascism and the recent happenings in Italy.

The first measures for the new government demonstrate that it is not going to change the bases of Italian traditional institution.

Naturally, I do not say that the present situation is a favourable situation for the proletarian and socialist movement, when I predict that Fascism will be liberal and democratic. Democratic governments have never given the working class anything but proclamations and promises. For example the Mussolini Government has assured us that it will respect the liberty of the press, but it has been careful to add that the press must deserve of this liberty. But what does this mean? It means that, while declaring itself for the liberty of the press, the government will permit the militarist Fascist organisation to proceed against the Communist papers, when it is convenient for it to suppress them, as has already been done. One must state that the Fascist government makes some concessions to certain

bourgeois liberals; and even if we cannot have much confidence in Mussolini's assurance that he will transform his militarist society into an athletic association or something of that sort, we have not heard of dozens of Fascisti being arrested because of their refusal to obey the demobilisation order issued by Mussolini.

What has been the effect of these events upon the proletariat? The latter has been recently in such position that it has not been able to play such an important part in the struggle but has been compelled to remain almost passive.

So far as the Communist Party is concerned, it has always well understood that the victory of Fascism means the defeat of the revolutionary movement. We are now confronted with the question have the tactics of the Communist Party been such as are capable of realising the maximum of peaceful results in the defence of the Italian proletariat. For we have never hidden the Party's impotence to assume an actual offensive against Fascist reaction. If, instead a compromise between the bourgeoisie and the Fascists, a military conflict or civil war had resulted, the proletariat might have been able to play a certain role, reconstructing a united front for the general strike, and thus it might have been victorious. But in the present situation, the proletariat has hardly participated in the melee. The importance of recent events is very great, one must at the same time realise that the change in the political scene has been less sudden than one would judge; there having been a daily accumulation of events leading up to the final coup of the Fascisti.

The only example of the struggle against the power of the State and the Fascisti was the battle at Cremona, in which there were six killed. The workers only fought in Rome. The revolutionary working class forces hurled themselves against the Fascisti; many were wounded. The following day the Royal Guard invaded the working class quarters and deprived them of all means of defence, permitting the Fascisti to follow and to shoot down the workers in cold blood. This is a most striking episode of this struggle.

The General Federation of labour disarmed the Communist Party by proposing a general strike and begging the

proletariat not to follow the dangerous path indicated by the revolutionary group. At a moment when our press was prevented from appearing, they even published the news that the Communist Party was on the point of dissolving.

The most striking incident concerning our Party in Rome, was the invasion by the Fascisti of the editorial offices of the "Comunista". On the 31st October, while the city was occupied by 100,000 Fascisti, the printing plant was entered by a band of Fascisti just when the paper was to come out. With the exception of comrade Togliatti, our editor in chief, all the staff were able to evade the Fascisti by emergency exits. Comrade Togliatti was in his office when the Fascisti entered. Our comrade's attitude was truly heroic. Boldly he declared that he was the chief editor of the "Comunista". He was stood up against the wall to be shot, while the Fascisti were holding back the crowd to proceed with the execution, and our comrade was only able to escape from them because the Fascisti, who were informed that the other editors were escaping over the roofs, started in their pursuit. This did not prevent our comrade from speaking to a meeting in Turin for the anniversary of the Russian Revolution a few days later (Applause).

But this example of which I wished to inform you, is quite isolated. The organisation of our party is in good condition. If the publication of the "Comunista" is suspended it is not because of a governmental order, but because the printers refuse to publish it. We have published it illegally in another printing plant. The difficulties in publishing it were not of a technical nature, but economic.

They seized the building of the "Ordine Nuovo" in Turin and confiscated the arms which had been kept on the premises for its defence. But we are publishing the paper elsewhere.

In Trieste the police also took possession of the printing plant of our paper, but we are still publishing it illegally. The possibilities of legal work still exist for our Party and our situation is not very tragic. But it is hard to foresee future developments and it is for this reason that I must make certain reservations with regard to the future situation

of our party and the progress of our work.

