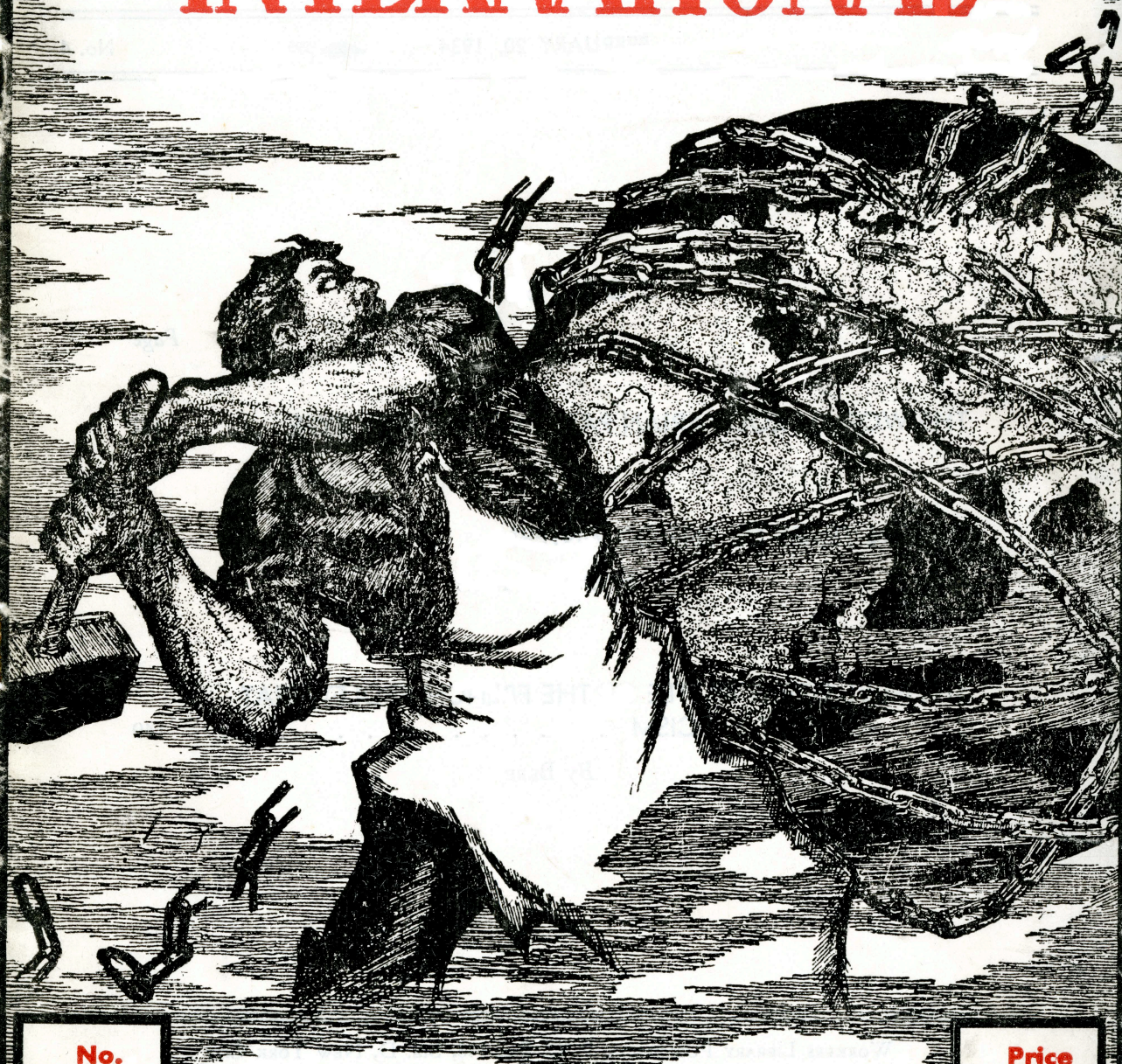


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DIMITROFF'S SPEECH IN THE LEIPZIG COURT*

DIMITROFF: By the provisions of Paragraph 258 of the Code of Court Procedure, I have the right to speak as defending counsel and as the accused.

Presiding Judge: You have the right to make your final remarks. You may do so.

Dimitroff: By virtue of the provisions of this Code, I have the right to controvert the case of the prosecution, and to make my final remarks only after I have done that.

Judges of the court, prosecutors and counsels for the defense! At the very beginning of this trial three months ago, I sent a letter as the accused to the presiding judge of the court. I wrote in the letter that I was sorry that my speeches led to conflicts. But I strongly protested against my conduct being interpreted as being a deliberate misuse of the right to ask questions and make statements with a view to carrying on propaganda. Naturally, as I am accused of a crime of which I am innocent, I try to defend myself by all means at my disposal.

"I admit," I wrote, "that some of my questions were not always put correctly from the point of view of their opportuneness and their form. However, this is only the result of my insufficient knowledge of German legal practice. Besides this, it is for the first time in my life that I am participating in such a trial. If I had a defending counsel of my own choice, I could undoubtedly avoid these incidents which are not conducive to the best interests of my own defense. I gave the names of a number of barristers—Detcheff, Moro-Giafferi, Campinchi, Torres, Grigoroff, Leo Gallagher (from America) and Dr. Leman (from Saarbruecken). But the imperial court has rejected all my proposals one after the other, on one pretext or another. I harbor no personal distrust towards Dr. Teichert as a man or a lawyer. But in the present situation in Germany, I cannot have the necessary confidence in Teichert when he assumes the role of my official defending counsel. Therefore I am endeavoring to defend myself, and this being the case, I naturally take steps sometimes which are not proper from the juridical point of view.

"In the interests of my defense before the court, and also, I think, in the interests of the normal course of the trial, I apply once more—and for the last time—to the high court to permit Marcel

Villard, who has this day received due authorization from my sister, to take part in my defense. If this, my last request, should unfortunately be also refused, I shall have no other course but to defend myself to the extent of my strength and abilities."

After this application had also been refused, I decided to defend myself. Having no need either for the honey or the eloquent venom of the counsel who has been forced on me, I have defended myself all the time without the help of counsel.

It is absolutely clear that I do not consider myself bound in any way by the speech of Dr. Teichert made in my defense. The only things that are of any significance as far as my defense is concerned are the things I have so far said myself and those that I shall say just now. I do not want to offend my Party Comrade Torgler—in my opinion he has already been sufficiently outraged by his defending counsel—but I must say outright that I would rather be sentenced to death by a German court for a crime of which I am innocent than secure an acquittal thanks to a speech in my defense such as that made by Dr. Sack on behalf of Torgler.

Presiding Judge (cutting Dimitroff short): It is no business of yours to spend your time criticizing here.

Dimitroff: I admit that my language is harsh and severe, but my struggle and my life have also been harsh and severe. But my language is honest and open. It is my habit to call things by their proper names. I am not a barrister, compelled to defend his client here.

I am defending myself as an accused Communist.

I am defending my own Communist revolutionary honor.

I am defending my ideas, my Communist convictions.

I am defending the meaning and content of my life.

Therefore every word which I speak before the court is, so to speak, *blood of my blood and flesh of my flesh*. Every word is an expression of my deep indignation at the unjust charge, at the fact that such an anti-Communist crime is attributed to Communists.

I have often been reproached with not taking a serious attitude to the German High Court. This is absolutely untrue.

It is true that for me, as a Communist, the highest law is the program of the Communist International, and the highest court is the Control Commission of the Communist International.

* Final text of speech, supplemented from stenographic notes, and translated from the Russian translation.

But for me as one accused, the High Court is an organ to which my attitude must be most serious, not only because it consists of judges who have special qualifications, but because this court is a very important organ of State power, an important organ of the ruling social order, an organ which can pass the highest sentence in its ultimate form. I can say with an easy conscience that I have spoken nothing but the truth on all questions before the court, and consequently before public opinion. As for my Party which is now carrying on its work illegally, I have declined to give any information whatsoever in that connection. I have always spoken seriously and with a feeling of the most profound conviction.

Presiding Judge: I will not tolerate you carrying on Communist propaganda here in this court. You have been doing it all the time. If you continue in this spirit, I will deprive you of the right to speak.

Dimitroff: I must strongly protest against the statement that my aim is propaganda. It may be said that my defense before the court has had a certain propagandist value. I admit that my conduct before the court may also serve as an example for a Communist on trial. But I do not admit that this is the aim of my defense. My aim is to refute the charge that Dimitroff, Torgler, Popoff and Taneff, the Communist Party of Germany and the Communist International have anything whatever to do with the fire.

I know that nobody in Bulgaria believes in our alleged complicity in the burning of the Reichstag. I know that there is probably no one in other countries who believes it. But in Germany conditions are different. Such strange statements might be believed here. I, therefore, wanted to prove that the Communist Party had nothing to do with such a crime.

If propaganda is spoken of, then many speeches delivered here have had such a character. The speeches of Goebbels and Goering have also had an indirect propagandist effect for the benefit of Communism, but no one can make them responsible for the fact that their speeches had such a propagandist effect. (Movement and laughter in the court).

The press has not only defamed me in every possible way—this is a matter of indifference to me—but in dealing with me it has also called the Bulgarian people “savages” and “barbarians”; I have been called a “shady Balkan subject,” “a wild Bulgarian”, and I cannot pass this over in silence.

It is true that Bulgarian *fascism* is savage and barbarous. But the Bulgarian working class and peasantry, the intellectuals of the Bulgarian people, are by no means savages and barbarians. The level of material culture in the Balkans, of

course, is not so high as in other European countries, but spiritually and politically the masses of our people are not on a lower level than the masses in other European countries. Our political struggle, our political strivings in Bulgaria, are not lower than in other countries. A people which has lived for 500 years under a foreign yoke without losing its language and nationality, our working class and peasantry which fought and are still fighting against Bulgarian fascism and for Communism, such a people is not barbarous and savage. It is only the fascists in Bulgaria who are savages and barbarians. But I ask you, Mr. Presiding Judge, *where is the country where fascists are not barbarians and savages?*

Presiding Judge (cutting Dimitroff short): Are you hinting at political relations in Germany?

Dimitroff (with an ironic smile): Of course not, Mr. Presiding Judge.

Long before the time when the German Emperor Karl V said that he only spoke German to his horses, while the German aristocrats and educated people wrote only in Latin and were ashamed of speaking German, Kirill and Mefodi in “barbarian” Bulgaria, had established and were spreading ancient Bulgarian script.

The Bulgarian nation has fought with all its force and with the greatest stubbornness against the foreign yoke. Therefore I protest against these attacks on the Bulgarian people. I have no grounds for being ashamed of being a Bulgarian. I am proud that I am a son of the Bulgarian working class.

Before dealing with the basic question, I must draw attention to the following: Dr. Teichert reproached us by saying that we were responsible for putting ourselves in the position of being accused of burning the Reichstag. But I must say in reply that very much time has passed since March 9, when we were arrested, and the time when this trial began. It was possible during this period to have investigated every point giving rise to suspicion. During the preliminary investigation I spoke to responsible officials of the so-called fire commission with regard to the Reichstag fire. These officials told me that the Bulgarians were not to blame for the Reichstag fire. We were only accused of living with false passports, under false names, and living without permits, etc.

Presiding Judge: The things you are now speaking of have not been discussed at the trial. Therefore, you have no right to speak of them now.

Dimitroff: Mr. Presiding Judge, all the facts should have been looked into during this period so as to release us from this charge in good time. In the indictment it states that “Dimitroff, Popoff, and Taneff assert that they are Bulgarian emigrants. In

spite of this, however, it may be taken as proven that they lived in Germany with a view of carrying on illegal work." They are "delegated by the Communist Party of Moscow to prepare an armed insurrection," says the indictment.

On page 83 of the indictment it states that "though Dimitroff has declared that he was not in Berlin from Feb. 25 to Feb. 28, this nevertheless does not alter matters and does not release him, Dimitroff, from the charge of complicity in burning the Reichstag." "This is plain not only from the testimony of Helmer," says the indictment further. "Other facts also indicate that . . ."

Presiding Judge: You must not read out the whole indictment. We know it well enough.

Dimitroff: I must say that three-quarters of all that was said in the court by the Prosecutor and the Counsels for the defense was well known long since, but they were repeated here over again (movement and laughter in the court). Helmer testified that Dimitroff and Van der Lubbe were in the Bayerhoff Restaurant. Further I read in the indictment: "Even if Dimitroff was not caught red-handed, nevertheless he took part in the preparations for setting the Reichstag afire. He went to Munich to ensure himself an alibi. The pamphlets found on Dimitroff show that he took part in the Communist movement in Germany." Such were the grounds given for this hastily drafted charge which turned out to be still-born.

Presiding Judge (cutting Dimitroff short): You must not use such expressions in regard to the indictment.

Dimitroff: I will try to find a different expression.

Presiding Judge: But not such an impermissible one.

Dimitroff: I will return to the methods used by the prosecution and to the indictment in a different connection.

The nature of this trial was determined in advance by the thesis that the burning of the Reichstag was the work of the Communist Party of Germany, and even of world Communism. This anti-Communist act—the setting fire to the Reichstag—was attributed to the Communists, was declared to be the signal for a Communist rising, a signal for a change in the German Constitution. With the help of this thesis, the whole trial was given an anti-Communist character. It states in the indictment: "The prosecution takes the point of view that this criminal act was intended to be the call, the signal for the enemies of the State, who wished thereupon to carry through a general attack on the German State in order to destroy it, and to erect in its place the dictatorship of the proletariat, a Soviet Government by the grace of the Third International."

Judges of the court! This is not the first time that such a crime has been laid at the door of the Communists. I cannot here cite all the examples of this kind. I will recall the attempt on the railway here in Germany, near Jueterbog, carried out by a psychopath, adventurer, and provocateur. At that time the statement was circulated not only in Germany but in other countries that this was the work of the German Communist Party, that this was a terrorist act committed by Communists. Then it was discovered that it was done by the psychopath and adventurer Matushka. He was arrested and sentenced.

I will recall another example—the assassination of the French President by Gorguloff. At that time also statements were made in all countries that the hand of the Communists could be seen here. Gorguloff was depicted as a Communist, as a Soviet agent. And what turned out to be the case? It was proved that this assassination was organized by White Guards, and that Gorguloff was a provocateur who wanted to bring about the breaking off of relations between the Soviet Union and France.

I will also recall the blowing up of the Sofia Cathedral. This explosion was not organized by the Bulgarian Communist Party, but as a result of it the Communist Party suffered persecution. Two thousand workers, peasants and intellectuals were savagely murdered by fascist gangs, on the pretext that the Cathedral was blown up by Communists. This provocation associated with the blowing up of the Sofia Cathedral was organized by the Bulgarian police. As far back as 1920 the head of the Sofia police, Prutkin, organized bomb-throwing himself during the railway strike as a means of provoking the Bulgarian workers.

Presiding Judge: (interrupting). This has nothing to do with the trial.

Dimitroff: The police official Heller spoke here of Communist propaganda in favor of incendiarism, etc. I asked him if he was not aware of cases when incendiarism performed by employers was later attributed to the Communists. In the *Voelkischer Beobachter* of October 5 it states that the Stettin police . . .

Presiding Judge: This article has not been brought forward at the trial. (Dimitroff tries to continue.)

Presiding Judge: Do not dare to speak of it here when it has not been referred to in the trial.

Dimitroff: A whole number of fires . . . (The presiding judge again interrupts Dimitroff). This was a case for investigation because a whole number of cases of incendiarism were blamed on the Communists. Then it was found that they had been committed by employers with a view to providing work. I will recall another point, namely the forging of

documents. There are a great many forgeries which have been used against the working class. There are very many such cases. I will remind you of the well-known Zinoviev letter. This letter was never written by Zinoviev. It was a forgery. This forgery was used by the British Conservatives against the working class. I remind you of a number of forgeries which have figured here in Germany.

