

Lessons of Struggle for Soviet Power
Piatnitsky on Trade Union Problems
Struggle Against Fascism in Italy

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 209

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
FOR SOVIET POWER	751
<u><i>Discussion for the Seventh Congress of the C.I.</i></u>	
PROBLEMS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT	757
<i>By O. PIATNITSKY</i>	
BASIC LESSONS OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ITALY AGAINST FASCISM UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF THE "TOTALIZED" REGIME	775
<i>By K. RONCOLI</i>	
—————	
THE CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE NEW MANEU- VERS OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS IN INDIA	783
<i>By G. SAFAROV</i>	
A SPEECH THAT HITLER FAILED TO DELIVER	792
<i>By L. MADYAR</i>	

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FOR SOVIET POWER

(On the Seventeenth Anniversary of the October Revolution)

I.

THE Anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution is the great, fighting holiday of the *international* proletariat.

From the very first days of its existence, Bolshevism looked upon the coming Russian Revolution as the prologue to the world proletarian revolution, and it is precisely in this that it saw its great historical significance. As early as in 1902, on the eve of the first bourgeois revolution in Russia, Lenin, in his pamphlet, *What Is To Be Done?*, wrote:

"History has now confronted us with an immediate task which is *more revolutionary than all the immediate tasks* that confront the proletariat of any other country. The fulfillment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but also (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction, *places the Russian proletariat in the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat.*" (Our emphasis—Ed.)

At the beginning of the imperialist war, in December, 1914, Lenin, in his article, "On the National Pride of the Great Russians", showed that "the Great Russians must not 'defend their fatherland', but must desire the defeat of Tsarism in every war", continuing: ". . . If history will solve the question in favor of Great Russian, great power, capitalism, then from this will follow the greater *Socialist* role of the Russian proletariat as the main driving force of the Communist Revolution which is being given birth to by capitalism."

Thus we see that at the time when Lenin raised before the Russian proletariat the task of the revolution (of preparing the defeat of its own government in the war), he explained it by the fact that the Russian proletariat should be "the main driving force of the Communist Revolution", and its patriotism should be directed precisely along these channels. A year later, in August, 1915, in putting forward his famous thesis, that the uneven economic and political development of capitalism creates the condition for the possibility of the victory of Socialism, at first in several or even in one capitalist country, Lenin explained what this should lead to. He said:

"The victorious proletariat of such a country expropriating the capitalists and organizing Socialist production would stand out *against* the rest of the capitalist world, attracting to its side the oppressed classes of other countries, inspiring uprisings against the capitalists and in case of necessity using military force against the exploiting classes and their States."

Thus, while preparing the revolution in Russia, Bolshevism invariably considered it as the prologue to the *world proletarian revolution*, and, after the victorious October revolution, Comrade Stalin, in 1924, could say with the greatest assurance, that:

"The world significance of the October Revolution lies not only in its constituting a great start made by one country in the work of breaking through the system of imperialism and the creation of the first land of socialism in the ocean of imperialist countries, but likewise *in its constituting the first stage in the world revolution and a mighty basis for its further development.*" (Our emphasis—Ed.)

The development of the world proletarian revolution did not proceed as fast as it might have appeared originally. Seventeen years have passed since the October revolution and the banner of the Soviets is only developing victoriously, outside of the Soviet Union, in one-sixth of China. This was not unexpected. Lenin frequently spoke of and explained that the path of the proletarian revolution will be more difficult in the leading capitalist countries than in Russia and that "in comparison with the leading countries it will be easier for the Russians to *begin* the great proletarian revolution" although it "will be more difficult to continue it."

Immediately after the war, when the revolutionary crisis approached, when the people of Europe and America were still armed, when the objective conditions for the revolution were present, the attempts to bring about the revolution in various countries ended unsuccessfully as a result of the fact that in these countries there did not yet exist, in contradistinction to Russia, mass Communist Parties. However, while the mass Communist Parties of other countries were being built, there took place the partial stabilization of capitalism, and the imperialist world was no longer split into two warring camps. In addition, and this is a most important fact, it became absolutely obvious that the bourgeoisie of the leading capitalist countries are incomparably stronger than the bourgeoisie of Tsarist Russia, and that in the leading capitalist countries, particularly in Germany, imperialism "is made, to our sorrow, of better steel and, therefore, does not break from the efforts of every . . . young chicken." (Lenin.)