The comrade who has just arrived is a working man in charge of an important local organisation of our party, and he expresses the interesting opinion, which is shared by many militants, that one can work better now than previously. I do not regard this as an established fact. But the comrade who has said this is a militant working among the masses, and his statement has an important value.

I have already told you that the opposition press published the false news of the dissolution of our party. We have contradicted this. Our central political organ, our illegal military centre, our trade union centre, are working at full speed, and connections with the country districts have been almost completely re-established. We shall perhaps suffer an organisational crisis. But our comrades in Italy did not for a single moment lose their heads, and they are now making all necessary arrangements. The "Avanti" was almost destroyed by the Fascisti, and it took several days to secure the republication of the paper. The official headquarters of the Socialist Party in Rome were completely destroyed by fire. With regard to the attitude of the Maximalist Party and with regard to the argument between the Communist Party and the General Federation of Labour, we have no statement to make.

As far as the reformists are concerned, it is obvious, by the language of their publications, that they will ally themselves with the new government.

Regarding the trade union question, comrade Rapossi of our trade union committee thinks that this work will be able to continue.

This is the latest information which has come to us, and which dates up to the 6th November.

I have talked for some time and I shall not touch upon the question of the attitude of our party during the whole period of the development of Fascism, while reserving my right to do so at some other stage in the Congress. With regard to the prospects of the future, we believe that Fascism will have to count with the discontent provoked by its governmental policies.

At the same time we realise that, when

one has besides the State, the control of a military organisation it is easier to triumph over manifestations of discontent and unfavourable economic conditions.

In the case of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the above has been true in a much larger sense, because the historical development is in our favour. The Fascisti are very well organised and have a certain measure of solidarity. Under these circumstances one may conclude that the situation of the Fascisti Government is by no means insecure.

You have noted that I have not exaggerated the conditions under which our Party has been fighting. This is no place in which to be sentimental.

The Italian Communist Party has committed certain errors which we are entitled to criticise; but I believe that the attitude of our comrades at present is proof that we have really worked towards the organisation of a revolutionary party of the proletariat which will form the base of working class revolution in Italy.

Although one may consider certain steps which they have taken as being incorrect, the Italian communists are well entitled to feel that they have done nothing with which to reproach themselves before the revolutionary movement and the Communist International.

Chairman: We shall now proceed with the debates on the reports of Comrades Radek and Bordiga. I call upon Comrade Smeral to address you.

Smeral (Czecho-Slovakia): Comrades, in my opinion, we are now entering in Czecho-Slovakia upon a period which will lead shortly to a form of government akin in character to the International fascist movement. At present we are in Czecho-Slovakia in the midst of an economic and political crisis. This crisis is so acute as to affect the very roots of the bourgeois state, leaving no other way out than an attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie to introduce fascist methods into the form of government.

I will endeavour to characterise briefly both the political and the economic crisis, and to give an idea of our tactics and policy in this connection.

I. As to the economic crisis, I have already outlined its characteristics features at the session of the Enlarged Executive last summer. The State is over-

industrialised. It has the industrial machinery, the apparatus and the labour power for the supply of 60 to 70 million consumers. It has only 14 million inhabitants. Owing to the dismemberment of Middle and East Europe, the depreciation of the German mark and the political and technical commercial preponderance of the great Allied States, it has no opportunity for export. This is the crux of the economic crisis. Already last summer I stated here in my report that the capitalist offensive which must arise out of this crisis is bound to result in the Czecho-Slovakian bourgeoisie carrying out its well laid plan to reduce the wages of the workers throughout the State by 50%. Such was the position last summer in connection with the capitalist offensive. Since then four months have elapsed and we now have an entirely new state of things confronting us. It is no more a question of reducing wages. The Czecho-Slovak capitalists are determined to do away with a large part of the industry. Three months ago we witnessed the phenomenon of a rapid upward movement in the value of the Czecho-Slovakian krone. In Zurich the value of the Czech krone rose from 8—9 to 18—20 centimes. This was due to an artificial manipulation by the Czecho-Slovakian Banks. Now, what was the aim of this artificial rise of the Czecho-Slovakian rate of Exchange? The aim was to make export absolutely impossible. In the conference held by the Czecho-Slovakian Chambers of Commerce and banks I openly stated that the Czecho-Slovakian government was deliberately encouraging the artificial rise of the Exchange rate, in order to make it impossible for the entire small and middle industry to carry on their production and export.