Presiding Judge: This is outside the bounds of the court investigation.

Dimitroff: It has been stated here that the burning of the Reichstag was to have served as a signal for an armed insurrection. Attempts have been made to prove this in the following way:

Goering has stated here in court that at the moment when Hitler came to power, the Communist Party of Germany was compelled to inflame the feelings of its followers and to undertake some action. He said: "The Communists had to do something. It was now or never!" He said that the Communist Party had for years been calling for the struggle against national-socialism, and that when the national-socialists took power, the C.P.G. had no other alternative but to take action, now or never. The Chief Public Prosecutor has tried to formulate this thesis more exactly and more "wisely."

Presiding Judge: I shall not permit you to insult the Chief Public Prosecutor.

Dimitroff: The assertions made by Goering in his capacity as chief witness for the prosecution were developed here by the Chief Public Prosecutor. The Chief Public Prosecutor, Dr. Werner, said: "The Communists were in such a position that they had either to retreat without a fight or to accept battle even without completing their preparations. Under the given circumstances it was the only chance the Communist Party had left. Either to abandon their aims without a struggle or to undertake a definite act of desperation, and to stake all on one throw. Under certain circumstances this might have saved the situation. There was a chance that it might not succeed, but even then the situation would not be worse than if the Communist Party retreated without a fight." The thesis which has been put forward and attributed to the Communist Party, is not a Communist thesis. Such a supposition shows that the enemies of the C.P.G. know it very badly. Anybody who wants to correctly carry on a struggle against his enemy should know this enemy very well. The fact that the Party was suppressed, that its mass organizations were dissolved, that it lost its legal existence, are naturally heavy blows at the revolutionary movement. *But this does not by any means signify that all is lost.*

In February 1933, the Communist Party was

threatened with suppression. The Communist press was prohibited and the suppression of the Communist Party was expected. The German Communist Party expected this. Its leaflets and newspapers spoke of it. The German Communist Party knew quite well that the Communist Parties had been prohibited in many countries, but that they continued their work and struggle in spite of this. The Communist Party is prohibited in Poland, Bulgaria, Italy and some other countries.

I can only speak of this on the basis of the experience of the Bulgarian Communist Party. After the rising in 1923 the Bulgarian Communist Party was suppressed, but it carried on its work, and though it cost many sacrifices, it has become stronger than it was before 1923. This is understood by every critically minded person.

The German Communist Party can, in a suitable situation, bring the revolution about even as an illegal Party. This is shown by the experience of the Russian Communist Party. The Russian Communist Party was illegal. It was subjected to bloody persecution, but the working class later led by the Communist Party, came to power. It was impossible for the leaders of the German Communist Party to argue that all was now lost, and that the question was one of two things, either insurrection or death. Such a silly idea could not have entered the heads of the leaders of the Communist Party. The Communist Party knew perfectly well that illegal work would mean numerous sacrifices and would demand self-sacrifice and daring, but it also knew that its revolutionary forces would strengthen, and that it would be able to carry out the task facing it. Therefore it is absolutely impossible that the German Communist Party wanted to stake everything on one throw at that time. *Fortunately, the Communists are not so shortsighted as their opponents, and they do not lose their heads in the most difficult situations.*

I should add to this that the German Communist Party and the other Communist Parties are Sections of the Communist International. What is the Communist International? I will permit myself to quote the statutes of the Communist International.

I will read the first paragraph of the statutes:

"The Communist International—the International Workers Association—is a union of Communist Parties in various countries. It is a World Communist Party.

"As the leader and organizer of the world revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the upholder of the principles and aims of Communism, the Communist International strives to win the majority of the working class and the broad strata of the propertyless peasantry, fights for the estab-

*lishment of the world dictatorship of the proletariat, for the establishment of a World Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, for the complete abolition of classes and for the achievement of Socialism—the first stage of Communist society.”**

In this World Party covering millions of people, and known as the Communist International, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the strongest Party. It is the ruling Party of the Soviet Union, the greatest country in the world. The Comintern is a World Communist Party, and weighs up the political situation jointly with the leaders of the Communist Parties of all countries.

The Communist International, to which all the sections are directly responsible, is not an organization of conspirators but a World Party. *Such a World Party does not play at insurrection and revolution.* Such a World Party cannot *say one thing* to the millions of its supporters and at the same time secretly *do the opposite*. Such a Party, my dear Dr. Sack, does not engage in double bookkeeping!

Dr. Sack: All right, get on with your Communist propaganda.

Dimitroff: When such a Party appeals to the millions of the proletariat, when it makes its decisions on tactics and immediate tasks, it does so seriously, fully conscious of its responsibility. I will read you a decision of the XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I. As these decisions were quoted here in court, I have the right to read them.

According to these decisions, the basic task of the German Communist Party is as follows: “To mobilize the vast masses of toilers in defense of their vital interests, against the bandit policy of monopolist capital, against fascism, against the emergency decrees, against nationalism and chauvinism, and by developing economic and political strikes, by struggle for proletarian internationalism, by means of demonstrations, to lead the masses to the point of the general political strike; to win over the bulk of the social-democratic masses, definitely overcome the weaknesses of trade union work. The chief slogan which the Communist Party of Germany must put forward to offset the slogan of the fascist dictatorship (the “Third Empire”) and the slogan of the social-democratic Party (“The Second Republic”), is the slogan of the *Workers’ and Peasants’ Republic*, i.e., Soviet Socialist Germany, which will guarantee the possibility of the voluntary affiliation of the people of Austria and other German territories.”

Mass work, mass struggle, mass resistance, the

united front, no adventures! Such is the Alpha and Omega of Communist tactics.

A manifesto of the Executive Committee of the Comintern was found on me. I think that can also be quoted. Two points are specially important in this manifesto. Thus, it speaks of demonstrations in various countries in connection with the events in Germany. It speaks of the tasks of the Communist Parties in the struggle against the national-socialist terror, and also of the defense of the organizations and press of the working class. In this manifesto, it says among other things:

“The main obstacle to the formation of the united front of struggle of the Communist and social-democratic workers was and is the policy conducted by the Social-Democratic Parties, who have exposed the international proletariat to the blows of the class enemy. This policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, known as the so-called policy of the ‘lesser evil,’ has led in practice to the triumph of fascist reaction in Germany.

“The Communist International and the Communist Parties of all countries have repeatedly declared their readiness to join in a common fight along with the social-democratic workers against the capitalist offensive, against political reaction and civil war. The Communist Parties were the organizers of the common fight of the Communist, social-democratic and non-Party workers in spite of the leaders of the Social-Democratic Parties who systematically disrupted the united front of the working masses. On July 20 last year the Communist Party of Germany, after the Prussian social-democratic government had been driven out by Papen, proposed to the Social-Democratic Party and the A.D.G.B. (German General Federation of Trade Unions) to organize a common strike against fascism. But the Social-Democratic Party and the A.D.G.B., with the approval of the whole of the Second International, described the proposal to organize a common strike as a provocation. The Communist Party of Germany repeated its proposal of common action at the moment when Hitler seized power; it called upon the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party and the Executive Committee of the A.D.G.B. to organize the resistance to fascism, but this time also met with a refusal. Nay, more, when in November last year the Berlin traffic workers unanimously went on strike against a wage reduction, the Social-Democratic Party sabotaged the united front struggle. The whole practice of the international labor movement is full of similar examples.

“The Bureau of Labor and Socialist International published on February 19 last, a declaration on the readiness of the Social-Democratic Parties affiliated to this International to form a united front

* *Program of the Communist International, Together With the Statutes*, p. 88. Workers Library Publishers, 10 cents.

with the Communists in order to fight against the fascist reaction in Germany. This declaration stands in sharp contradiction to the whole of the previous actions of the L.S.I. and Social-Democratic Parties. The whole policy and activity of the L.S.I. hitherto justifies the Communist International and the Communist Parties in putting no faith in the sincerity of the declaration of the L.S.I. Bureau, which makes its proposal at a moment when in a number of countries, and before all in Germany, the working masses are taking into their own hands the organizing of the united front. In spite of this, however, the Executive Committee of the Communist International, in view of fascism, which is unchaining all the forces of world reaction against the working class of Germany, calls upon all Communist Parties to make yet another attempt to set up the united front of struggle with the social-democratic workers through the medium of the Social-Democratic Parties. The E.C.C.I. makes this attempt in the firm conviction that the united front of the working class, on the basis of the class struggle, will be able to repel the offensive of capital and fascism and to accelerate extraordinarily the inevitable end of all capitalist exploitation.

"Having regard to the fact that, owing to the peculiarity of the conditions, as well as the differences in the concrete fighting tasks confronting the working class in the various countries, an agreement between the Communist and Social-Democratic Parties for definite actions against the bourgeoisie can be carried out most successfully within the confines of each individual country. The E.C.C.I. recommends the Communist Parties of the various countries to approach the central committees of the Social-Democratic Parties belonging to the L.S.I. with proposals regarding joint actions against fascism and against the offensive of capital. Nevertheless the negotiations between the parties concluding such an agreement must be based on the most elementary prerequisites for the common fight. Without a concrete program of action against the bourgeoisie, any agreement between the parties would be directed against the interests of the working class.

"The Executive Committee of the Communist International, which makes these proposals before the international working class, calls upon all Communist Parties, and in the first place on the Communist Party of Germany, immediately and without waiting for the results of negotiations and agreements with the social-democracy with regard to a common fight, to proceed to organize joint fighting committees with social-democratic workers and with workers of all other persuasions.

"The Communists have proved through their long years of struggle that they stand, and will stand, not

in words, but in deeds, in the front ranks of the fight for the united front in class actions against the bourgeoisie.

"The Executive Committee of the Communist International firmly believes that the social-democratic and non-Party workers, regardless of what attitude the social-democratic leaders adopt in setting up the united front, will overcome all obstacles and, together with the Communists, set up the united front not in words but in deeds.

"Precisely at the present moment, when German fascism has organized a monstrous provocation (setting fire to the Reichstag, forging documents about an alleged Communist insurrection, etc.) in order to crush the workers' movement in Germany, every worker must recognize his class duty in the fight against the capitalist offensive and fascist reaction." *

In this manifesto, nothing is said of the direct struggle for power. This task was not raised by the Communist Party of Germany nor by the Communist International. But I can say that the manifesto of the Comintern provides for armed insurrection.

The Court has drawn the conclusion from this that as the Communist Party aims to bring about an armed insurrection, then this insurrection was being directly prepared and was to have broken out. This, however, is illogical, incorrect, to say the least of it. Of course, it is the task of the Communist Parties throughout the whole world to struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is our principle, our aim. But it is a definite program, which requires the forces not only of the working class but of the other strata of the toilers, if it is to be carried out.

It was a well-known fact that the German Communist Party stood for the proletarian revolution. But this is not the question to be decided at this trial. The question is whether a rising was really fixed to secure the seizure of power for February 27, in connection with the burning of the Reichstag.

What has the court inquiry shown, judges of the Supreme Court? The legend that the Reichstag fire was the work of the Communists has completely broken down. I shall not here quote the testimony of the witnesses, as the other defending counsel has done. But this question may be considered as settled for any person of normal intelligence. The Reichstag fire is in no way whatever connected with the activity of the Communist Party—has no connection not only with a rising, but with a demonstration, a strike or any other action of this kind. This has been fully proved by the court enquiry.

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 13, No. 11, March 9, 1933, pages 261-262.

The burning of the Reichstag—I ignore the statements of criminals and psychopaths—was not taken by anyone to be the signal for a rebellion. No one noticed any actions, movements or attempts at rebellion in connection with the fire at the Reichstag. No one heard of it at that time. All stories tending in this direction belong to a much later period. At the time of the fire the workers were on the defensive against the attack of fascism. The Communist Party of Germany was trying to organize the resistance of the masses, to organize their defense. But it has been proved that *the burning of the Reichstag was the pretext, the prelude to a wide and deliberate destructive drive against the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party of Germany.* It has been proved beyond dispute that on February 27-28 the responsible representatives of the government did not dream that a Communist rising was about to break out.

I have asked many questions on this subject of the witnesses called here. Above all, I questioned Heller, the wonderful Karwahne (laughter in court), Fren, Count Helldorf, and police officials. In spite of the variations among them, they all replied that they had not heard anything to indicate that a Communist insurrection was about to take place. This means that absolutely no steps were taken at all by governing circles.

Presiding Judge: But the court received a statement from the chief of the Western Police Section on this question.

Dimitroff: In his statements to the court, the chief of the Western Police Section related that Goering called him to his office and gave him verbal instructions on the struggle against the Communist Party, *i.e.*, on the struggle against Communist meetings, strikes, demonstrations, the electoral campaign, etc. But even this statement does not indicate that measures were being taken against a Communist insurrection which was about to take place immediately.

Barrister Seiffert spoke of this yesterday. He drew the conclusion that no one in government circles expected a rising at that moment. Seiffert quoted Goebbels, and mentioned that from the start the latter did not believe the news about the Reichstag fire. Whether this was so in reality is a different matter.

The emergency decree of the German government on February 28, 1933, is also a proof in this respect. It was issued immediately after the fire. Read this decree. What is written in it? It says there that such and such paragraphs of the constitution are repealed, namely paragraphs on the freedom of organization, freedom of the press, personal

inviolability, the inviolability of the home, etc. This is the essence of the emergency decree, of its second paragraph. The drive against the working class . . .

Presiding Judge: Not against the workers but against the Communists.

Dimitroff: I must state that not only were Communists arrested on the basis of this emergency decree but so were social-democratic and catholic workers, and their organizations were disbanded. I should like to emphasize that this emergency decree was directed not only against the C.P.G., although, of course, the decree was directed first and foremost against it, but also against the other oppositional parties and groups. This law was needed in order to introduce exceptional measures, and it is organically connected with the burning of the Reichstag.

Presiding Judge: If you make attacks on the German government, I shall deprive you of the right to speak.

Dimitroff: In this trial, one question has been altogether left without explanation.

Presiding Judge: When you speak, address yourself to the judges and not to the public. Otherwise your speech may be regarded as propaganda.

Dimitroff: One question has been left unexplained both by the prosecution and the defense. I am not surprised that they did not think it necessary. They are very much afraid of this question. It is the question of the character of the political situation in Germany in February 1933. I must make some remarks here on this question. At the end of February, the situation was such that a struggle was taking place in the camp of the nationalist front.

Presiding Judge: You are entering a sphere which I have already repeatedly forbidden you to touch.

Dimitroff: I wish to remind you of my application to the court to call a number of witnesses, including Schleicher, Bruening, Papen, Hugenberg, the vice-president of the Stahlhelm, Duesterberg, and others.

Presiding Judge: But the court turned down the application to call these witnesses. Therefore you must not speak on this matter.

Dimitroff: I know, and know why.

Presiding Judge: It is unpleasant for me to be continually interrupting you during your final remarks, but you must observe my instructions.

Dimitroff: This internal struggle in the nationalist camp took place in connection with a struggle behind the scenes in German business circles. The struggle went on between the Thyssen and Krupp groups (war industry) which had financed the national-socialist movement for many years in succession, and their competitors who were to be pushed into the background.

Thyssen and Krupp wished to establish the prin-

principle of autocracy and absolute domination over the country under their practical guidance, to bring about a considerable reduction in the standard of living of the working class, and for this purpose it was necessary to crush the revolutionary proletarian. At this time the Communist Party was striving to form a united front so as to unite all forces for defense against the attempts of the national-socialists to annihilate the working class movement. Some of the social-democratic workers felt the necessity for the united front of the working class. They understood the need for it. Many thousands of social-democratic workers joined the ranks of the C.P.G. But in February and March, the task of establishing the united front did not by any means imply a rebellion and preparations for it, but only meant the mobilization of the working class against the plunderous onslaught of the capitalists and against the violence of the national-socialists.