The great power of resistance on the part of the western bourgeoisie, in comparison with the Russian bourgeoisie, is amongst other things conditioned by the fact that "in the West", as Lenin said, "the Mensheviks have more firmly 'colonized' themselves in the trade unions and formed there a layer, far

stronger than in Russia, of *professional, narrow, egotistic, hard, greedy, petty-bourgeois, imperialistically inclined, 'labor aristocracy', bribed and corrupted by imperialism*".

Proceeding from this, Lenin already in 1921, at the Third Congress of the Communist International, presented his famous thesis:

"The more the proletariat is organized in a capitalistically developed country, the more thorough preparations for the revolution does history demand from us and with the greater thoroughness must we work towards the winning of the majority of the working class."

The path to the proletarian revolution in the leading capitalist countries was, and remains, more difficult than was the path to the revolution in the former Tsarist Russia. It required years of the deepest world economic crisis and world historic victories of Socialism in the Soviet Union, to enable the Communist International finally to establish at the Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. that the world revolutionary crisis is maturing and that the world is approaching a new round of revolutions and wars.

Despite the protracted path to the proletarian revolution in the leading capitalist countries, the entire course of events for the past 17 years confirms the correctness of the thesis of Comrade Stalin that the October Revolution *constitutes "the first stage of the world revolution and a mighty basis for its further development"*.

The Soviet Union, from the moment of its existence, was and remains the ever clearer flaming torch that is lighting the path of the international proletariat to Socialism and that stimulates forces of the world proletarian revolution. For the past 17 years, from the very day of the October Revolution, there was not a single moment that the Soviet Union did not play the role of the mighty lever and driving force of the world proletarian revolution. The developing Communist Parties drew their strength from the victories and achievements of the Soviet Union. The influence of the Soviet Union did not limit itself to the Communist vanguard of those countries. During all these years, millions of workers throughout the world followed with untiring attention what was being created in the great land of the Soviets. Despite the lies, despite the slander of the capitalist class and its social-democratic agents together with their Trotskyite hangers-on, the great majority of the proletarians throughout the world are now daily becoming more convinced that in the Soviet Union there exists the real rule of the working class, that there real Socialism is being built, that Soviet Power does not carry on a policy of "Red Imperialism", that it is the only power which consistently carries out a policy of peace.

Because of this, the sympathies of the great majority of the workers throughout the world are with the Soviet Union; because of this also, the international proletariat is convinced that the defeat of the Soviet Union would have been a catastrophe for the international proletariat; because of this, the international proletariat is ready to come forward to the defense of the Soviet Union in the event of a counter-revolutionary war against the Soviet Union.

However, from all this it does not yet follow that the majority of the working class in the capitalist countries are already, *in their own countries*, ready to follow in the path of October. Thanks to the treacherous role of Social-Democracy—this main social bulwark of the bourgeoisie—although the majority of the workers in the capitalist countries have recognized that real socialism is being built in the Soviet Union, they are not, however, as yet convinced that under their particular conditions it is necessary to take the same road. The majority of the workers in the capitalist countries have not yet recognized that the armed uprising and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets is the *only* path to Socialism.

However, in those countries where fascism is violently advancing, especially in countries where the fascist dictatorship has already been established, generally in countries where the revolutionary crisis is rapidly maturing, the workers are now already rapidly overcoming their democratic illusions, and there matures the recognition of the inevitability of the Soviet path. This is quite eloquently testified to by the events of the past year.

When the advance of fascism began in France, in the streets of Paris and of other cities, the workers passionately put forward the slogan of "Soviets Everywhere!" and, at the same time, their urge for a united front with the Communists became irresistible.

The Austrian workers, who were under the influence of Social-Democracy, who had taken up arms in order to defend themselves from the fascist attacks, did not, however, take up the offensive. Very quickly, however, during the process of the armed struggle, a fundamental change in their mood was marked. In the heat of the struggle, with unprecedented rapidity, they began to turn away from the Social-Democrats, who not long ago occupied a monopoly position in the Austrian labor movement, and began to turn towards Communism.

In Spain, the Socialists took to arms only in order to defend the republic from a fascist uprising, But, in Asturias, where the Communists had the strongest position, and where the armed uprising reached its greatest intensity, the struggle which began under the slogan of the defense of the republic developed and grew over into a Soviet revolution though it did not as yet lead to victory.

The experiences of the revolutionary events of the last year (as well as the earlier experiences of the Chinese revolution) enable us to maintain with full assuredness: Even if, in the advance towards the revolution, the proletariat of one or another country does not as yet recognize that the revolution, in order to be victorious, must follow in the path of the Soviets, nevertheless, when they rise to a higher stage of the revolution, and approach the seizure of power, they, having before them the great experience of the Soviet Union with its world historic victories, are drawn with irresistible force towards Soviet Power.