All small factories were to be destroyed. They were not only to be closed for the transition period, but were to be definitely excluded from the complex of the Czecho-Slovakian State. This is a similar method to that used by the American planters during the periodical crises in the pre-war period. This method consisted in destroying, during periods of too abundant harvests, a part of the crop (be it coffee or corn), in order to keep up prices. It is a further development of the tactics practiced by the Border states, which

are artificially preventing the growth of industry, so as to have no proletariat. We have in Czecho-Slovakia a situation in which the industrialists together with the capitalist political organisations not only shut down temporarily but are positively destroying their well equipped industrial undertakings, in order to gain a breathing spell. This is a very serious economic crisis through which the Czecho-Slovak State is passing. I wish to draw your attention to the fact that there are symptoms that this reduction of industry may ease the present intolerable situation, but not for long. The factories are destroyed, but the population remains. The workers who were concentrated in the industrial districts will remain even after the factories have disappeared. It can be easily imagined what the temper of these workers will be; this destruction of the industries is being carried out as a plan of restoring the inner equilibrium of the national State. From a nationalist point of view this is equivalent to a lost war resulting in the loss of territory. I venture to say that this is even worse. If Czecho-Slovakia were to lose one third of its territory, it would also lose the population living in this territory. If however, Czecho-Slovakia does not decrease horizontally, but vertically, in its industrial construction, it will lose the factories and with them the possibility of feeding the population, while the population itself will remain. Under such circumstances the government crisis will get beyond solution.

Then, there is the political crisis. The peculiarity of the structure of the Czecho-Slovak State consists in the fact that a third of the population (the State is composed of Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Poles, Hungarians and Ukrainians) is in opposition to the government on principle. All parliamentary authorities must be based upon the Czecho-Slovak two thirds majority of the population. In this portion of the population, the Communists forming a mass party must be included. Since the inauguration of the Communist Party no political elections have taken place in Czecho-Slovakia. The Communal elections (the first political elections since the establishment of our Party) were to take place this spring according to the law but they were postponed for

a year on the strength of a new law which was promulgated for fear of a Communist victory.

It will be difficult to postpone the elections for another year, and this election will probably furnish statistical proof of the fact that the Czecho-Slovak bourgeois social democratic party no longer exists. The new born bourgeois nationalist State will be in a position in which bourgeois parliamentarism will not be of much use to it. The crisis of bourgeois democracy is so serious that it is putting, just as the industrial crisis does, the very existence of the State in its bourgeois form into jeopardy.

Comrades, there is still another point to be considered in this connection. At the parting of the ways, before the economic and parliamentary crisis resolve themselves in the formation of a new type of government, we shall have to pass through a long phase of national strife. The impression is being created among the wide strata of the non-communist population that national independence is in peril. It is quite possible that the irredentist nationalist among the German and Hungarian bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will want to take advantage of this situation. This probability is making matters more complicated as far as the temper and the consciousness of the masses are concerned. Under Capitalist government the small nations are either hammer or anvil. Such a wave of nationalism may have an influence over the masses which the bourgeois world might use in the interests of their fascist aims and against the class struggle of the working class. Thus we have three important phenomena before us: an immediate economic crisis, a crisis of parliamentary government which is undermining the foundations of the state owing to the impossibility of a parliamentary solution, and the panicky fear in national circles with regard to national independence. The Communists are blamed for all this. The Czecho-Slovakian bourgeoisie has already used up its best forces in the government of the country. When Massaryk, Banas, and Sochla are played out, the Czech Bourgeoisie will have no one authoritative enough to replace them. There will be no other way out for the government than to throw over the

democratic form, and to say that the maintenance of the national State is the paramount necessity. The ideology will in my opinion, lead in the near future to the formation of a government which will not rest on the parliamentary institutions, but on the white guard organisations the Sokols, the Siberians Legionnaires and other organisations of this kind which already exist within the working masses and enjoy a great deal of popularity among the non-communist portions of the population.