Presiding Judge (cutting Dimitroff short): You have always emphasized that you are only interested in the political situation in Bulgaria, but what you are saying now proves that you have displayed a big interest in political questions affecting Germany.

Dimitroff: Mr. Presiding Judge, you are trying to reproach me, but I can reply to you as follows: As a Bulgarian revolutionary I am interested in the revolutionary movement in all countries. For example, I am interested in South American political questions. I know them probably as well as I know German questions though I have never been in America. But then, that does not mean that if some parliamentary building in South America burns down, that I am to blame.

During the court proceedings here, at the trial, I have learned a great deal, and thanks to my political sense, I have picked up and understood many details. There were two basic points in the political situation at that period. The first was that the national-socialists were striving towards autocratic power, and the second, counter-balancing this, was the activity of the Communist Party directed towards establishing the united front of the workers. In my opinion, this has also been made clear during the court proceedings at the trial.

The national-socialists needed a maneuver to create a diversion, to distract attention from the difficulties existing within the nationalist camp, and to disrupt the united front of the workers. The "national government" required an impressive excuse for issuing its emergency decree of February 28 which abolished the freedom of the press, the inviolability of personal freedom, and which established a system of police repressions, concentration

camps and other measures for the struggle against the Communists.

Presiding Judge (cutting Dimitroff short): You have reached the very limit. You are making insinuations!

Dimitroff: I only want to cast some light on the political situation in Germany on the eve of the Reichstag fire, as I understand it.

Presiding Judge: This is not the place for insinuations against the government, or for statements which have been disproved long ago.

Dimitroff: The working class had to defend itself with all its power, and for this purpose the Communist Party tried to organize the united front, despite the resistance of Wels and Breitscheid, who have now raised a hysterical howl abroad.

Presiding Judge: You must pass on to your defense, if you want to do so. Otherwise you will not have enough time for it.

Dimitroff: I have stated earlier, that I agree with the indictment on one point. I must now confirm my agreement. This applies to the question as to whether Van der Lubbe set the Reichstag on fire himself or whether he had any confederates. The representative of the prosecution, Parisius, has stated here that the fate of the accused depends on the answer to the question as to whether Van der Lubbe had accomplices or not. To this I reply: no, a thousand times no! This argument of the prosecution is not logical. *I consider that Van der Lubbe really did not set fire to the Reichstag by himself.* On the basis of expert evidence and the data of the court proceedings, I have come to the conclusion that the act of setting fire to the large hall in the Reichstag was of a different type to that in the restaurant on the lower story, etc. The large hall was set on fire by other people and by other means. The acts of arson committed by Lubbe, and the incendiarism in the large hall only coincide in time, but are essentially different in other respects. The most probable thing is that Lubbe is an unthinking tool of these people, a tool who has been misused. Van der Lubbe does not say everything here. He is stubbornly keeping silence even now. The solution of this question does not decide the fate of the accused. Van der Lubbe was not alone, but neither Torgler nor Popoff nor Taneff nor Dimitroff were with him.

On February 26, Van der Lubbe in all probability met a certain person in Hennigsdorf and told him of his attempts at incendiarism in the Town Hall and the Palace. This person told him that all these fires were merely "child's play". The burning of the Reichstag during the elections would be the real thing. Thus the burning of the Reichstag arose out of a secret alliance between political madness

and political provocation. The ally representative of political madness is sitting in the prisoner's dock. The ally representative of political provocation remains at liberty. The stupid Van der Lubbe could not be aware that while he was making his awkward attempts to set fire to the restaurant, the corridor and the lower story, certain persons unknown were at the same time making use of the combustible fluid spoken of by Doctor Schatz, to set fire to the large hall. (Van der Lubbe begins to laugh. His whole body shakes with silent laughter. The attention of the public, the judges and the accused at this time is focused on Lubbe).:

Dimitroff (pointing to Lubbe): The unknown provocateur took care of all the preparations for the fire. This Mephistopheles has succeeded in disappearing without a trace. And here we have the stupid tool, the pitiful Faust, while Mephistopheles has disappeared. It was most probable that a bridge was established in Hennigsdorf between Lubbe and the representatives of police provocation, the agents and enemies of the working class.

The Chief Public Prosecutor, Werner, has said here that Van der Lubbe is a Communist. He has stated further that even if Van der Lubbe is not a Communist, he did his job in the interests of the Communist Party and in connection with it. This statement is not true.

Who is Van der Lubbe? Is he a Communist? By no means! Is he an anarchist? No! He is a de-classed worker, a mutinous lumpenproletarian, a creature who has been misused, who has been utilized against the working class. No! He is no Communist. He is no anarchist. There is not a single Communist in the world, not a single anarchist who would behave in court as Van der Lubbe is doing. Genuine anarchists perform senseless acts, but when they are in court they accept responsibility and explain their aims. If any Communist were to do such a thing, he would not remain silent in court, while innocent people stand in the prisoners' dock. No, Van der Lubbe is no Communist, he is no anarchist. He is a tool misused by fascism.

There can be nothing in common between this person, this misused tool who has been utilized to do harm to Communism and the chairman of the Communist fraction of the Reichstag, or the Bulgarian Communists.

I must remind you here that on the morning of February 28, Goering published a news-bulletin on the fire. In this news-bulletin, there is a statement to the effect that Torgler and Koenen fled from the Reichstag building at 10 p.m. This story was spread throughout the country. The statement added that the fire was the work of the Commu-

nists. At the same time the tracks of Van der Lubbe in Hennigsdorf were not followed up. The person who spent the night with Van der Lubbe in the police lodging house in Hennigsdorf has not been found.

Presiding Judge (cutting Dimitroff short): When do you intend to finish your speech?

Dimitroff: I want to speak for another half hour. I must express my opinion on this question. . . .

Presiding Judge: But you cannot keep on talking endlessly.

Dimitroff: During the three months of the trial, Mr. Presiding Judge, you have compelled me to keep silent, time after time, promising me that I should be able to speak in detail in my own defense at the end of the trial. Now the end of the trial has come, but despite your promise you are restricting my right to speak once again. The question of Hennigsdorf is extremely important. Washinsky, the man who spent the night with Van der Lubbe, has not been found. My proposal to seek him out was declared to be purposeless. The assertion that Lubbe was in Hennigsdorf together with Communists is a lie concocted by a national-socialist witness, the hairdresser Krawe. If Van der Lubbe had been in Hennigsdorf with some Communists, the fact would have been investigated long since. Mr. Presiding Judge, no one has been interested in seeking Washinsky out.

The person in plain clothes who came to the Brandenburg police station with the first news of the fire in the Reichstag has not been sought out, and remains unknown to the present day. Investigations were conducted on a false track. The national-socialist deputy, Dr. Albrecht who left the Reichstag immediately after the fire has not been questioned. The search for the incendiaries has taken place not where they really are to be found but where they do not exist. They have been sought for in the ranks of the Communist Party, and this is incorrect. This has made it possible for the real incendiaries to disappear. The decision was: as they did not arrest and did not dare to arrest the real incendiaries, they had better take other, so to speak "honorary" incendiaries of the Reichstag.

Presiding Judge: I forbid you to go on like this. I'll give you ten more minutes.

Dimitroff: I have the right to make proposals on the sentence, and to state my reasons. The Chief Public Prosecutor has regarded all the evidence of the Communists as unworthy of belief. I do not take up such a position. I cannot state, for example, that all the national-socialist witnesses are liars. I think that among the millions of national-socialists there are honest people as well. . . .

Presiding Judge: I forbid you to make such malicious attacks.

Dimitroff: But is it not remarkable that all the chief witnesses for the prosecution are national-socialist deputies, journalists and supporters of national-socialism? The national-socialist deputy, Karwahne, stated that he saw Torgler together with Van der Lubbe in the Reichstag building. The national-socialist deputy, Frei, stated that he saw Popoff together with Torgler in the Reichstag building. The national-socialist waiter Helmer stated that he saw Van der Lubbe together with Dimitroff. The national-socialist journalist Weberstadt saw Taneff together with Lubbe. What is this—accident? The witness Dr. Drescher, alias Zimmerman, an employee of the *Völkischer Beobachter* . . .

Presiding Judge (interrupting short): That has not been proved.

Dimitroff: . . . stated that Dimitroff was the organizer of the explosion in Sofia Cathedral, a point which has been disproved, and professed to have seen me in the Reichstag with Torgler. I state with absolute confidence that Drescher and Zimmerman are one and the same person. . . .

Presiding Judge: I reject that. It has not been proved.

Dimitroff: The police official Heller has quoted a Communist poem here from a book published in 1925, so as to prove that the Communists set fire to the Reichstag in 1933.

I will also take the liberty of quoting a poem from the great German poet Goethe:

Lerne zeitig Kluger sein,
Auf des Glückes grosser Wage
Steht die Zunge selten ein;
Du musst steigen oder sinken,
Du musst herrschen und gewinnen
Oder dienen und verlieren,
Leiden oder triumphieren,
Amboss oder Hammer sein.*

Yes, those who do not want to be the anvil must be the hammer!

The German working class, as a whole did not understand this truth either in 1918 or in 1923 or on July 20, 1932 or in January 1933. The social-democratic leaders Wels, Severing, Braun, Leipart,

* Learn in time to be wise;
The great balance of man's fate
Rarely rests at even weight.
You must either rise or sink,
You must dominate and win
Or be doomed to serve and lose,
Either suffer or to triumph,
Be the anvil or the hammer.

Grassmann, and their like are responsible for this. Now, of course, the German workers will be able to understand it.

A great deal has been said here about German justice and law, and I want to express my opinion on this matter. There is no doubt that the political combinations of the given moment and the ruling political tendencies always have an effect on the decisions of a court.

The Minister of Justice, Kerrl, is a competent witness for this court. I will quote him:

"The accepted idea of formally liberal law is that the idol of justice should be objectivity. This brings us to the source of the alienation between the people and justice, and in the last analysis it is always justice which is to blame for this alienation in the long run. What is objectivity at a time when the people are fighting for existence? Does the warring soldier or the warring army know anything of objectivity? The soldier and the army know only one thing, have only one idea, and admit only one question, namely, how to protect liberty and honor, how to save the nation.

"Thus, it is obvious that in a nation which is fighting a life and death struggle, justice cannot bow down to lifeless objectivity. The measures of the courts, the prosecutors and lawyers will be dictated by one idea alone, namely: what is most important for the nation, what will save the people?

"Not spineless objectivity, which signifies stagnation, and therefore fossilization, alienation from the people—no, all the actions and all the measures of the legal body as a whole and of each individual must be subordinated to the needs of the people, of the nation."

Thus, justice is a relative conception.

Presiding Judge: This has nothing to do with the question at issue. You must make your proposals.

Dimitroff: The Chief Public Prosecutor has proposed to acquit the accused Bulgarians since there is an insufficiency of evidence. But this does not satisfy me at all. The question is by no means so simple. This would not remove suspicion. No, it has been proved during the trial that we had nothing to do with the burning of the Reichstag. Therefore, there is no place for any suspicion whatsoever. We Bulgarians, like Torgler, must be acquitted not because there is an absence of incriminatory evidence, but because we, as Communists, have nothing in common and could not have anything in common with this anti-Communist act.

I propose the following decisions be made:

1. The High Court to recognize our innocence in this affair and to declare the accusation false. This applies to us all—to me, Torgler, Popoff and Taneff.

2. Van der Lubbe to be regarded as a tool used to harm the working class.

3. Those responsible for the unfounded charge against us to be called to account.

4. To recompense us at the expense of the persons responsible for time lost, for damage to our health and the sufferings we have undergone.

Presiding Judge: The Court will bear these so-called proposals of yours in mind when discussing the verdict.

Dimitroff: The time will come when these proposals will be carried out with interest. As for the full investigation of the burning of the Reichstag and the discovery of the real culprits, this, of course, will be done by the judgment of the people in the coming proletarian revolution.

In the 17th century, the founder of scientific physics Galileo was tried by the stern court of the Inquisition, which had to sentence him to death as a heretic. With the deepest determination and conviction he cried:

"*And nevertheless, the world revolves!*" And later this scientific truth became known to all mankind.

(The presiding judge sharply cuts Dimitroff short, stands up, gathers his papers and prepares to leave the court.)

Dimitroff (continuing): We Communists can now say no less firmly than old man Galileo:

And nevertheless it revolves! The wheel of history is turning, moving forward in the direction of Soviet Europe, in the direction of the world Union of Soviet Republics!

And this wheel, driven ahead by the proletariat under the leadership of the Communist International, cannot be stopped by destructive measures nor by prison sentences nor by death sentences. It turns and will continue to turn until the final victory of Communism.

(The police seize Dimitroff and force him violently into his seat.)

The presiding judge and his colleagues withdraw to consider whether Dimitroff may continue to speak. After discussion, the court returns and announces that Dimitroff is finally deprived of the right to speak.

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THE SITUATION IN GERMANY

By G. SMOLIANSKY

FIFTEEN months ago the German bourgeoisie, aiming to save themselves from proletarian revolution, placed the most savage terroristic fascist party of the bourgeoisie in power. The National-Socialist Party was at that time at the zenith of its demagoguery and its mass influence. To the glare of thousands of torches, crowds of the Berlin middle class and unemployed Storm Troopers, driven furious by the horrors of the crisis, marched past the President's palace. On the balcony, the "leader" himself, Adolph Hitler, held by the hand the man whom social-democracy had put in power to watch over the Weimar constitution, the East Prussian feudalst and the Kaiser's Field Marshal, Hindenburg, demonstrating to the latter the determination of the German people to have an "authoritative" government. Imitating the "iron chancellor" Bismarck, the "leader" greeted the demonstrators, intoxicated by lavish promises and unrestrained chauvinism, with the cry "The heavens salute our victories!"

The fascist bourgeoisie were not alone in announcing to the whole world that Marxism was already a "thing of the historic past", that the "Communist Party of Germany is dead", and that the "fascist regime would reign for 30,000 years", but using every loophole, all the social-democratic saviors of capitalism deafened the working masses with poisonous prophesies of a new epoch of "fascism and reaction".

But of course fascism was not fated to eliminate class contradictions, and to stride over the contradictions within decaying German capitalism in defiance of the whole of historic development. The advent of the fascist dictatorship to power in Germany was able to retard the victory of the proletarian revolution for a time, but the role of fascism, and at the same time its historic doom is precisely to be found in the fact that, in making a principle of the "totalitarian state" and the "nation" against the "struggle of classes", it *still more sharply lays bare the contradictions of the capitalist system and still more thoroughly digs a gulf between the classes.*

On the basis of a Marxist-Leninist analysis, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. in its resolution of April 1, 1933, showed the only possible outlook, namely, the revolutionary outlook, before the German working class.

"Every day will show with greater clearness the manner in which the masses who follow Hitler have been tricked. . . . The revolutionary upsurge in Germany will inevitably grow in spite of the fascist terror. The resistance of the masses to fascism is bound to increase. The establishment of an

open fascist dictatorship, by destroying all the democratic illusions among the masses and liberating them from the influence of social-democracy, accelerates the rate of Germany's development towards proletarian revolution." *

The more feverishly fascism has striven to "satisfy all classes", by plundering millions of taxpayers so as to throw subsidies running into billions to the manufacturers and agrarians, along with sops to isolated strata of the petty bourgeoisie who were promised the "restoration of economic independence", the more sharply the deep class contradictions show themselves, while at the same time the process of class differentiation in town and village has been intensified. After a year in power, German fascism has carried into effect an open dictatorship of the most predacious, most grasping monopolistic capital, such as the world has never seen. And the more fiercely the apparatus of the fascist terror operates, the more powerful is the supreme revolutionary struggle of the Communist Party of Germany impressed on the minds of the masses. After a year and a quarter of fascist dictatorship, the German Communist Party is acting as the only revolutionary force organizing the overthrow of the detested regime, and has accumulated enormous political capital. And however much the fascist government has tried to penetrate into the ranks of the working class so as with one blow to deprive Marxism in Germany of its life-source, the hatred of the working masses towards national-socialism has grown with every new day. The Leipzig battle of the fearless proletarian revolutionary Dimitroff against the fascist "court", and the stunning moral and political defeat of fascism was greeted enthusiastically by the entire mass of the German proletariat as their own victory. It could not be otherwise.