No matter in what form a revolution begins in one or another country it can be victorious now only in the form of Soviets, be it a revolution of a bourgeois democratic character or of a direct proletarian character.

Precisely because of this, the Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. noted the maturing of the world revolutionary crisis, and at the same time very timely raised the slogan "Soviet Power" as the central political slogan for the present time. This slogan should already now become our central slogan, in order that the proletariat, in one or another country, independent of the degree to which the revolutionary crisis has matured, should know in advance what road it must take, in order that this should not be recognized only *post factum*. This is so, because in the decisive moment, due to the unclarity regarding the aims, there were already committed mistakes that are difficult to correct, as was the case in Austria and partly in Spain in the days of the armed struggle.

In view of the maturing of the revolutionary crisis the slogan of Soviet Power must at this time everywhere, in all capitalist countries, become our central slogan. This does not at all mean that we should ignore the uneven revolutionary development in various capitalist countries. This unevenness, however, does not mean that in one or another capitalist country, which is backward in a revolutionary sense, we should remove the slogan for Soviet Power as our central slogan. The uneven revolutionary development only indicates that in the various countries we should adopt a variety of *methods* and develop various *approaches* for the popularization of this slogan to the broadest masses.

Take for example the two concretely worked out programs for Soviet Power—one, published in the economically developed, but in the revolutionary sense backward, England. This program was published by the Communist Party of the Lancashire District. The other program was published in an economically backward, but in the revolutionary sense advanced, Spain. This second program was published two days before the general strike as the manifesto of the Communist Party of Spain, which formulated the

future program for the workers' and peasants' government.

These two documents demonstrate how it is possible and how one must propagandize one and the same slogan for Soviet Power, how one must clothe this in various forms depending upon the level of the revolutionary maturity of the working class to whom we turn with our propaganda.

The Lancashire document is shaped in a form which takes into consideration the moods of the backward English workers, thus formulated by one of the textile workers of Ashton-under-Lyne:

"But you cannot expect us to be enthusiastic about theories so hazy and 'up in the air.' Why not explain what Soviet Power would mean in relation to this very town in which we live and to these very factories in which we work?"

The Spanish manifesto gives a concise and precise program of the revolution corresponding to the militant mood of the Spanish workers as it existed on the eve of their armed struggle.

II.

We must now popularize in the broadest manner the slogan for Soviet Power. At the same time we must, in our Communist Parties, amongst our revolutionary active workers, and amongst the working class in general, popularize the path by which the Bolsheviks brought about the October Revolution. We must explain how the experiences of the heroic struggles of the Bolsheviks can and must be applied to the present circumstances and conditions.

Comrade Stalin, in his article "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists" and in a number of other articles, gave us the best and a classical analysis of the path taken by the Bolsheviks to October. The first thing to which Comrade Stalin calls attention, in speaking about the October Revolution, is the role that the Party of the Bolsheviks played in the preparation for October.

"1. During the entire period of preparation for October the Party constantly relied in its struggle upon the spontaneous upward swing of the revolutionary movement of the masses.

"2. While relying on the spontaneous upward swing, it kept in its own hands the undivided leadership of the movement.

"3. Such leadership of the movement made it easier for the Party to form the mass political army for the October Revolution.

"4. Such a policy was bound to lead to the entire preparation for October proceeding under the leadership of a *single* Party, the Party of the Bolsheviks.

"5. Such preparations for October, in their turn, led, as a result of the October insurrection, to power being in the hands of *one* party, the Bolshevik Party.

"Thus the undivided leadership of *one* party, the Communist Party, as the fundamental factor of the preparations for October—such is the characteristic feature of the October Revolution, *such was the first special feature in the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October.*" (Our emphasis—*Ed.*)

These words of Comrade Stalin regarding the role of the Party must, especially now, be kept firmly in mind when our Communist Parties are carrying through the tactic of the broadest united front of the Communists with the Social-Democrats in the struggle against fascism, against the attacks of the capitalists and against the danger of war.

In what in particular should the *independent* leading role of our Party have expressed itself and express itself now, in the face of advancing fascism?

When the open fascist dictatorship was established in Germany, the Social-Democrats and their Trotskyite hangers-on asserted that a whole historical epoch of fascism had come into being, in the sense that the proletariat is smashed, that fascism will everywhere inevitably be victorious and that there are no revolutionary prospects in sight.