Comrades, considering that our entire party views the situation in the light which I have just put before you, surely no one will imagine that we are so foolish and so dense as not to take account of the weakening of the class struggle and of the methods of this struggle. Under such circumstances is there anyone who will imagine that a tendency might arise in Czecho-Slovakia which would be inclined to copy blindly the European forms of Communism? Such a thing is not likely to happen, and is not at all true. We are fully aware that in this very complicated situation, the Communist Party must expect to be the objects of fierce attacks. Our Young Communist Leagues have already been forced underground. In the New Year the present parliamentary majority will probably want to put on the statute books a Defence of the Republic Act. The bourgeois counter revolutionary organisations, the Sokols, the legionnaires and others are subsidised by the State and systematically encouraged in the Press. The legal centres of the bourgeois counter revolution are wide awake and are prepared to create a hostile atmosphere against us by means of national watchwords and lies. We must take council here about the ways and means to ward off this peril. I shall not deal here with the recent phases of the struggle. Everyone knows what these phases are: life and death struggle for the proletariat dictatorship. It is a question of what our attitude is to be during the first phase. During that phase our tactics and watchwords must be such as to draw away the masses from the counter-revolution and to bring them over to our side. The greater our influence over the masses, the better we will be able to paralyse the counter-revolutionary attacks. We shall have to

choose suitable slogans and watchwords when discussing the question of tactics.

If we advance during the first period, partial watchwords suitable to the development of events, which we ourselves do not look upon as a dogma and as something final, we must nevertheless present them in such a way as to make the masses realise that they are our watchwords, even though they be for us a manoeuvre and a means to bring the masses into motion leading them forward in the process of application. When in March and April of 1917 Lenin came forward with the demand for socialisation of banks and of big industrial organisations, of the abolition of commercial secrets and of the organisation of the consumers, he did not tell Kerensky and the world that it was a swindle and a lie and only a matter and manoeuvre as far as we were concerned.

On the contrary, he said: "we will fight for these slogans which we hold as being within reach of possibilities at present". Because the watchwords were brought before the masses in this form, they carried them away and led them into the struggle. During the subsequent phases they learned from their own experiences that one must go beyond these watchwords. As to the tactics of the gathering of forces, I venture to say that we must be still more cunning and circumspect about them because our bourgeoisie has carefully studied the Russian Bolshevik tactics before the assumption of power. It knows the dialectical side of our tactics. It knows that the watchword which we considered excellent yesterday, can be totally unsuitable today, and vice versa. For this reason we must know how to manoeuvre. However, in order to be able to manoeuvre, the party must be consolidated from within; confidence, authority, and discipline must reign within it, for without them we will not be able to cope with the bourgeoisie.

We will be reduced to mere dogmatic declamations, and will make the victory of the bourgeoisie more difficult, if we allow ourselves to be influenced by the fear of being defeated by a comrade in a factional strife. Freedom and elasticity of tactics in the various phases of development of events is absolutely necessary (Hear! Hear!). If the leaders of the

Communist party do not have the confidence of the International, the general staff of our revolutionary struggle, we can safely say, that such leaders must be removed. However, if the leaders of the party have the confidence of the International, this party is entitled to manoeuvre, without any interference and mistrust on the part of the International, so as to be able to bring the masses over to our side. My time is too short to deal in greater detail with the tactics of the transition period in Czecho-Slovakia. I want merely to state that the workers government is not a dogma for us during the present stage, and not a definite solution of all evils, but a watchword by means of which we want to mobilise the masses. We want to enlist the sympathies of the nationalist socialist workers who might play a very important role under an Orgechi or Fascist government.