Hitler was able to come to power primarily because as a result of the treacherous policy of social-democracy the working class was *split within, and isolated without* from the petty bourgeoisie of town and village, and above all from the peasants. When he came to power, Hitler addressed himself to the strata which had helped him to surround the proletariat, in his famous "Four Year Program". The three big planks in this platform were:

a. "The salvation of the peasants in order to preserve the basis for the food and the vital foundations of the nation", so stated Hitler.

* *What Is Happening in Germany?*, Workers Library Publishers, p. 39.

b. "The creation of work for the unemployed."

c. "The struggle against the danger of inflation", in the direction of which the government of Papen and Schleicher had already made a move. "The protection of the currency", was embodied in the arsenal containing the chief slogans of the national-socialists, its purpose being to win the mass of the urban petty bourgeoisie, for whom the inflation of 1923 is undoubtedly the most terrible event they recollect over the entire post-war period.

In the *first period* of their power, the national-socialists feverishly hastened to secure the influence among the masses achieved as a result of their previous demagogy, so as to strengthen and concentrate the apparatus of State power, which they had seized. This was the period of "Gleichschaltung", of the political "unification" of Germany. The last relics of the various independent regions were liquidated. All other political parties of the bourgeoisie disappeared. The demagogy of the national-socialists even at this period rapidly faded. But fascism still industriously disguised the finance-capitalist character of its measures. It deceived the peasants in their expectation of receiving land and of being liberated from "debt slavery", but was still able to make demagogic use of the debt moratorium which it declared in the countryside and of the celebrated policy of "autarchy", which amounted to artificially raising the prices of farm products. By means of these measures, fascism sought to give the impression of the "united village family" as the main foundation of the "totality of the nation". It is noteworthy that the social-democrats, like all the opportunists who loudly announced the advent of a new era of fascism and reaction, accepted this fascist fiction as genuine fact. It is also a characteristic feature of the maneuvers of the national-socialists, that Hitler utilized his chief ally, Hugenberg, and the latter's Nationalist, mainly agrarian, Party, as the chief object of his demagogy, accusing the nationalists of aristocratic reaction, corruption, and depicting them as the main obstacle in the way of the "settlement" of the peasants. This slogan was to replace the old demagogic promises of a fundamental land reform.

Fascism also tried to utilize the first period of depression among the workers who were caught unprepared by the treachery of the social-democrats and the wide scope of the fascist terror, to immediately get the workers' mass organizations, and primarily the trade unions, into its hands, and to set up a mass basis for itself in the factories. By organizing a "national festival of labor" on May 1, and on the following day seizing the apparatus of the reformist trade unions, the leaders of German fascism, intoxicated with the speed at which the "unification" of the apparatus of the State and the bourgeois

parties was taking place, seriously harbored the illusion that it was possible for it to win the working class,—and to win it at lightning speed. The workers were assured that the system of wage agreements would remain inviolate. At the same time, fascism tried to fetter any outward activity displayed by the proletariat by officially prohibiting strikes under the threat of the sternest repression. But very soon a wave of movements in the factories in which many workers, formerly members of the National-Socialist Party, participated, compelled the fascists to realize the illusory nature of their attempts to bring the working class under their control. At this time, the social-democrats did not exist either as an organization or as agitators or propagandists. In these most difficult conditions, the Communist Party reorganized its work underground, displayed wonderful examples of mass proletarian heroism, and accumulated that political capital which was one of the most important factors later on in the transition to the beginning of a new revolutionary upsurge.

In respect to foreign affairs, this period was characterized by the practical isolation of Germany. All the surrounding bourgeois governments were scared by the aggressiveness of German national-socialism. In France and Poland the question of a preventive war was most vividly in evidence at this period. This isolation of Germany from the outer world in turn helped German fascism to keep up the chauvinist hysteria which it has unleashed.

A *new stage* began after the summer of 1933, the characteristic feature of which was primarily that it was the *beginning of a new revolutionary upsurge*. The social-democrats were still timidly in evidence, feeling out their old leading cadres. But the new moods and ideas among the masses compelled the social-democratic leaders living in other countries, to raise the question of the "revision" of their former policy, of the necessity of "neu beginnen", of "beginning anew". The Communist Party, which was reorganizing itself to meet the illegal situation, suffered severe losses just at this very time, thus giving rise to new hopes in the breasts of the social-fascists. The Communists, they reasoned, have cleaved the road, and we, social-democrats, will climb back on their shoulders to the masses who used to follow us. The Communist Party was faced with the question of directing the underground organizations towards mass work, of forming independent class trade unions, of attracting the masses of social-democratic workers. An influx of social-democratic workers began to make itself felt very palpably in the Communist organizations. A sectarian danger was disclosed in their fear of this influx.

In this period, national-socialism openly displayed itself as the *dictatorship of monopolist capital*. With

the aid of the government, cartelization reached enormous dimensions. In the literal sense of the term, a handful of capitalist robbers concentrate in their hands the basic commanding heights in German economy. A transition is taking place from political to economic "totality". All the economic organizations of the bourgeoisie are "unified". Fascism carries into practice the most sacred predatory dreams of the employers as to their right to be "masters in their own house", declaring the capitalist to be the "leader" of the factory at the head of a "united factory family". But at the same time, considerable illusions are still maintained regarding the "program for the creation of work", which is assisted by a fact which objectively favors fascism, namely, that its coming to power coincided with a certain alleviation of the world economic crisis and its passing from the lowest point to a depression (in Germany as well).

The Hitler government scatters government funds still more recklessly spending six billion marks on subsidies and gifts during its year in power, and of this sum, two billions went on the fulfilment of the "plan for finding work" which in reality was a program for preparing for war. This program of providing work is carried out first of all at the expense of lowering the standard of living of the working masses, by directly lowering wages, by introducing the shortened working week, by reducing social insurance, by forced labor, and by draining the hard-earned money belonging to the mass of taxpayers into the pockets of the employers. The clearest example of the predatory character of the fascist "drive against unemployment" is to be found in the situation existing in East Prussia, where the fascists are boasting that they have completely "liquidated" unemployment in this border district. During the month of October alone the industrialists and agrarians in this district received subsidies amounting to 3,124,000 marks. This means that if the fascists were to take it into their heads to carry their "drive" through on a similar scale throughout the whole of Germany, then they would have to hand out 500 million marks a month to the employers, or six billion marks for the year. These measures of the fascist government arouse a feeling of sympathy and a desire to imitate, among the entire international bourgeoisie. For instance, an article in the organ of French heavy industry, the *Journee Industrielle*, dated March 30, 1934, which gives a eulogistic estimate of Hitler's "drive against unemployment", is very noteworthy of the fascization of "democratic" France.

"In any case", it states, "almost everyone can see . . . the rebirth of the spirit of the family, property and economic independence [referring to the new position of the employers, G. S.] in a country which was permeated with collectivization

more than any other capitalist country was. This makes it impossible for us to give a sweeping condemnation of the German policy of struggle against unemployment, even though it had to be accompanied by big financial difficulties."

This "international solidarity" of the bourgeoisie takes on a further special interest because in essence all the economic measures of the fascist government are a concentrated form of carrying out *before* the war the things which the international bourgeoisie already considers necessary *during* war itself. It is not only a question of mass armaments before the war, of manipulating public opinion, but of *immediately* carrying out fundamental economic reconstruction in all spheres to conform to the needs of war and covering both industry and agriculture. Such a reorganization is being carried through in *all* capitalist countries. But in no single capitalist country is it being carried out to *such a degree* as in Germany. This is made essential by the whole economic and political position of the German bourgeoisie. Moreover, as distinct from 1914-18, the *private* interests of monopolist capital stand out much more openly and cynically now.

The "new labor regulations" liquidated even fascist trade unions, established unlimited power for the employer in the sphere of wages, and converted the factory into a barracks of the epoch of Frederick the Great. Although the new law only comes into force in June, the employers have already had time to make wide use of the new regulations for directly cutting wages. Official fascist statistics which boastfully talk of three million workers brought into industry in fifteen months, are at the same time compelled to record the absence of any increase in the total amount of paid wages, and in many cases, a direct reduction. The fascists themselves say that while, according to their figures, the number of unemployed receiving work from December 1932 to September 1933 was 1,700,000, the sum paid out in wages remained practically at one level. In its report for 1933 the Krupp Company states that during the year the number of workers increased by 7,762 while the sum paid out was reduced from 69.6 million marks to 67.4 millions. The report of the well-known Chemical Trust, the "I. G. Farbenindustrie", shows an increase in the number of workers employed by 35 per cent, while wages increased by only 1½ per cent.

The fascist press has been converted into a graveyard as far as information is concerned, and publishes nothing but empty and bombastic speeches by Hitler, Goebbels and all the endless great and small "leaders". But the government institutions are filled with memoranda from the employers uttering warnings as to the "dangerous ferment in the minds" of those

in the factories, and endless complaints against the "demagogy" even of the "labor front" which was formed by the police by reshuffling the fascist trade unions.

"The strivings of the national-socialists to eliminate class contradictions has remained *merely a wish* up to now. The general prohibition of strikes could only bring about the *removal of the outer manifestations of the struggle but could not remove their causes*. . . . *On the whole nothing has changed.*"

This, for example, is what is written by the manager of the Lignose Chemical Trust (working chiefly on war orders), in whose factories the workers were most carefully selected, so that in some cases 100 per cent of the workers are formally members of the National-Socialist Party.

The employers' appetites grow from day to day. The dreams of the capitalists may be gauged from an intimate conversation of a certain Ober-Regierungsrat, Dr. K., a big businessman, which took place on December 22, 1933:

"German economy is in a condition of most dangerous crisis. The entire program for creating work' as operated by the government will never be carried out. Sooner or later wages will have to be lowered again. And, however comical it may sound, in many respects we shall have to *go backwards 200 years*. And above all we shall have to lower habits of life *to the limit.*"

The employers regard any tempo legalizing the plunder of the workers as being too slow, and this gives rise to serious friction even with the representatives of the "labor front", who resort in the propaganda to the use of a certain dose of demagogy. In connection with their demagogic campaign "to reduce prices" which is being carried on by the "labor front" under the guidance of the notorious Doctor Ley, a number of employers' organizations, especially commercial organizations, have come out with a sharp criticism of the propaganda of the "labor front", while Hitler himself, in his speech at Munich on March 21, announced a "second drive against unemployment" and raised the question of lowering prices. The Reich Association of Wholesale and Foreign Trade characterizes the results of this slogan as follows:

"We must state that *the mere information in the press about such a campaign* has, according to the information at our disposal, caused a *certain condition of disquiet*. . . . In view of the exceptional resources at the disposal of the propaganda apparatus of the German 'workers' front', such an all-embracing campaign for the lowering of prices would cause *such a critical position in business that we consider that we have the right to draw attention to this immediately.*"

There is the further very significant fact characterizing the situation that the leader of the Berlin section of the "workers' front", Engel, who was the fascist personification of the inviolability of wage agreements, was dismissed recently. The employers are trying to get rid as quickly as possible of any external formalities which could in the slightest degree hinder the capitalist being "master in his own house".

On the other hand, a section of the unemployed have been taken into industry in one way or another. The unemployed who are outside the factory gates are trying above all to get jobs inside the factories. But when they find themselves in the surroundings of the present-day fascist factory jail, or working as serfs in the forced labor camps, they will with our aid be drawn into the common class front in the factory against the employers.

The fascist government compels the employers to engaged unemployed national-socialist workers first of all, and to throw out the old cadres who are all suspected, and not without reason, of "sympathy towards Marxism". The government has launched the slogan that all unemployed national-socialists who have a party card, running from No. 1 to No. 100,000, must immediately receive jobs. But even this cannot be done, because in the overwhelming majority the unemployed Storm Troops consist of unskilled workers, who moreover are dreaming of a better life now that their party is in power, while for the employers to lose their old cadres means to undertake a very unprofitable and risky experiment.

Thus fascism is twisting and turning in the effort to develop a mass basis for itself in the factories, since it is being stifled in the clutches of the old contradictions of the German bourgeoisie and of the new ones created by the fascist dictatorship.

The same is true of the *villages*. Though Hitler in his last speech still continued to talk of the decisive importance of the peasants, nevertheless the dream of the "united village family" has long since faded away. The Minister of National Economy, Schmidt, openly mocks at "liberation from the tyranny of interest". The period of the moratorium has not yet elapsed, but the government is already taking on itself the role of collector of current debts. Only those who have farms of not less than eighteen acres are considered to be "peasants". According to the new fascist "inheritance law" these farms may not be divided. This law has introduced the fiercest dissension into the peasant family, because a farm can only be left to one heir, while all the others are doomed to pauperization and hopeless unemployment in circumstances when the crisis is on. At the same time, enormous exasperation has been caused among the agricultural proletariat, for, in addition to the detachments from the "forced labor" camps who have

been sent on agricultural work, 200,000 unemployed have been sent into the countryside as so-called "auxiliary workers", while the labor of the latter is paid for literally at the rate of 5 pfennigs a day and extremely limited food and "working garments". Thus, instead of the "united village family", fascism has called into existence an unprecedentedly *keen differentiation in the villages*. Fascism is still trying to maneuver while continuing to incite the farm laborers against the unemployed whom fascism itself has driven into the countryside, and while inciting the village against the town. But the new features, as compared with the previous period, are that in implanting a new "strong peasant" in the villages based on the inheritance law, fascism is trying to tear the middle peasant away from the united front with the poor peasants and the farm laboring village elements against the big landowners which it used demagogically before coming to power. It is trying to tear them away so as to get them into closer contact with the kulaks and the landlords, and to establish for itself, even on a narrow basis, a smoother and firmer basis in the villages.

At the same time fascism is directly attracting new strata of the petty bourgeoisie to the State's pork barrel, thus attaching them strongly to the fascist State. The doors are opened to all the greed, vanity and pride of the petty middle-class, intensified in addition by anti-Semitism and chauvinistic intoxication. The abundance of appointments in the unified government offices, in the race-sterilized educational institutions, scientific institutions, editorial offices of newspapers, etc., has given wings to the hopes of the army of declassed petty-bourgeois elements who are thus liberated for a time from the realization that they have no perspectives and that they are crushed down by the capitalist crisis. But, as was the case in the villages, in the "program for creating work", in the predatory method of managements, the sops and appointments had in the long run to become more and more *exhausted*. And ahead there is the possibility of *inflation*, the terrible scourge of the urban petty bourgeoisie. And the further matters go, the more does dissatisfaction grow among these circles. The Swiss paper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* which openly sympathizes with the national-socialists, describes the feeling in the towns as follows:

"When you listen to what is being said among the people, you immediately notice that even in personal conversations people are very reserved in expressing their opinion. . . . Only women talk and criticize among their nearest acquaintances. . . . The intellectuals have only partly been won over, a fact which frequently causes outbursts of anger among the national-socialists."