Under such circumstances, the task of our Party consisted, while basing ourselves on the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the present situation and not only on what appears on the surface, of showing how, under the conditions of raging fascism, there matures the revolutionary crisis. This is similar to what Lenin did during the imperialist war when the broadest masses, encouraged by the Social-Democrats, were caught by patriotic moods, and when he was nonetheless able to uncover the process of the maturing revolution. Under the conditions of advancing fascism, the task facing our Parties has consisted in showing that this course being taken towards fascism arises out of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, that the victory of fascism does not only mean the strengthening of the positions of the bourgeoisie, but it also creates the conditions for undermining its positions, and the stronger the fascist terror rages the quicker will the revolutionary crisis mature.

When the frightful example of the Hitler terror gave a new impulse to the counter-offensive of the proletariat, Social-Democracy, under the pressure of the masses and out of fear of the fascist dictatorship, began to incline towards the united front struggles with the Communists, against fascism. In connection with this, however, there arose and continues to exist a new danger. Social-Democracy, taking up the united front with us, pursues only the aim of the defense of the bourgeois democratic order against fascism as a certain degeneration of the present bourgeois State. Social-Democracy thus attempts to bring the masses on to this path and to retain them there.

Under such conditions the independent and leading

role of our Party consists in the following: While in every way defending the democratic rights of the workers, at the same time it must show the masses the incorrectness of making distinction in principle between fascist dictatorship and the bourgeois democratic dictatorship. Further, we must explain to the masses that the former grows organically out of the latter, and that the complete defeat of fascism is only possible through the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie in all of its forms. We must show that the proletariat can be victorious only when it will go over from the defensive to the offensive, only when the working class will struggle for Soviet Power.

The *second peculiarity* in the tactics of the Bolsheviks, in the period of the preparations for October, consisted, in the words of Comrade Stalin, in that the leadership of the Bolshevik Party,

"... proceeded along the line of isolating the *compromising* parties, as the most dangerous groupings in the period in which the revolution was coming to a head—along the line of isolating the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. . . .

"The fundamental strategic rule of Leninism," said Comrade Stalin, "is the recognition that the *compromising* parties are the most dangerous social support of the enemies of the revolution in the period in which the revolutionary climax is approaching.

"But how, concretely, did the Party carry into effect this policy of isolation, in what form, under what slogan? It is effected in the form of the revolutionary mass movement for the power of the Soviets under the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets', by means of the struggle to convert the Soviets from organs for mobilizing the masses into organs of insurrection, into organs of power, into the apparatus of the new proletarian state power. . . .

"During the first stage this slogan signifies the rupture of the *bloc* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks with the Cadets, the formation of a Soviet government consisting of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks (for at that time the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks predominated in the Soviets), the right of free agitation for the opposition (that is, for the Bolsheviks) and the free struggle of parties within the Soviets. . . . This plan . . . undoubtedly facilitated the preparation of the conditions required for guaranteeing the dictatorship, for by putting the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries into power and forcing them to carry into effect their anti-revolutionary platform, it hastened the unmasking of the true nature of these parties, hastened their isolation, their rupture with the masses."

Thus the Bolsheviks achieved the fulfillment of the main strategic rule of Leninism—namely, the isolation of the parties of compromise and the winning to its side of the majority of the working class.

How can the Communists, under the present con-

ditions, bring about the isolation of the compromise parties of the Second International?

The road to the isolation of Social-Democracy from the masses lies now as well through the development of the revolutionary struggle for power. By organizing united front struggle against fascism, the attacks of capital and the war danger, the Communists expose the compromisers and lead the masses in the struggle for Soviet Power, irrespective of the fact that the united front at the present time, due to the crisis which Social-Democracy is experiencing, may be and is being operated by us not only from below but also from the top, a state of things that makes it easier for us to approach the Social-Democratic masses.

There is no doubt that with the slogans of struggle against fascism and against the attacks of the capitalists, the united front opens up before us great revolutionary possibilities. This is similar to the situation in 1917 when the slogans of the Bolsheviks, addressed to the masses, namely: "All Power to the Soviets!" and "Down With the Ten Capitalist Ministers!" and the demand presented to the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s by the Bolsheviks that an end be put to coalition with the Cadets, opened great revolutionary possibilities for the Bolsheviks. The united front with the Social-Democrats will only open up before us great revolutionary possibilities if we do not, by the tactics of the united front, tie up our revolutionary initiative, our independent development of the struggles, and if we demand the further extension of these struggles from the Social-Democratic workers and organizations with whom we enter into united front struggles, and if we keep in mind the words of Comrade Stalin when he said in the report of the Central Committee to the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.:

"Only when the petty-bourgeois parties of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had finally discredited themselves on the basic questions of the revolution, only when the masses began to convince themselves of the correctness of our policies, did we lead the masses to the uprising. *Herein lies the root of the idea of the united front. The tactics of the united front were set in motion by Lenin only in order to make it easier for the millions of the masses of the working class in the capitalist countries who are burdened with the prejudices of Social-Democratic class collaboration to come over to the side of Communism.*" (Our emphasis—Ed.)