By means of this watchword we wish to draw away as much as possible all the proletarian elements from coalition with the bourgeoisie and from the influence of the Pacifist circles. Moreover, we want to make use of these watchwords for the establishment of independent proletarian class organs, and in order to penetrate into the army. For propaganda in the army along side of our endeavour to bring the proletarians to our side, is the second barricade which we must erect against the advance of the Fascist movement. I was only to give you a mere outline, as my time was too short to discuss the question in detail.

Comrade Pullman: Comrades, The imperialist war has disturbed the normal equilibrium and the inter-dependence of the national section, of world capitalist economy. America the least affected by the war went through similar experience. The Capitalist class of America, powerful and conscious, took advantage of the industrial depression and launched a violent attack upon the workers' organisations which succeeded during the war in strengthening considerably their position. Under the pretext of the restriction of war orders a general curtailment of industry took place. The shutting down of factories created an immense army of unemployed, at one time exceeding six millions. For the purpose of dealing a death blow to organised labour, a manu-

facturers' association was organised with a capital of over fifteen million dollars. The attack started under the "Open Shop" slogan and the maintenance of the so-called "rights" of the workers unrestrictedly.

Unorganised labour was the first victim. The shops where the unorganised workers were employed were the first to close. When they re-opened only a fraction of the formerly employed were taken back and at reduced wages. In some cases the reduction exceeded 60%. The next to feel the shock of the attack were the insufficiently organised crafts, and finally the attack was turned against the strong unions.

As a result of the capitalist offensive, the working class to-day finds its economic basis shattered and its ranks disrupted. During this period there was a considerable decrease in the number of organised workers. The American Federation of Labour alone has lost over one million. The working day has been lengthened, wages reduced, shop conditions made much worse, seniority and promotion rights taken away.

In the metal trades the number of organised workers has been reduced from 800,000 to 275,000. Wages have been cut from 25% to 40% and the working day increased from 8 hours to 9 and 10 hours.

If the steel industry, which at the time of the last strike had over 350,000 organised workers is now practically without any organisation. Here wages have been reduced from 22% to 40%; the steel barons persisted in maintaining the 12-hour day, and a 24 hour day during the change of shifts.

In the packing industry, not over 10,000 remained of the 200,000 formerly organised. Here wages were reduced from 25% to 35%, and the 8-hour work day was increased to 10 hours.

In the needle trades industry the number of organised workers decreased about 80,000. Wages were reduced from 15% to 25%.

In the oil fields and metal mining industry there is practically no organisation and white terror reigns supreme.

In the automobile industry the labour force has been reduced in proportion to the increased efficiency of the remaining workers. For instance, the Willis Over-

land Company previously employed 14,000 men producing 550 cars per day, later the force had been reduced to 7,000 men which produced 500 cars. This year over 650,000 miners were on strike for a period of five months. A temporary agreement reached with the operators provides for the continuation of all conditions till March 1923. Thus the sacrifices and heroism of the workers accomplished no tangible results although they partially succeeded in checking the capitalist offensive.

The railroad strike was also defeated due to the interference of the government as well as the treachery of union bureaucracy. The railroad men were forced to accept wage reductions of over 15%. In the beginning of the strike the government remained passive, and apparently neutral but as the workers' resistance grew stronger, the government openly came to the support of the railroad magnates. As a rule in all industrial conflicts the Government rushes to the assistance of the capitalists by throwing on their side the entire force of the judiciary and military machine. This was especially exemplified in the Corenado decision of the Supreme Court, announcing that the unions were responsible for damages caused by strikes. The most striking instance of Government interference was provided in West Virginia where government troops quelled the strike. In Herrin, Ill., the persecution was financed and instigated by the Illinois Chamber of Commerce.