The petty bourgeoisie of the towns were most

deeply affected by the military chauvinist propaganda of the national-socialists. And on the foreign political arena it was necessary to veil carefully the militant slogans of the first period of power and to maneuver, utilizing the contradictions of the competing imperialists. The first line taken by the fascist dictatorship, namely, to organize a united front of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Union, and to take the lead of the counter-revolutionary military campaign, and on this basis to explode the Versailles system, did not succeed. The next attempt, namely, a head-on attack on Austria so as to cut the Versailles knot there, was also a failure. Hence the transition to *more complex maneuvers* calculated on a longer period. On the other hand, a preventive war against Germany did not take place because British imperialism did not want to strengthen the position of the French bourgeoisie on the Continent, because Italian imperialism, which bars the path of fascist Germany to the Near East, was at the same time by no means interested in further strengthening French imperialism. German fascism utilized these contradictions, and to a certain extent was able to break through the vassal system of French imperialism in the east and south-east of Europe (Poland—a breach in the Little Entente). In reality nothing but territorial borders have remained from the Versailles Treaty. German fascism is also trying to create a basis for a temporary agreement with French imperialism (unsuccessfully, it is true), and is trying in every way to soothe the frightened French bourgeoisie. "Not a single intelligent Frenchman", writes the newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, in an inspired article entitled "Germany and France", "will seriously believe that France is dealing with the Hitler of 1923, who merely talks differently now, owing to his cunning, but secretly thinks as he thought formerly."

It is clear that this need to maneuver requires a certain re-adaptation to secure a *more solid mass basis*, the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie included.

In these conditions, fascist Germany at the beginning of 1934 found itself face to face with a serious commercial and financial crisis. With no colonies, and no foreign monopolist markets, having by its policy of "autarchy" secured the declaration of economic war on itself by the neighboring countries, with no exports of capital and at the same time an unceasing leakage of gold and the currency fund, the national-socialists were bound to be brought to this crisis very quickly as the result of their predatory management. *This was the first serious open blow at the economic policy of fascism*. The impossibility of "autarchy" for capitalism has been demonstrated in practice, as plainly as possible. As the liberal *Prager Presse* stated humorously, "autarchy came in sooner than its authors wanted". The foreign trade

balance of Germany which was favorable in 1928 became unfavorable for the first time in 1934. While the balance of foreign trade of the countries competing against Germany improved somewhat during the last year, the reverse took place in Germany. The lowering of wages and the standard of living of the masses, which contracted the home market still further during the last year, could not be real basis for extensive dumping on the world market. Furthermore, the prices of the raw material imported by German industry (textile raw material, non-ferrous metals, etc.), which fell during the crisis years more than the finished products exported by Germany, rose again during the last year, thus depriving Germany of a big advantage. If the import of raw material is reduced for a long time or even if the import of some raw materials is stopped, this means that the whole "program for finding work" will be endangered and a new wave of unemployment will be caused. Nevertheless, the national-socialist government has to a certain degree already been compelled to take such steps, and has for a time completely stopped the issue of foreign currency to importers of textile raw material and copper, in general limiting the quotas of foreign currency by one third. The coffers of the government store are empty of foreign currency. The foreign currency fund in April 1934 was only 6 per cent of what it was in 1930.

Thus inflation is knocking at the gates of fascist Germany. And this is the case despite the fact that the fascist government has not made its reparations payments, that the foreign debts of Germany have shrunk by $4\frac{1}{2}$ billions owing to the fall of the dollar and pound, and that expenditure on social insurance has been considerably reduced. At the same time, the budget for 1934 has in view a tremendous increase of expenditure, primarily military expenditure. The increase in the budget of the war ministry is to amount to 220 million marks, and of the ministry of aviation to 132 millions. A new section covering the maintenance of the storm troopers is to take 250 millions while 190 millions are to be spent on "voluntary labor service". This means that the commercial and currency difficulties are being considerably increased by the difficulties facing the state budget.

What is the way out?

A struggle is going on between the contradictory interests in the camp of the German bourgeoisie around this question, a struggle carefully concealed up to the present under the fascist unification. These contradictions cover different spheres, contradictions between industrialists and agrarians, export and import capital, monopolists and non-monopolists, creditors and debtors. Inflation or no inflation—such is the main theme of the discussion. The national-socialist

leaders who have been declaiming for a year about the salvation of German currency by the fascist regime, are still continuing officially to curse the inflation of the "November criminals". But a note is already to be discerned in their speeches, preparing for the possibility of a new inflation even though it be a partial one. In his speech at Munich, Hitler stated that "we shall never allow such an inflation as took place in 1923". All the speeches of the ministers and economists emphasize the necessity of increasing exports, while the report of the Empire Credit Association openly raised the question of a "change of currency". Finally, the economists-theoreticians are giving ideological arguments to prove the value of inflation for the entire German people.

"Measures for devaluation are neither for nor against any separate strata", writes the theoretical economic organ of national-socialism, the *Deutsche Volkswirtschaft* (March 1933). "And if devaluation is applied as an economic measure in connection with the market situation, it is . . . a measure for the general good, used in the struggle against the crisis and thus serving in the interest of all strata."

On the other hand, banking capital is in the forefront in not being interested in inflation. The present president of the Reichsbank, Schacht, who is a representative of heavy industry, openly opposes inflation and also takes his argument from national-socialist "ideology". He directly polemizes against Hitler's speech when, at the end of March 1934 he says outright in the *Rheinisch-Mänsche Ökonomische Zeitung*:

"A thing which is incompatible with the spirit of national-socialist Germany and deserving of stern resistance, is the fact that irresponsible people at the present day are trying to discredit the policy of the Reichsbank by the propaganda of devaluation and of such plans, the fulfilment of which, possibly, would be of use to our foreign trade for a short time, but which would deal a heavy blow at German national economy as a whole."

As a way out, Schacht proposes to demand a "breathing space" at the forthcoming conference of creditors in Berlin in April, for private debts to be counted as political ones, since Germany had to pay instalments on reparations. Schacht plans to go to America after the conference to seek credits for the purchase of raw materials. By restricting the issue of foreign currency certificates to importers, by strict control over raw material, by restricting the export of German bank notes and a number of similar measures, Schacht hopes to bring about an alleviation of the currency difficulties.

The near future will show whether Schacht can

carry out these measures and whether the fascist government can avoid inflation. Rumors are current of the resignation of Schacht. In any case, one thing is beyond question. Inflation is fraught with much worse results for Germany than for Great Britain or America. Germany has only one-fourteenth of the gold and valuta backing of Great Britain and one-forty-fifth of that of America. The political consequences of inflation for Germany are immeasurable. It is characteristic of Germany's present situation that there is unrest and discontent almost everywhere except in the directly interested circles. As political life does not exist openly, it finds external expression in the most varied forms, to the point of struggle on the religious field, which is taking on an ever more acute character (the Easter message of the pope, the arrest of 400 clergymen). There is as yet no open movement of the masses against the fascist dictatorship. But fascism, which is leading Germany to catastrophe, may find itself faced with an accelerated process of the transformation of its enormous economic difficulties into such a movement. This is why fascism, while in any case gradually preparing for inflation, is at the same time so afraid of it.

And this is why the fascists are hysterically sounding the alarm as regards the increasing number of "critics". The tricky demagogue Goebbels, who is the one who listens most keenly to the sentiments of the masses, at a meeting of the Berlin functionaries of the national-socialists bitterly sneered at the "February" national-socialists, who fancied themselves to be the "old guard". For the real old guard will be the chief support of the fascist government "in case hard times come again, when the enormous crowds of the present hangers-on will melt away". The national-socialists are having to admit to the masses bit by bit that they have deceived them.

"We must have the courage to strip our ideals of their romance", said Goebbels in his speech, "because the further we are from the ideal, the easier do we find it to clothe it in romantic coverings, and the nearer we get to the ideal the less romantic it becomes."

This is a direct political call to change the line pursued by German fascism to one operating on a mass basis which is less wide but more reliable. Baldur von Schirach, the leader of the Hitlerite youth, stated this quite openly on February 21, at a meeting of leaders of the Berlin section:

"The time for romance and chatter, the time for propaganda and recruiting has gone by . . . ; It is no longer a matter of leading millions, but of educating the Germans who in the future will form the cadres leading the nation."

The increasing ferment among the masses and the

growth of the political influence of the C.P.G., signalized in all the speeches of the "leaders" and specialists in police affairs, such as Hitler, Goebbels, Goering, Diehls, Hess, confront the German Communist Party, which is preparing the revolutionary overthrow of the fascist dictatorship, with the task of more rapidly rallying the masses in town and village. This means a very different scale of mass work than that which has been used so far. Every omission in mass work is now converted into political lagging behind which threatens the entire work of preparing the decisive revolutionary struggles for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Fascism is striving hard to get hold of the factories. It is here where the decisive preliminary battle between Communism and fascism will take place, and it will depend primarily on the strength of Communism in the factories how soon the hatred of the masses of the workers towards fascism will grow into open mass actions.

Many movements are taking place. Despite the severe repression there is also an open strike struggle, news of which only gets through from time to time. During only the last one and a half or two months we know of eleven cases of the strike struggle, including the strike of a thousand railway workers in the railway workshops in Cologne, the workers of the A.E.G. Electric Company at Treptow, the foundry shops of Krupps, the Opel automobile workers. Even the social-democratic press which, in order to justify itself, throws the blame for fascism coming to power on the "passivity of the masses", has been compelled to recognize a growth of the activity of the masses. The "Left" social-democratic organ *New Front* in a polemic against the Communists, writes:

"Illegal Communist literature bring news of a mass of strikes. It is not true! These strikes are short and passive. It is true that discontent is growing. And even at the labor exchanges people are talking, and this was not the case previously."

The social-democrats practically do not exist now as an organized force hindering the active class struggle in the factories. But the social-democratic workers who are thirsting for an active struggle against fascism, who are disappointed with Weimar democracy, who have come to hate their leaders, are growing more and more in numbers. The new feature is that the Communist Party of Germany has for the first time penetrated right into the midst of the social-democratic working masses. At the same time, social-democratic ideology and especially the traditions of the Social-Democratic Party still maintain a firm hold over considerable masses of social-democratic workers, and so hinders them from immediately joining the ranks of the Communists even though they leave the Social-Democratic Party.

And this dictates the first and most important task

of the mass work of the Communist Party of Germany, namely, *to win these masses over to Communism.*

This means:

a. *A more intense struggle against social-democracy; a clear line of principle in this struggle, and, that the Communist Party must show itself to the social-democratic workers.*

b. *A bold approach to the social-democratic workers; sectarianism in respect to the social-democratic workers must be definitely overcome.*

Fear of the social-democratic workers who in some localities form almost half of the lower Party organizations of the Communist Party of Germany even now, who are a most important reserve for a new inflow of forces to the Communist organization, and who represent a most important factor for strengthening the position of the Communist Party of Germany in the factories, may lead to the self-isolation of the underground organization which is heroically carrying on illegal revolutionary work, but which is not yet able to organize the broadest masses. This *sectarian fear* is expressed above all by the fact that frequently the Party organizations do not show sufficient confidence in the social-democratic workers who are coming to the Party *in masses*. Frequently voices are heard to the effect that our task now is not "to run after the social-democratic workers", but "to gather the forces of Communism". This is a very improper contrast. The mass unrest is manifested not only in the fact that an ever larger number of social-democratic workers are coming over to Communism, but contacts with the Communist organizations are being sought by numerous elements who were in the Party at one time or another, but who left it for various reasons or who passively dropped out during the first period of the fascist dictatorship. However, the basic criterion for a member of an underground Communist organization is above all *his reliability in the struggle against the fascist dictatorship.* Therefore the social-democratic workers who carry on an active struggle against the fascist dictatorship, and who come to our Party as the only revolutionary workers' Party, the Party of the proletarian dictatorship, are not only desirable members of the revolutionary proletarian vanguard, but they should be drawn into the most active participation in the work of the underground Communist organization.

This sectarian fear of the social-democratic workers nourishes direct Right opportunist deviations. Under the pretense of "gathering the forces of Communism", and "utilizing the experience of the old revolutionaries", efforts are made here and there to form blocs from the top with despicable renegades and Brandlerites who "whatever you may say, were

Communists at one time", and consequently "are better" than social-democratic workers.

It is plain that incalculable harm may be dealt to the cause of Communism by this conciliation to the social-fascist hangers-on who are doing everything in their power to discredit the Party and help the social-democratic leaders to restrain the social-democratic workers from coming over to Communism.

For instance, it is absolutely impermissible that there should be such a sectarian-opportunist isolation of the social-democratic workers coming to the Communist Party as that which took place in one of the lower organizations. For a number of months, Communist workers, ex-members of the Social-Democratic Party, paid their membership dues *collectively*, thus forming, as it were, *an organization within that organization.*

But in order to bring the social-democratic workers in masses to Communism and to ensure that the revolutionary activity of the social-democratic workers and their hatred towards social-democracy will rapidly rise to the level of *Communism*, it is necessary that the social-democratic workers at the same time see the *revolutionary face of the Communist Party*, that there be a tremendous increase in the *struggle against social-democracy* and an exposure of the *counter-revolutionary nature of all its "Left" maneuvers.* Under the growing pressure of the masses, even the official leaders of the social-democrats who are living abroad, in the persons of Wels and Stampfer, have worked out a "new program" which is intended to daze the social-democratic workers with its "revolutionary" phraseology.

The aim is the same, namely, *the restoration of bourgeois democracy, i.e., the saving of capitalism.* But in view of the impression created among the social-democratic workers by the pitiful bankruptcy of the entire policy of German social-democracy, this program speaks of the "revolutionary" overthrow of fascism, of the period of "revolutionary dictatorship". However, when advancing the slogan of the "revolutionary dictatorship", this program makes the reservation that this dictatorship (as distinguished from that of the Bolsheviks) will have to clear the path for the restoration of democracy. While putting forward the slogan of the "revolutionary overthrow" of fascism, this program does not use a single word to show *how* the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat will be organized. On the contrary, the old social-fascist theory (the theory held by the entire social-fascist camp up to and including Seydewitz, Brandler and Trotsky) regarding a whole "period of fascism and reaction", the "self-exhaustion" of the fascist dictatorship, is calculated not on the organization of the struggle but on a spontaneous movement of the masses against the hated regime, and this theory remains at the center of the new program.

"If the internal contradictions of fascism, if the increasing class contradictions in capitalism develop, if discontent and disappointment shake the mass basis of national-socialist rule, if oppositional trends arise and spontaneous mass movements begin, then the task of the revolutionary elite will be to deepen these contradictions in the consciousness of the masses, to direct their development, to influence their purposefulness."

The events in Austria had a tremendous influence on the German workers and especially on the social-democratic workers, showing them on the one hand the only revolutionary path which can avert the fascist dictatorship, and, on the other hand, the complete bankruptcy of the last "reserve of honor of German socialism". This, together with the ever increasing unrest among the masses in Germany in general, compelled a number of social-democratic leaders abroad, and especially the notorious "Left" group of Seydewitz, to resort to still more "Left" demagoguery, to mimic the slogans of the Communist Party and at the same time to increase their campaign of slander against Communism under the cover of hypocritical phrases on unity. The late leader of the reformist employees' trade union, Aufhaeuser, a former member of the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, who has the reputation of being the most "Left" member of the Central Committee, openly states that "the program of Wels and Stampfer is insufficient, because what social-democratic worker will now believe the bankrupt leaders?". The group of "Lefts" around Seydewitz, in connection with the smashing of social-democracy in Austria, the "model country of democratic socialism", "repudiates democracy, launches the slogan of the armed insurrection, the dictatorship of the proletariat, Soviet Power, the restoration of the unity of the working class", but of course not through the Communist Party, but through the "gathering of all the honest supporters of unity in all the workers' parties", who will "form free centers of unity, and as a result will create the only *single* revolutionary party of the proletariat". Thus from the original Trotskyite-social-fascist slogan: "All parties are bankrupt" (including both the Social-Democratic and the Communist Parties), which was unable to serve as a barrier to prevent the social-democratic workers coming over to Communism, "Left" and "extreme Left" social-fascism is passing over to the most cunning methods of struggle against Communism and to a struggle for a "breathing space" for social-fascism.

In order to expose this policy of social-fascism in the eyes of the social-democratic workers, Communists must show them *in practice how to carry out the revolutionary united front from below*. The social-fascists of all kinds are trying to attach themselves to the enormous political gains earned by the Com-

munist Party in its heroic struggle during the last year. Therefore, they are trying at all costs to force "blocs with leaders" on to the Communists, and are exerting pressure on unreliable elements, as the wolf does in Krylov's well-known fable, which cries "let us forget bygone; the past is finished with". Such, for example, is the slogan of the Judas Brandlerites. The social-fascists, scattered and unorganized, are most insistent in their proposal to publish *joint newspapers*. It is clear that the aim is the same, namely that should social-democratic workers get the impression that the "revolutionary character" of social-democracy is being "restored", they will lose the impulse to come over immediately to the ranks of Communism.

The second important question of mass work is *trade union work*. The Communist Party of Germany correctly adopted the strategic line of forming mass independent class trade unions. The experience of fifteen months of fascist dictatorship has shown that even the small Red trade unions, of metal workers, miners, etc., which existed before the coming of the fascist dictatorship, have nevertheless been able to hold firm, and continue their work in underground conditions, while the A.D.G.B., with its 4,000,000 members, has collapsed like a colossus with feet of clay. The social-fascists are here also mimicking us, stealing the slogan of independent unions, but by this they understand *not an active organization* but the *gathering of the cadres of old trade union bureaucrats*, who will form an organized nucleus for the regenerated trade unions should a spontaneous upsurge of the masses and the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship take place. Of course, there is no need to imagine that in underground conditions it is possible to have trade unions with hundreds of thousands of members. But the thing that is *possible and necessary* for the Communist vanguard to do is to form *real class* underground trade union organizations which will be *connected with the masses* in the factories and labor exchanges, which will really *lead all the economic movements of the masses*, and carry out for the Party the role of transmission belts to the masses.

This presupposes first of all the wide development of work in all the *existing mass organizations* of the workers formed by fascism. And this is precisely the *weakest link* in the work of the Communist Party, while without work in the fascist factory mass organizations, there cannot and will not be mass independent class trade unions. And without the most active participation in all questions of factory life, even in the way they are raised by the fascist government, there cannot be serious work in the fascist mass organizations. For example, the Communists must participate most actively in the campaign now being carried on by the fascists for the elections of the so-called "factory trustees" which are a bastard

substitute for factory committees. Any boycott or passivity in this campaign would mean separation from the vital questions of the masses. In exposing this fascist system of "trustees" as direct agents in the hands of the employer-"leaders", the Communists must carry on this campaign under the slogan of free elections, putting forward the candidature of workers who are popular among the masses and can defend the interests of the workers, as an offset to the candidates officially nominated by the employers. It is clear that the Communists must in all cases call on the workers to vote against the lists proposed by the employers.

This presupposes a completely different scale of work among the *national-socialist workers*. Open expressions of discontent and disappointment are becoming more and more frequent among the national-socialist workers. Hundreds of workers leave meetings of the "workers' front", fierce clashes take place between members of the Stahlhelm and the national-socialists in the factories. There have been many cases in which the Storm Troops, even during open demonstrations against the fascist government (as on January 7 near Kokburser Hills in Berlin) looked on these demonstrations in silence. This work must be converted from the work of the apparatus into *part of the mass work* by gathering all the oppositional elements among the national-socialist workers.

Finally, *a decisive change must be brought about in the mass work of the Young Communist League.*

Strikes and mass movements of protest in the labor service camps have shown what favorable soil exists for mass work among the youth. The youth who wander about without work, who have not gone through the hell of the imperialist war, easily fall into the clutches of the nationalist and social demagogogy of fascism. But the fascist dictatorship has converted the whole life of the youth into an outright barrack-convict regime in return for a semi-prison ration and cheap parades. Here the struggle against sectarianism is literally demanded by the practice of life. The Young Communist League as a mass organization will grow and will be able to organize the working youth for the struggle against the fascist dictatorship only if it liquidates at the greatest possible speed its present impermissible isolation from the masses of the working youth who are in the Hitlerite youth leagues.

Such are the basic problems of the mass work of the Communist Party at the present stage. Only such mass work will be able to ensure that the Communist Party of Germany will carry out its role as the organizer of the proletarian revolution against fascism, and for the dictatorship of the working class. "Only a strong proletarian revolutionary Party can prepare and win power." (Stalin at the Seventeenth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union). For this there must be a clear *revolutionary aim, firm revolutionary will and the revolutionary ability to mobilize the masses.*

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WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES OF THE COMMUNIST PRESS IN CUBA

By BIJOWSKY

"A NEWSPAPER", wrote Lenin, "is not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator, but also a collective organizer".

But is the central organ of the Communist Party of Cuba, *El Trabajador*, and the *Bandera Roja*, which later replaced it, fulfilling this task which is of such especial urgency during the revolutionary struggles?

It is carrying on active concrete propaganda of the decisions of the Fifth Plenum of the C.C. of the C.P. of Cuba, it is struggling persistently against the Cuban variety of Trotskyism, the so-called *Juncism*, against chauvinism and race theories ("the Negroes are a lower race"), it gives information from the localities, factories, workshops, plantations, about strikes, demonstrations and other revolutionary actions, deals with the partial revolutionary struggles, and links them up with the general perspective of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution, with the struggle for the workers' and peasants' Soviet Power.

In the main, the central organ copes with its task. It really rallies the masses politically, organizes them for struggle, and in a number of cases issues slogans that are appropriate to the level and the tasks facing the mass movement.

At the same time there is a series of very big shortcomings in the paper, which partly reflect the general weakness of the C.P. of Cuba, but in the main depend on the blunders, shortcomings and mistakes of the editors.

A serious political mistake in the paper is that it did not carry on an explanatory campaign regarding the opportunist mistake made by the C.C. of the C.P. of Cuba at the time of the development of the August struggles against Machado, after the C.C. had admitted these mistakes. At that time the C.C. considered that the armed struggle against Machado would lead directly to imperialist intervention, and that the proletariat of Cuba was not ready for this struggle, and so called on the workers to stop the general strike at a time when it had already grown into a spontaneous armed insurrection. Later the C.C. admitted and exposed this mistake, as a mistake of a clearly Menshevik type, but this found no reflection on the pages of the central organ. A criticism of this serious political mistake and of its social-democratic roots was entirely absent from the paper.

The paper also made serious mistakes in connection with the propaganda and popularization of the basic political slogan of the Party, namely the struggle

for Soviets in Cuba as organs of the revolutionary-democratic workers' and peasants' government. In the article "What Are the Soviets? When Should They Be Organized? What Is Their First Activity?" which appeared though somewhat behind time, the paper considers that the primary task of the Soviets is the formation of two commissions: (1) A commission to immediately improve the living conditions of the population. (2) A commission to defend the workers' and peasants' government. This restriction of the tasks facing the Soviets is all the more important, because the Soviets which were formed in various places in Cuba, clearly did not know "what to begin with", remained inactive, until they were broken up by the troops.

A positive feature in this article is that it gives concrete directives as to where exactly the sharpening of the class struggle is most favorable for the formation of Soviets.

Having launched the slogan of the formation of a workers' and peasants' government, the Party published a short program on what this government would give the various strata of the population, namely the workers, peasants, unemployed and petty bourgeoisie. However, having published the program, the Party press did not propagate and did not popularize it further, did not make it the starting point for a systematic and clear explanation to the masses as to what the Soviets could give them in the near future, what concretely is meant by revolutionary way out of the crisis, proposed by the Communist Party.

In addition to this, in its propaganda for Soviets, the paper directly reflects some mistakes of the C.C. Thus, one of the manifestos of the C.C. published in the paper, says:

"Workers! Peasants! In those places where our mass struggle has reached the level of civil war, i.e., the armed struggle against the ruling classes under the leadership of the proletariat and the Communist Party, fraternize with the soldiers, and in those places where there are no local governments, organize Soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers deputies." (*El Trabajador*, No. 8.)

This formulation is entirely incorrect and, for that matter does not correspond to the correct tactics actually conducted by the Party. The fraternization of the soldiers with the revolutionary masses must be organized and is actually organized, not only when

the struggle of the proletariat and peasantry has already reached the level of civil war, but at every opportunity, on every occasion when the soldiers come in contact with the masses of the people, especially during strikes, demonstrations and mass actions of the proletariat. In this underestimation of the importance of fraternization, as a means of disintegrating the old bourgeois-landlord army, there can be felt the general weakness of the military work of the Party, the insufficient struggle for the mass of the soldiers.

It is just as incorrect to call for the formation of Soviets, only in those places where there is no local government, *i.e.*, only in places where power is already slipping out of the hands of the ruling exploiting classes. This directly leads to the theory of the automatic doom of the bourgeois-landlord regime, to the passive expectation of its break-up. Of course, it is easiest of all to seize power in places where the regime of the bourgeois-landlord dictatorship has been most weakened. But this by no means does away with the task of the organization of Soviets, as the organs of preparation for the seizure of power, as the organs of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses for the struggle for power.

The Party press pays a fair amount of attention to questions of work in the army, and hardly a single manifesto of the Party has appeared which has not contained an appeal to the soldiers and sailors.

Here is an example of such an appeal:

"Soldiers and sailors! You are used by the exploiting classes of Cuba against the toiling people and the Communist Party. You are being poisoned with vilest patriotism and are being sent to shoot down workers' demonstrations. Refuse to disperse workers' demonstrations and meetings! Fraternize with the workers and peasants! Form committees of soldiers and sailors! Join the Communist Party! Form Party cells in the barracks and on board ship!"

The work of the C.P. of Cuba in the army is, however, still insufficient although it has already produced no small results. Throughout the whole period of the revolutionary events there have been very many cases of fraternization between soldiers and the workers and peasants. It was not for nothing that the American Ambassador in Cuba, Welles, demanded that 1,500 soldiers be sent from the U.S.A., considering that the army was completely demoralized and unreliable.

The task facing the C.P. of Cuba is not to limit itself to sending manifestoes to the army, but to carry on day-to-day organizational work inside the various units, by forming Party cells and sailors' ship committees. With regard to this, the first step has already been taken. The Party has renewed the pub-

lication of the organ of the Communist soldiers' and sailors' cells—*Continella Roja* (*The Red Guard*), which deals with the situation in the army, and popularizes the tasks facing the Communists, and the character and significance of the Red Army, etc.

El Trabajador carries on a struggle to revolutionize strikes, correctly seeing in strikes, not only a means of struggle for current partial demands, but also a powerful weapon for class education, *i.e.*, the political education of the proletariat.

The paper writes:

"The very situation dictates the necessity for strikes of a political character, so as to show the workers, in the process of the economic struggles, the class nature of the bourgeois-landlord government." (*El Trabajador*, No. 8.)

Bandera Roja, which has begun to appear instead of *El Trabajador*, pays much attention to strike struggles, and publishes the articles of worker correspondents from the factories and plantations, dealing with the strikes themselves and the mass movements which arise in direct connection with them. For instance, in Baguanos (of Oriente Province), a Red Guard was formed during the strikes which recruited 120 men while the work of the Y.C.L. improved and a demonstration of 59 Pioneers took place with demands for support for the strikes.

A big shortcoming is the fact that the majority of the letters are not used by the paper to sum up the strikes nor does it deal with their positive and negative sides, a feature necessary to secure the exchange of experience and the education of the masses.

There is no doubt that by using the tactics of the united front, the Party has secured great successes in the winning of the reformist trade unions, the majority of the former reformist unions having joined the revolutionary Confederation of Labor. But the influence of the reformists has undoubtedly been preserved not only in the unions which have remained reformist, but also in the unions which joined the revolutionary C.N.O.C. (National Confederation of Labor of Cuba). It is impermissible, therefore, for the press not to pay any attention to the questions of the tactics of the united front, the exposure of the role of the petty bourgeois A.B.C., the work of the reformist and revolutionary trade unions and the work among the youth and the students. The struggle against survivals and influences, against reformist illusions, is far from being finished. The successes achieved must be consolidated. Trade union work is still one of the most important spheres of work facing the Party. It must be intensified. Particularly in Cuba, work among the youth and students is of especially great importance. It is sufficient to follow all the events taking place in Cuba, beginning with the overthrow of Machado, to be convinced of the

high political activity and great importance of the petty bourgeois students. The press pays little attention to the questions of anti-imperialist struggle, and in this regard the former mistakes made by the Party can be felt. Insufficient attention is also paid to the question of the struggles of the peasants, their conditions and the Party work among them.

The press devotes some space to the question of work among the unemployed. One of the issues publishes the demands connected with the unemployed movement as put forward by the Communist Party. These include:

1. The demand for social insurance.
2. The demand for free transport when searching for work.
3. The demand for support for the unemployed and all the members of their families.
4. The demand that the struggle of the unemployed be linked up with the struggle of the employed, in support of strikers, etc.

The central organ of the Party also pays serious attention to the national question. Some months ago a new organization of the fascist type, the A.R.N. (Association of National Recovery) was formed in Cuba, which aims at spreading the propaganda of white Cuban nationalism and chauvinism.

The Party press rapidly and correctly reacted to this propaganda and published articles exposing the real class nature of this organization, and is carrying on a struggle for the right of the oppressed nationalities to self-determination to the point of separation. This slogan was properly concretized in the struggles of the Party and the Party press for the right of the Negroes in the Province of Oriente to self-determination.

The Communist paper exposes the policy of the bourgeois-landlord clique of Cuba and calls on all toilers, black and white, to form a united front in the struggle against this criminal campaign, and to achieve economic, political and social equality for the Negroes. The shortcoming in this respect is the fact that the central organ of the C.P. does not pay attention to the exposure of the national reformist leaders of various Negro organizations (clubs, associations, etc.), whereas the influence of the latter among the Negro toilers of Cuba is still fairly strong.

The cause of the Cuban revolution is the cause of the world proletariat. Every item of information showing that the strikers and the struggling workers and peasants of Cuba are not isolated in their struggle, that the toilers of other countries are thinking of them, that others like them are carrying on the struggle in their own countries against their own bourgeoisie, supports their fighting spirit.

Therefore, the Party press must pay more attention to the publication of the information supplied by the Communist Parties of other countries (naturally

without overloading the paper thereby) regarding solidarity with the Cuban toilers (the appeal of the C.P.s. of Mexico and U.S.A. were insufficiently utilized) and also regarding the development of revolutionary events in other countries. It is impermissible that information on the Leipzig trial and the heroic conduct of Comrade Dimitroff at the trial only appeared in the issue of November 7. Prior to this date not a word was published about the trial.

Of great significance for the Communist Party of Cuba for working out correct political tactics in the revolutionary struggles, for consolidating all the Party organizations, was the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee which was held in September, 1933, at which one of the chief questions taken up was that of organization.

The main shortcomings in this sphere to be noted by the papers were:

1. The weakness of the District Committees and the leadership of the factory cells.
2. The absence of inner life in the cells and their isolation from the District Committees, the District Committees also being isolated from the Central Committee.
3. Their inability to keep the newly recruited workers in the Party.
4. The opportunist character of the leadership of several organizations, which do not understand the role of the Party and which try to adapt themselves to legal possibilities by supporting the government of Grau San Martin.

The Plenum of the Party dealt severe blows at all these mistakes and shortcomings, and demanded the living up of the Party life of the lower cells, the formation of new cells in the basic branches of industry (sugar, tobacco, railway), the establishment of close contacts with the lower organizations, and the intensification of recruiting into the Party (particularly women), and issued the slogan of increasing the membership of the Party to 10,000 and the Y.C.L. to 5,000 by November 7.

The central organ of the Party continued to pay attention to this question also after the Plenum, and has published a series of articles criticizing the shortcomings of the recruiting campaign in various districts. In this connection an article was published in No. 3 of *Bandera Roja* dealing with the question as to what is a class and what is a Party. It is true that this article was not written in a sufficiently simple style and was almost inaccessible to the workers and peasants.