In the railroad strike the attorney general Dougherty obtained an injunction against the unions which practically paralysed and made illegal all strike activities. When obtaining the injunction Dougherty openly stated that the Government would support the drive for the "Open Shop".

Then, following on the heels of the capitalist offensive came the raids on the Communist Party and the Left Wing movement in the trade unions. The arrests and deportations of the active members of trade unions became an everyday occurrence, on a par with lynching, tar-and-feathering, and torture of political prisoners. Constitutional rights are denied even to the yellow socialists. The labour boards and compulsory industrial arbitration courts are used to crush the workers.

In many states a state constabulary has been established which assist the railroad, steel and mining magnates to maintain the white terror.

About the Fascisti organisation in America: We have the American Legion which was organised by a group of officers and drew into its ranks a large number of war veterans under the pretext of gaining a few economic demands such as pensions, bonuses and medical treatment of wounded soldiers. The capitalists maintain also a large army of private detective agencies and factory guards. A secret organisation in America known as the Ku-Klux-Klan plays an important role in the capitalist offensive. It is especially active in the South, but it extends its activities also in the North. It terrorises the Negroes compelling them to do compulsory work at reduced wages and under legal guise assists plantation owners in maintaining a practical system of espionage. At the time of the elections the polls are heavily guarded and Negroes prevented from exercising their formal rights.

Though the capitalist offensive assured an ever increasing impetus, the union bureaucracy did not put up any active resistance but, on the contrary, became passive and treacherous to the workers' interests. The many improvements gained by the workers during the war have been sacrificed by the union bureaucrats practically without a struggle. Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labour, at the present time is active in establishing cordial relations and joint committees with the American Legion while, on the other hand, Gompers fought against the Communists and Left Wing elements in the trade unions.

In the miners' union the bureaucrats have betrayed the miners at a time when the strike was all but won.

During the railway strike, E. F. Grable, head of the International Brotherhood of maintenance-of-way employees and railroad shop labourers, held back his organisation of 400,000 men, notwithstanding the fact that an overwhelming majority of them had voted to join the strike. It is due to this treachery that the defeat of the railroad union may be largely attributed.

In the political field, the union bureaucrats while serving as tools in the

ruling capitalist parties, oppose the political actions of the workers and the formation of a bonafide labour party. Great handicap lies in the defective form of labour organisations which permits the capitalists to lead their attack against the workers and prevent their consolidation.

The Party has reacted against the capitalist offensive and tried to do its best notwithstanding the fact that within the Communist Party during the last year internal friction existed. It made a number of attempts to rally the workers against the capitalist offensive. Several efforts have been made to organise the unemployed; due to this fact however, that at that time the party did not have connections with the trade unions our efforts were not successful as objective conditions warranted. The Party concentrated its attention on the penetration of the trade unions and took an active part in the formation of the Left Wing movement. Under the guidance of the Party's Left Wing movement has been organised in the trade unions which has gained a strong influence. For the purpose of establishing close contact with the workers and developing a strong mass organisation a legal political party was organised and whenever the workers were engaged in a struggle the party attempted to apply the United Front tactic.

American capitalists having reached the highest state of its development and having created the most efficient system of production has been forced to find an outlet in two directions:—first, the emigration of finance—capital to the industrial backward countries, and secondly, the expansion of foreign markets. American capitalism has thus become involved in a desperate competitive struggle with European capitalism. American capitalists will thus bring to bear an additional pressure upon the working class of America. However, in future, the struggle of workers particularly in the metal trade struggle and the mining industry, will change its isolated character. The achievement of co-ordinated and joint action of American and European miners and metal workers will enable the workers to take the offensive. The present moment finds the workers deeply dissatisfied. Never before

has the government so clearly exposed its class character to the workers. And we may expect the industrial conflict that will break out in the immediate future will assume a more revolutionary and political character.