In one of the issues (*Bandera Roja*, No. 2) there is a discussion on the reason for the recruiting campaign lagging behind the growth of the strike movement and the influence of the Party. Though it was in August and September that we had the largest

number of strikes, organized and led by the C.P., the growth of the Party during these months was insignificant. In the district of Citios the growth of the Party is three times greater than in the district of Marionas which is one of the most industrial districts where the greatest number of strikes took place.

In this there was to be felt the influence of the theory that in order to join the Party, a worker must have a high political education. In reality such an attitude closes the doors of the Party organizations to a considerable section of the revolutionary workers who are approaching the Party. With regard to this the central organ stated:

"It is necessary that every Party organization, and all its members individually, actively struggle against the sectarian tendencies which consist in the inadequacy of the recruiting campaign, in the continuation of the criminal practice of expelling Party members who have not yet been drawn into work, and justifying this by their 'passivity' in the organization." (*El Trabajador*, No. 8.)

A very great defect which is far from having been liquidated in the organization of the Party is the practice of setting up, in the main, street cells and not factory or plantation cells. Without doubt this has served as a brake on the growth of the Party, and to its lagging behind the growth of its political influence.

A great achievement of the paper is that while publishing the letters of the worker correspondents from the factories and plantations, it gives information about how many were recruited to the Party, Y.C.L. and revolutionary trade unions during strikes.

In Santa Lucia (Oriente Province) during strikes, 45 comrades joined the Y.C.L., of whom 15 were girls.

In Tacajo (Oriente Province) 100 new members were recruited to the Party.

In *Samo*, as a result of the successfully conducted strike, 845 workers joined the revolutionary trade union of banana workers.

It would be very good if the central organ of the Party utilized the experience of the organ of the Mexican Communist Party, *El Machete*, and organized a section in its pages dealing with Party structure, where organizational questions could be dealt with; for example, questions of the work of the cells, mutual relations between the Party and the trade unions, the Party and the Y.C.L., the role of the Communist factions, etc.

The central organ must pay more attention to questions of the struggle for the widest use of all legal possibilities, which in the revolutionary conditions still exist, despite the suppression of the Party. In spite of the orders of the counter-revolutionary government of Mendieta, the C.P. of Cuba must

struggle for the preservation of its legal position everywhere where it is possible, and not allow itself to be driven underground. If this is difficult in Havana, nevertheless, it is quite possible in a number of provinces. The press must propagate the idea that the Party and the revolutionary trade unions should organize mass violations of the suppression order.

A great shortcoming of the Party press of Cuba is its inability to utilize the propaganda of Soviets and the great achievements of Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. to increase the influence of Communists. The press does not popularize sufficiently the achievements of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., the improvement of the position of the masses, etc.

It is true that *Bandera Roja* published a series of articles such as "The October Revolution and Its Significance for National Minorities", "Armies of the World", "Art and Science in the U.S.S.R.", "Agriculture, Industry, the Rise in Wages, the Reduction of the Working Day", etc., but this was only in the issue devoted to the anniversary of the October Revolution.

In the leading article on the subject of November 7, the sixteenth anniversary was very well and correctly linked up with the events taking place in Cuba. The paper wrote:

"For the toilers of Cuba, November 7 must be a day of mighty struggles for economic and political demands, a day of struggle for the immediate withdrawal of American warships from Cuban waters; a day of struggle against the bourgeois-landlord government of Grau San Martin, for the establishment of the workers and peasants government on the basis of Soviets." (*Bandera Roja*, No. 2.)

But firstly such articles should be published not only in anniversary issues of the paper, and secondly, they should be linked up more closely with the current struggle of the revolutionary masses of Cuba. The workers and peasants of Cuba must see in the achievements of the U.S.S.R. the correctness of the path along which the C.P. of Cuba leads them.

On September 14, 1933, a group of Trotskyist renegades (Junco and Co.) who had been expelled from the Communist Party, gave themselves the title of the Party of "Bolshevik Leninists".

Bandera Roja has exposed their counter-revolutionary defeatist line in a series of articles. By the concrete example of the treacherous position adopted by the representatives of the Federacion Obrera de Habana (which is in the hands of the Junco group) at the "Erunta" factory, the paper very cleverly showed what counter-revolutionary actions are concealed behind "ultra-revolutionary" phrases.

During the strikes at this factory, the Trotskyist

trade union leaders made an agreement with the employers, behind the backs of the masses, to reduce the wages of the workers.

Thus, writes the paper, "behind the 'ultra-revolutionary' theories of the 'Bolshevik Leninist' Juncists, there is concealed grovelling to the government and scabbing in strikes. Cuts are made in wages of thousands of workers struggling for bread, for work, for freedom". (*Bandera Roja*, No. 2.)

The best characterization of the role of Trotskyism in Cuba is given by the bourgeois paper, the *Prensa* which states that the general strike fixed for October 30, in protest against the shooting of workers was disrupted by the Trotskyist trade unions.

* * * * *

The press of the Communist Party of Cuba has without doubt achieved successes. In addition to the

central organ of the Party, which appears regularly and on fairly large sheets, provincial papers have begun to be published, namely *Luchador Roja* in Santa Clara and *El Comunista* in Oriente. The Central Committee has sent directives to the other three provinces about the publication of their own papers.

The central organ *Bandera Roja* must pay more attention to the provincial papers and render them daily help by publishing reviews of these papers in its pages.

Finally, a few words about the language.

The language of the paper is one which is simple and which the broad masses will understand. True, individual formulations are not always exact and correct. The articles are very lengthy. This must be corrected.

P A M P H L E T S

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THE SPECIAL IMPORTANCE OF REVOLUTIONARY THEORY AT THE PRESENT STAGE

(Speech at the Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.)

By A. MARTYNOV

THE editorial board of our journal, *The Communist International*, raises before the Political Commission the question of our Sections giving it all-round support as the leading political and theoretical organ of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. In connection with this, I wish to devote my speech to an explanation of the special importance which is assumed, particularly at the present moment, by revolutionary theory, by raising the theoretical level of our Parties, and by their irreconcilable struggle against the slightest deviations from the foundations of Leninism.

I will begin with a few quotations that are well known but which are very useful to call to mind again and again.

When Lenin was laying the foundation of the Bolshevik Party on the eve of the first revolution, he wrote that, "without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement".* In this regard Lenin was quoting the words of Engels who, in 1874, recognized not two forms of the great struggle, the political and economic, "but three, adding to the first two, the theoretical struggle".† Lenin was quoting the words of Engels who pointed out the "indifference of the English labor movement to all theory which is one of the main reasons why it moves so slowly in spite of the splendid organization of the individual unions".‡

The significance of revolutionary theory was concretely formulated by Comrade Stalin in his lectures, *The Foundations of Leninism*, and in his speech at the conference of Marxist Agrarians. Comrade Stalin said:

"Theory can become the greatest force in the labor movement if it is indissolubly bound up with revolutionary practice, for it alone can give the movement confidence, guidance, strength and understanding of the inner relations between events; it alone can help practice to clarify the process and direction of class movements in the present and near future." §

* V. I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, Little Lenin Library, p. 28. International Publishers, 1933.

† *Ibid.*, p. 29.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

§ J. Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, p. 26-27. International Publishers, 1932.

Comrade Stalin said:

"You know that a theory, when it is a genuine theory, gives practical workers the power of orientation, clarity of perspective, faith in their work, confidence in the victory of our cause." *

This role of revolutionary theory which has been emphasized so much by our teachers, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, assumes special importance at the present time when we are accomplishing a difficult advance, when the world is coming close up to the new round of revolutions and wars, when the basic question of our movement, the question of power has been placed on the order of the day of history and when the pressure of the class enemy on our Party is increasing tremendously both as regards fascist terror and social-democratic maneuvers.

I shall indicate only a few of the facts and features which are characteristic of the present period of difficult uphill work, in connection with these points. I shall try to demonstrate how easy it is, now, to slide into the morass of opportunism, how easy it can be at present for opportunism to creep into our ranks, how easily we may prove to be unequal to the tasks which face us, if we are not sufficiently well-armed with the revolutionary theory of Leninism.

Firstly, in connection with the maturing of the world revolutionary crisis, we find at present an upsurge of the revolutionary movement, on the one hand and, on the other hand, the mobilization of the forces of counter-revolution, the furious offensive of fascism. Social-democracy, the agency and the main social buttress of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the working class, is utilizing this two-fold process to scare the workers, to convince them that the "epoch of fascism and reaction" has now set in and that the proletariat has been defeated on the most important sector of the struggle in the capitalist world, namely, in Germany. And we have heard here in the speeches of Comrades Thorez, Gottwald and Piatnitsky, that this theory found a temporary echo in the ranks of our Czechoslovakian Party, our French Party, not to mention the little oppositional Remmele-Neumann group in Germany.

How could it have happened that a number of our

* J. Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. 2, p. 253. International Publishers, 1933.

comrades should have adopted this capitulatory theory?

It happened because they could only see what was taking place on the surface and could not understand, and were unable to give a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the deep processes which are revolutionizing the entire situation, and are revolutionizing the proletariat in connection with the economic crisis which has brought about the disintegration of the mechanism of capitalist economy. It happened because they regarded the establishment of open fascist dictatorship only as a growth of the powers of the bourgeoisie, and could not see that revolutionary development is simultaneously delayed and accelerated by the fascist frenzy of the bourgeoisie. It happened because they could only see how and whither the bourgeois classes are moving at the present time, and even that without sufficient clearness, and did not understand how and whither the toiling classes will be moving in the near future.

This arose from the fact that they had not held out against the pressure of the class enemy, had not deeply mastered Leninist theory, which, in the words of Comrade Stalin, "alone can help practice to clarify the process and direction of class movements in the present and near future", and which "gives practical workers a clear perspective . . . and confidence in the victory of our cause".

Secondly, in connection with the maturing of the world revolutionary crisis, social-democracy, which is the agency of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the working class, is not only becoming fascized rapidly but is at the same time resorting to all kinds of demagogic maneuvers on a scale unknown in recent years. In view of the fact that these maneuvers have a certain effect on the workers, we must display great flexibility so as to repulse them. But if our Parties are insufficiently armed with the revolutionary theory of Lenin, if they are insufficiently impregnated with the realization of the profound difference in principle between our Party and the Social-Democratic Parties, if they are insufficiently steeled in merciless struggle against social-democracy, then the adoption of flexible tactics easily degenerates into Right opportunist tactics or into a secretarian fear of the adoption of the united front.

I will give one example.

Immediately after Hitler came to power, the social-democrats talked of the united front with the Communists, of the conclusion of a "non-aggression pact" with them. In reply to these maneuvers, and in reply to the fact that the bureau of the Second International publicly expressed its readiness to enter into negotiations with the Comintern on united struggle, the Executive Committee of the Comintern, with a view to defeating this lying maneuver, instructed the Communist Parties to conclude fighting agreements

with the Social-Democratic Parties regarding the united front of struggle. In this statement the E.C.C.I. enumerated all the past acts of treachery committed by social-democracy and put forward two essential conditions for agreement to guarantee us against the Second International's utilizing these agreements against the interests of the working class.

We have already heard here how our French comrades took up this appeal of the Comintern and how they committed a serious opportunist mistake in carrying it into practice—nor were they alone in so doing.

How could this come about? It came about only because our comrades who committed this mistake had insufficiently mastered the principles of Leninism, had insufficiently understood and mastered the principle that whatever tactical steps we may take in respect to social-democracy, *at the basis* of our tactics there lies an unalterably irreconcilable attitude in principle towards social-democracy. It came about because our French comrades did not understand *all the regularity and inevitably* of the evolution of post-war social-democracy to fascism, though they speak of this often enough, and displayed an impermissible credulity in respect to our mortal enemy, forgetting the good old rule of Robespierre: "The basic virtue of a citizen is mistrust". Social-democracy is not so foolish as to write on its forehead: "I am the chief social buttress of the bourgeoisie".

Social-democracy always wears a mask, and if our comrades were better acquainted with the history of Bolshevism, they would know that the struggle of the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks was not easy, because the Mensheviks not only concealed their opportunism behind "orthodox" phrases, but themselves accused the Bolsheviks of "lack of principles", of "opportunism" and even of "Millerandism". Vera Zaslitch said to me after the split: "You do not know what an unprincipled man this Lenin is! He is ready to change his tactics every month. I shall not be surprised if he changes the program of the Party as well one of these days". Lenin replied to this charge: "How these Mensheviks drag at the tail of things! There has already been a sharp change in the situation, but they keep on repeating the old legends and drag the Party backwards".

And the "unprincipled" Lenin really did—as Zaslitch prophesied in horror—when he temporarily adopted the Social-Revolutionaries' program so as to attract to the side of the proletarian revolution the peasants who sympathized with this program, calculating that when the dictatorship of the proletariat was established, it would be easy to convince the peasants on the basis of their own experience of the correctness of the Bolshevik agrarian program. This is just what happened. The Mensheviks accused the Bolsheviks of Millerandism and Jauresism in 1905 in connection with the readiness of the Bolsheviks, in

the first Russian bourgeois democratic revolution, to take part in a provisional revolutionary government in case of a victorious insurrection. The struggle against the Mensheviks was not an easy one, but owing to the firmness of principle and irreconcilability of the Bolsheviks the latter were able to thoroughly expose the Mensheviks and it was for this reason alone that they were able to secure the great October victory.

Thirdly, the menace of proletarian revolution in the conditions of the general crisis of capitalism, interwoven with an unprecedented world economic crisis, gave rise to the frantic orgy of fascism. Whereas the social-democrats prostitute Marxism in the most shameless manner, and tried to convert this mighty revolutionary doctrine into a weapon of bourgeois counter-revolution, fascism proclaimed a campaign for the extermination of Marxism, setting itself the aim of thrusting out the ideology of Marxism to replace it by an ideology of bestial nationalism and chauvinism in its most repulsive medieval forms (the theory of superior and lower races, etc.).

The experience of Germany has already shown that the fascist drive against Marxism has not only failed to exterminate among the workers this ideology so hated by the fascists, but has still further increased the strivings of the workers toward Marxist teachings. But this nationalism and chauvinism is at present taking hold of the ruined petty bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeois intellectuals, and the declassed workers, the sections of the population which can and should come over to our side.

Are we carrying on an adequate ideological struggle against the *fascist variety of nationalism*? No, we are not. We expose the national and social demagoguery of the fascists, explaining that they are not Socialists, but lackeys of the big bourgeoisie. And here some people stray into the opportunist social-democratic theory that the fascists are allegedly a party of the petty bourgeoisie or of the lumpenproletariat. Our struggle, also, against nationalism and chauvinism is *general*, and even this struggle is carried on to an insufficient degree. But the overwhelming majority of Communists, who have a correct position on this question, do not carry on an adequate ideological struggle against the "*specific*" fascist variety of nationalism, do not to a sufficient extent expose to the masses the fact that these fascist forms in which nationalism is expressed at present are the best confirmation that this is not only the ideology of an exploiting class, but the *stinking ideology of a dying exploiting class spitting out its venom in its historic death throes*. And this must call forth a special repugnance towards this ideology.

Fourthly, in connection with the maturing of the world revolutionary crisis, our Parties at present are everywhere putting forward the question of power.

In connection with this maturing of the revolutionary crisis, this question of power is now being put forward by the social-democrats as well, but with demagogic aims. In order to deceive the workers, the social-democrats are also saying that the only way out of the crisis is Socialism, the transfer of power to the working class. Some of them have even begun to talk about the "dictatorship of the proletariat", but, of course, about a "temporary dictatorship", about the path "through dictatorship to democracy", etc. The proletariat will not be able to be victorious in the forthcoming decisive struggles, will not be able to rally around the Communist Parties, if our Communist Parties do not smash up this demagoguery of social-democracy, if, while linking up with the struggle for power, the struggle for the smallest and most trifling partial demands of the masses, they are unable to explain concretely *how* power can be won and *how* social-democracy is trying at this stage to distract the workers from the *real* struggle for power by its demagogic lying phrases.

Is this campaign of explanation and exposure in connection with the question of power carried on well by us? We must state directly that it is not being carried on well enough. At present, when the question of power is being put on the order of the day of history, as it was at the time of the first post-war revolutionary crisis, great practical importance is assumed by the complex of questions regarding the State which Lenin, like the genius he was, dealt with in his book *State and Revolution* and in his book *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. The complex of ideas set out in these books, have now obtained full historic confirmation as the result of two paths—the Bolshevik path and the social-democratic path. Do we in our mass agitation now raise the question of power to such a height of principle? No, we do not. And this is because of the same neglect of revolutionary theory which finds expression in the fact that even the famous 21 Conditions adopted at the Second Congress of the Comintern have not everywhere been well mastered up to the present, although it is precisely at the present time that they again take on specially urgent significance in connection with the attempts of the "Left" social-democrats to form a new Two-and-a-Half International, or a new Fourth International.

Interest in revolutionary theory, or what amounts to the same thing, in the theory of Leninism, is shown *unevenly* in our Parties in the capitalist, semi-colonial and colonial countries. Among the big Parties the greatest interest in the theory of Leninism is shown by our Chinese Communist Party, our German Communist Party, our Polish Communist Party and our Bulgarian Communist Party. And, of course, this is no accident. Our Chinese Communist Party is not only a heroic Party but is also a Party which

greedily absorbs the teachings of Leninism. When I heard the speech of Comrade Wan Ming here at the Plenum, I remembered the article which Lenin wrote even before the war, with the striking title, "Advanced Asia and Backward Europe". Why is it that our Chinese Communist Party and the other Communist Parties of the East—Japanese and Indo-Chinese—so thirstily absorb the teachings of Leninism at the present time? Not only because of the double oppression experienced by the great semi-colonial Chinese people, but because our Communist Parties in the East were free of social-democratic traditions and democratic illusions.

Lenin wrote:

"Ignorance is not so far from the truth as prejudice, because ignorant but honest toilers and supporters of the toilers can now, after the war, more easily understand the inevitability of revolution, of civil war and the dictatorship of the proletariat than the Kautskys, MacDonaldis, Vanderveldes, Brantings, Turattis and the whole bunch of them, crammed with the most learned reformist prejudices".*

The German Communist Party, as distinguished from the Chinese Party, was not free from the traditions of social-democracy. Historically it was connected by descent with the Left Luxemburgian wing of social-democracy. And it was not easy for the German Party to overcome the mistakes of Luxemburgism. But Luxemburgism had one feature in common with Leninism, and this was its high interest in theory and its irreconcilability of principle, though not such irreconcilability as was to be observed in Leninism, but incomparably more so than in the centrist social-democracy. The same may be said of the Polish Communist Party. Historically it was also connected by descent with Luxemburgism, with the social-democracy of Poland and Lithuania. In addition it was linked up in the past more closely than all other Communist Parties with the revolutionary struggle of the Bolsheviks of Czarist Russia. The same can be said of the Bulgarian Communist Party, which was historically linked up by descent with the movement of the "Tesniaks".

Our Chinese, German, Polish and Bulgarian Communist Parties, not to mention the C.P.S.U., of course, display, comparatively speaking, the greatest interest in theory, in the study of the foundations of Leninism. And it is no chance that these Parties are the strongest of our Parties in the sphere of the practical struggle. Much less interest in theory and the study of the foundations of Leninism is shown by our other parties—the American, British, Czecho-

slovakian and French Parties, etc., although recently the strivings towards the study of the theories of Leninism has increased in these Parties as well, especially among their young cadres. This theoretical lagging behind is one of the causes why it is comparatively more difficult for them to overcome opportunist waverings in practice.

The method of overcoming opportunist waverings is not the same in our theoretically advanced Parties and those Parties which are comparatively more backward theoretically. Our German Communist Party eliminated its opportunist deviations in the course of fierce struggles of principle against Brandlerism and the Ruth Fisher deviation. Our Polish Communist Party also overcame them in similar battles of principle against the Kostresheva-Warski group, the Chinese Party in the struggles against Chen-du-Suism and Li-Li-Hsanism, the Bulgarian Party in the struggles against the mistakes of the Tesniak movement. In these fierce battles of principle, the Parties became ideologically steel-tempered, and an example of such steel-tempering was shown us not long ago by our splendid Comrade Dimitroff who found it necessary even in the court, on the Tenth Anniversary of the September revolt in Bulgaria, to criticize the opportunist mistakes of the Bulgarian Party leadership to which he belonged in 1923.

Others of our Parties get rid of their opportunist mistakes in a different way. They get rid of them without ideological battles, quietly, noiselessly, in family style. Therefore, they do not eliminate their opportunist mistakes thoroughly enough, and relapses occur very frequently.

When the Comintern points out or explains to the leaders of these Parties the various mistakes which they have made, they agree with the Comintern, but after correcting one mistake, they immediately make another one in the same sphere. It works out like the labors of Sisyphus. How is this to be explained? By the fact that political life does not stand still, that the situation is changing rapidly, and that if our enemies, the social-democrats, are defeated in one place, they rapidly reform their ranks and resort to new maneuvers. In order to correctly apply the directives of the Comintern to correspond with this rapid change of the situation and these rapid changes of the maneuvers of our enemies, our Communist Parties must not only have a good knowledge of what is stated in the tactical resolutions of the Comintern, but must also be aware of the principles and methods of Leninism which the Comintern invariably takes as its basis when giving its tactical directives. And these principles and methods of Leninism have not yet been sufficiently mastered by our Parties, due to their neglect of theory. In order to operate the line of the Comintern consistently, it is not sufficient to

* *Lenin*, Vol. XXIV, p. 396, Russian edition.

master its directives *empirically*, but we must grasp them *theoretically*. And in this respect, things are by no means as they should be in our Parties.

I will deal in greater detail with one question connected with the problem of theoretical soundness and empiricism. Some comrades complain that we, with our learned language and politically sharpened definitions, find difficulty in approaching the broad masses because the masses always reason empirically. Complete clarity must be achieved on this question. The Russian Bolsheviks always placed theory at an extremely high level, and the same Russian Bolsheviks were able to talk to the masses in such a popular language and to make such a close approach to them while at every moment taking into account what was worrying the masses, what they wanted, what they were striving to obtain, that their agitation found an echo among the broad masses, the millions of workers and peasants. The Russian Bolsheviks were well able to link up with the masses, remembering the words of Marx that "theory becomes a material force when it takes hold of the masses". The Bolsheviks considered and still consider that unless this is the case, theory is of no use to them, for they are not armchair wiseacres but revolutionaries standing at the head of the mass movement.

But the secret of the success of the Bolsheviks lies in the fact that they understood not only how to link *themselves up with the masses*, but also how to *carry the masses with them*, to direct their struggle towards the great revolutionary aims of the working class, that they did not drag at the tail of the masses, did not bow down before spontaneity, but raised the masses to the level of the revolutionary tasks facing them. They not only listened carefully to the voice of the masses, but, on the basis of their own experience led the masses to the struggle for revolutionary tasks, patiently but firmly scattering their petty bourgeois prejudices, patiently but firmly exposing the opportunist views with which the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries influenced them.

And to enable the Party to carry on this *correct policy*, which is of *decisive* importance for consolidating the influence of the Party among the masses, to enable the Party to thoroughly understand *whither* it must lead the masses at the given period and *how* it must expose the conciliators, the Party itself had to thoroughly master the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism. This theory which is founded on dialectical materialism, is a very complicated theory. Marx wrote in the preface to the French edition of *Capital* (it is no accident that it was precisely to the French edition and not to the German), that: "There is no broad military highway leading to science. Only those can reckon on reaching its shining heights who do not fear the labors of climbing up its rocky paths". Our revolutionary theory is difficult. In order

to master it and link it up with practice, all the economic and political conceptions and all the words in which these conceptions are expressed must be sharpened like razors.

Thus we must not mix two things. It is one thing to speak of the language in which we talk to the broad masses so that they can understand us, and another matter to speak of the ideas which we must inculcate into the hands of the *active elements of our Party*, the vanguard of the working masses, and of the learned language in which we of necessity wrap these ideas so that these active elements can *themselves* find their way in complex circumstances, so that they understand what tasks face us, so that they learn the complex strategy and tactics of Lenin. This Party language cannot be too simple, because it has to be the verbal reflection not of what is described as "common sense", but of the revolutionary dialectics of Marx and Lenin. Of course, there is no Chinese wall between the active elements of the Party and the masses, and there are many inconspicuous transitional paths, but as we rise from the masses to the regular Party workers, the higher we go in the hierarchy of the Party, the greater must be our claims and the more irreconcilable must we be in demanding theoretical clarity and exactness of our conceptions, as well as exactness of our Party language, because unsoundness of tactics and vacillation lie hidden behind vagueness of words and ideas.

We see that behind the dispute about language there lies hidden a dispute on questions of the deepest principle. Those who cannot find the real language for the *masses* slip into sectarianism. But those who have a tendency to vulgarize our *Party language* may easily slip into opportunism.

I repeat, in a number of our Parties things are far from well in respect to the theoretical comprehension of our tactical directives. I do not at all mean to say by this that our Parties are now growing ideologically. That would be to slander them. They are bound to grow ideologically because their practical experience is accumulating in the process of the struggle, and this experience is freshened also in the process of day-to-day leadership, and at Party conferences, and congresses, at plenums of the E.C.C.I. and at the congresses of the Comintern, and in our press. Our Parties are undoubtedly growing ideologically and have even grown a great deal in the last few years. But their ideological growth is still lagging very much behind the demands of the times and especially behind the demands of the present time, when the pressure of the class enemy on our Party has tremendously increased and when the greatest soundness of principle is needed to withstand this pressure.

In this respect, matters are much better in the four Parties which I mentioned above, namely, the

Polish, German, Chinese and Bulgarian Parties, than in the majority of the other Parties. For instance, I may point to the great theoretical achievements of the Polish Communist Party as expressed in its draft program. I can give another example. The Comintern defined the character of the Chinese Soviets as the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants, in the form of Soviets. The economic policy of the Soviet Government in China should have been constructed accordingly. But this correct general formula of the nature of Soviet economics in China proved to be insufficient, and in putting it into practice the Communist Party of China made mistakes which might have had very serious results. However, our Chinese Communist Party, which had mastered the method of Leninism and was helped by the Comintern, succeeded in concretizing the formula and correcting its mistakes. In doing so it took a number of points into account such as length of the civil war in China, the economic backwardness of the Soviet districts, the existence of an economic blockade of the Soviets and the concrete revolutionary outlook in China.

When we point out the still very insufficient interest in theory which is shown by some of our Parties, such as the British, French and Czechoslovakian Parties, we sometimes receive a very curious reply: "This, of course, is owing to their national character. They are not Germans, whom Engels called a 'theoretical nation'." These arguments about "national character" are anti-Marxian and anti-Leninist, and in particular the reference to Engels is completely unfounded. It is true that Engels said that the German workers were at an advantage in that they "belonged to the most theoretical people of Europe". But he added immediately: "They have retained that sense of theory which the so-called 'educated' people of Germany have totally lost".*

So the crux of the matter is not the nation. References to "national character" are anti-Marxian and anti-Leninist. It is not a question of some peculiar "national character" which is expressed in the neglect of theory, but of definite historical traditions which have grown up in the given country under certain circumstances and which change with the changes of these circumstances. Voltaire once said: "The Germans rule the clouds, the French rule the land and the English rule the sea". This dictum was true for a definite period of time. But in the 60's of last century, Germany which had begun to build up her industry rapidly, came down with equal rapidity from the clouds of romanticism ("von den heiteren Regionen, wo die reinen Geister wohnen") to the earth, and began to operate the Bismarckian policy

of "blood and iron". And France, which had ruled on the land, learned to "swim" and became the second colonial power in the world. It is often said of Britons, of the British workers, that a theoretical approach to them is doomed to failure, that Britain is the classic country of empiricism, the classic country of practical compromises. It is forgotten, however, that if definite historic conditions gave rise to these features among the British bourgeoisie, who infected broad masses of the British proletariat with them, nevertheless they did not always exist and will not always exist in the future. It must not be forgotten that before the development of British trade unionism in the 40's of last century, England had its revolutionary Chartist rising, and still earlier, in the 17th century, it had its Cromwell, and earlier still, in the Middle Ages, it had the most bloody history in Europe. And we do not doubt that in the very near future Great Britain will again leave the path of compromise and conciliation for the path of revolutionary uprising.

It is not a matter of the existence of some "national character" but of the existence of very bad historic traditions. But that is why we are Bolsheviks, namely, to break all bad historic traditions and all bad historic routine, without fearing to go against the stream of a time. And if we explain to our British, French and Czechoslovakian comrades in a business-like manner, "empirically", on the basis of experience of their own practical struggle and their mistakes, how harmful empiricism is and how important it is for them to accelerate their mastery of revolutionary theory, then we shall undoubtedly have success, the more so as the objective conditions in which we live are pregnant with great and rapid changes. For that matter, as I have already said, a noticeable advance is to be noted at present in this respect among the young cadres of these Parties.

I will now pass from these problems to a very important practical matter connected with these problems. I return to our journal *The Communist International*. This journal, as the leading political and theoretical organ of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, is, and in any case should be, one of the weapons for raising the theoretical level of our Parties. But if it is to carry out this function well, our Parties must come to its help in two senses. Firstly, responsible comrades from our various Sections must at last begin to contribute to our journal systematically not only in the sense of contributing informative articles, but in the sense of raising certain *problems* which arise from the movement in their countries. But this is not enough. They must learn to raise and elaborate these problems in Leninist fashion. This means that, in raising these problems, they must take the decisions of the Comintern and the decisions of their Parties which have been ap-

* Quoted by Lenin in *What Is to Be Done?*, p. 29.

proved by the Comintern as their starting point, linking these up with the changing circumstances of the struggle. This also means that when elaborating problems, they must follow the good example of the journalist comrades of the C.P.S.U. If these problems have already been raised in any form by our teachers Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, it is then necessary to make a thorough study of what and how and *in what concrete conditions* such and such a problem was spoken of by Comrade Stalin, the best interpreter of Lenin, who is developing his teachings further. Then, what and how and in what circumstances such and such a problem was spoken of by Lenin, the best interpreter of Marx and Engels, who developed their teachings further. Then, taking as a basis the way they raise the particular problem, and taking them as a guide, as well as taking the new experience into account, independently elaborate the problem further according to the new concrete conditions of the struggle. We should remember that though we mercilessly destroy conservative and reactionary traditions, we all the more honor revolutionary traditions, since we are not like the Ivans who do not remember kith and kin. We value every thought, every word of our great teachers, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

The second thing that we are seeking to obtain from the leadership of our Comintern sections is for them energetically to assist in obtaining a wide cir-

culcation for our journal, with a view to theoretically educating our Party activists, a task which is especially necessary at the present time when owing to the fact that many of our Parties have been driven into illegality, their own theoretical organs, as for instance in Germany, have temporarily been compelled to stop publication.

In conclusion, I will recall the words of Lenin which he said at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern and which were in the nature of a bequest to the Comintern:

"I think that the chief thing for us all, both for the Russian and the foreign comrades, is that after five years of the Russian Revolution we have to study. All the Parties and all sections in Russia are showing this by their thirst for knowledge. These strivings towards study show that a most important task for us now is to study and study again. . . . I am convinced that in this respect we must say not only to the Russian but to the foreign comrades that a most important thing in the coming period is study. We study in the general sense. They must study in a special sense, so as to really attain the organization, construction, method and content of revolutionary work. If this is accomplished, then I am convinced that the prospects for the world revolution will not only be good but excellent".*

* *Lenin*, Vol. XXVII, p. 355, Russian edition.

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