The party must be ready for this struggle, it must develop its membership, it must win the confidence of the masses by consolidating and developing the strength of the workers in their struggle for their immediate demands.

The Party must intensify the activity of its members in the trade unions and take an active part in the daily struggles, in their fight against the union bureaucracy and prepare them for political action. The party should establish its nucleus in every plant, mine and workshop and by attracting into its ranks all militant elements gain the leadership of the revolutionary struggles.

These we believe are the most important tasks facing the Communist Party in America.

Urbans, Germany.—Comrades, First of all, allow me to state that I represent here the views not of the majority but of the minority of the German Delegation.

Both, Comrade Zinoviev and Comrade Radek have said that the chief task of this Congress was to define the danger from the Right. It is my opinion that Comrade Radek has not done any too great service to the Congress of the International by his speech; he gave the centrists and their friends the opportunity to use his arguments in support of their own position. The unanimity on the views of this congress has been thereby greatly damaged. It seems to me that Comrade Radek has been carried away by the fascination of his theme. He put too much emphasis upon the offense of capital, intense though it is, and forgot that this ruthless offensive also brought about the counter offensive of the proletariat.

He spoke of defensive struggles only; he forgot the beginning International movements which are already more than mere defensive struggles.

This overemphasis of the capitalist offensive is demonstrated in the following extract: (from Radek's speech) "It is a characteristic of the present period that The Masses of the proletariat have lost faith in the possibility of the con-

quering power in the near future". He says further "The struggle for power has become impossible now; it will become possible in the future but not now."

If we emphasise too much this apathy of the masses and do not point out the growing movement of the proletariat, our discussion will amount to pouring water on the mills of the Centrists. By taking this attitude which should at any rate have been avoided, Comrade Radek set himself in opposition to Comrades Zinoviev and Trozky.

In the limited time which is given me, I will naturally not be able, to show this in detail, I can only point to the above two quotations. So this false appreciation of the offensive of capital and the under-estimating of positive character of the working class movement correspond also his views on the United Front and the Workers Government as Communist policies. Most typical of this point of view is the example which Karl Radek refers to, regarding the committee of nine and the World Labour Congress.

Comrade Radek says: "We regarded the Commission of Nine as a possible step for the organisation of the United Front" and then again "The Second and two and a Half Internationals were not yet ready to fight." Does not this sound as if there were a possibility of fighting together the with Second and Two and a Half Internationals? (Radek: Quite true). If you insist upon this, then I must say that it is not possible for us to fight together with the U.S.P. and the S.P.D.; their whole past will prevent them from taking part in the struggle for power. They have opposed the working class, and for that reason the class war can end only in the destruction of their organisation, with the disappearance of the Second International. The policy of the Second International and of the Amsterdam Trade Unions goes so far as to be willing to destroy their own organisation in order to weaken the working class. And here is a great difference in our appreciation of the situation.

When Comrade Radek says that the commission of the World Labour Congress could not be successful, first, because the masses were not mobilised, and second, because the Two and A Half international preferred to scheme and

bargain rather than organising the working class,—these are about Radek's words—and when he points to certain deficiencies, as for instance that 500 factory committees were not mobilised, and no delegations sent to the Reichstag, he is right. But such actions could not be expected of the void preliminary political preparation and the participation of the masses was necessary. Negotiations with the organisation leaders can be successful only when backed up with pressure from the masses. However, Comrade Radek seems to exaggerate the importance of the negotiations with the leaders. He says: "Even now we are thinking of the possibility of forming a United Front from the top." The United Front will become possible when the masses united and force thereby a temporary co-operation of the leaders, and some compromise on the part of the S. P. D., and the U. S. P. D., or of the Second International. These organisations will never lead a real struggle. (Comrade Else Baum: We will come back later to this argument). This view of the situation is responsible for Comrade Radek's views on the Workers Government. He spoke of corridors through which one must pass before arriving into the room of the Dictatorship, and thereby did he differentiate himself from the Left who believe that they could come in through the chimney. Why then do you Comrade Radek, say quite frankly that you consider it necessary to pass through the ante-room: thereby strengthening the position of those that believe that we must remain a longer time in that ante-room in order to reach the main room. I believe that it would be better not to shut off the possibility of storming through the chimney instead of waiting a long time in the ante-room. (Radek: The Proletariat is too large to come in through the chimney) The Proletariat is strong enough to break open the chimney and force its way into the room of Dictatorship.

Comrade Radek's view of the Workers Government, in spite of his claim that it agrees with those of Comrade Zinoviev are contradictory to these views as represented in the minutes. This view of the United Front under the Workers Government originates from a false appreciation of the situation.

The proletarian movement has already

entered into an active stage. This is proved by the movement for the 8-hour day in France as well as the shop councils movement in Germany. (I'm surprised that Comrade Radek did not mention this.) The Shop Councils movement in Germany is a typical sign of the awakening political consciousness of the proletariat.

The worker is realising that without co-operation with other workers he cannot win for himself even the historical piece of bread of which Comrade Radek spoke. This is quite true, but he sees more; namely that when he fights for his piece of bread he is opposed by the police and other institutions of the State power. He sees the political side of things, he realises that wage struggles are insufficient, that the economic fights must be transformed to political ones. The struggle for the control of production is one of those political factors of which the working class has become conscious. The beginning of this struggle in the Shop Councils movement is furnishing proof that the working class movement has passed into a positive stage, that it is awakening politically. Comrades, we should not forget that the Shop Councils movement is significant not only in the sense of organisation, as the campaign for the Commission of Nine and the Workers' World Congress, or even the demonstration at the time of the Rathenau murder, but that it extends beyond this and possesses a much more positive character. In this Shop Councils' movement, the workers, organised first locally and then partly also by districts have begun to oppose their power to that of the State,

to create control committees, and that these control committees are opposing the will of the State and the State bureaucracy in the towns. These control committees have already scored many successes. We have proofs of this in Germany. I know that this is still far from being the final struggle for the conquest of power. I do not wish to exaggerate the success of the proletariat; but this movement has awakened the consciousness of the proletariat. This is one thing which we must not forget, which we must bring out here before the Communist International instead of keeping silence on it. We must not point to the seamy side of things only. This would only strengthen the Centrists and their friends. By insisting upon the positive side of this movement we will counter-balance such actions as those of the Italian Maximalists. The Italian example and the speech of Comrade Bordiga prove clearly that it is a useless task to speak of unity of the working class without creating such a unity in the actual struggle for the prime necessities the proletariat needs in order to live.

President: Before we proceed with the translations I would like to read a few notices of the presidium:

The Presidium will come together here at the end of this session.

The following Commissions will meet.

At 7-30 The Commission for Jugo-Slavia and at 6-30 The Commission on Spain.

Now we shall have the translations after which the session will adjourn. The next session will take place to-morrow at 11.

The Session adjourned at 4.15. p. m.

Personal Explanations.

Zinoviev's arguments about my alleged Polish nationalism, were based on a misunderstanding. The article, for which I was blamed, was not written during the offensive against Warsaw, but a long time before it—about the beginning of July. In this article I did not expound the theory of the inadmissibility of introducing proletarian dictatorship into a country at the point of a bayonet. I think that such theories are incorrect. I merely thought

that under the circumstances then prevailing in Poland such an attempt would be a mistake, and I wrote this article in the belief that the Soviet Government would not commit such a mistake.

Some time later I took the liberty to point this out in a confidential letter to Russian friend, and Comrade Lenin publicly admitted that this was a mistake a year later.

As to the accusation that in my speech

I refused to consider the question of a workers' government in regard to Poland (also a nationalist viewpoint), I wish to state that I did not make such a statement in the course of my speech.

L. Donsky (Poland).

Erratum.

Session № 7 page 74. Col. 2. line 17 from top—in place of "accepts with reservations"—should read accept Without reserve".