After the defeat of the Kornilov uprising the Bolsheviks won over to their side the majority of the working class. The Soviets, in their majority, were already under Bolshevik leadership and then the Bolshevik Party began to prepare the armed uprising.

The armed uprising is the highest form of the class

struggle. During the armed uprising there takes place the verification in action of the whole strategy, of the whole tactic, of the whole organization of the Party that leads the uprising.

What are the especially important lessons that our Parties can now learn from the direct preparations for the armed uprising carried through by the Bolsheviks on the eve of October? We will mention only two such lessons.

The Bolsheviks were opposed to any form of revolutionary adventurism, they did not play at uprisings; they decided upon the uprising only then when they succeeded, on the basis of their whole policy, to win to their side the majority of the working class and in obtaining a decisive preponderance of forces at the decisive points (this did not rule out the fact that the Bolsheviks in the July days of 1917 were compelled to head the spontaneous movement which broke out prematurely, in order to lead the masses into struggle with the least possible number of victims). From the moment, however, when the conditions for the uprising were established, the Bolsheviks took the line of the most determined offensive, carrying on a merciless struggle against the Right opportunist elements in their own ranks, i.e., those who showed hesitation and readiness to compromise in the period of attack.

Secondly, when the Bolsheviks assumed a determined offensive and, in connection with this, strengthened their fire against opportunism, they recognized, however, that,

"... for the victory of the revolution, if that revolution is really a people's revolution which draws in the masses in their millions, it is not sufficient to have the Party slogans correct. For the victory of the revolution one more condition is required, namely, that the masses themselves become convinced by their own experience of the correctness of those slogans. Only then do the slogans of the Party become the slogans of the masses themselves. . . . In other words, one of the special features in the tactics of the Bolsheviks lies in the fact that these tactics do not confuse the leadership of the Party with the leadership of the masses . . . in that these tactics represent the science, not only of leadership of the Party, but the leadership of the millions of the toiling masses." (Stalin.)

The Bolshevik Party entered on the struggle for Soviet Power and the armed uprising with open vizzor. In his famous April thesis, Lenin put forward the slogan of the Republic of Soviets. After the June days the Sixth Congress of the Party stated the following in its resolution: "The only method which the international proletariat has of really doing away with war is, therefore, the conquest of power, and in Russia the conquest of power by the workers and the poorest peasantry. . . . At the present time the peaceful development and painless transition of power

to the Soviets has become impossible, for in actual fact power has already passed into the hands of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie". (*Works*, Vol. XXI, p. 472, Russian ed.) After the Kornilov offensive had been liquidated, the Bolsheviks, headed by Lenin, raised the question squarely of the armed uprising. On September 14, Lenin wrote that "the question of power cannot be passed by, cannot be postponed". (*Ibid.* p. 142.) On September 12-14 Lenin wrote to the C.C. of the Party that "the Bolsheviks must seize power". (*Ibid.*, p. 193.) At the same time in a letter to the C.C. Lenin explained the attitude of Marxism towards the uprising. (*Ibid.*, p. 195.) In this article Lenin repudiated the arguments of those who asserted the Bolsheviks would not seize power. On October 7, Lenin wrote that "the crisis has come to a head". (*Ibid.*, p. 235.)

Finally, on October 10, on the basis of Lenin's report, the C.C. of the Party adopted its famous decision which stated that "recognizing in this way that the armed uprising is inevitable and has fully matured, the C.C. proposes that all Party organizations be led thereby, and discuss and solve all practical questions from this point of view". (*Ibid.*, p. 330.) Beginning from April, 1917, the Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin, openly prepared the proletariat for the seizure of power. After the June days the Party openly prepared the proletariat for the armed uprising. After the defeat of the Kornilov offensive, and the capture by the Bolsheviks of the majority in the Soviets in the big towns, the Party, led by Lenin, began energetically to organize the preparation of the armed uprising. At the same time, and especially in the storm months (September-October), Lenin adopted the most elastic tactics so as to draw on the millions of backward reserves to the decisive struggles.

After the delegates of the All-Russian Congress of Peasant Deputies had prepared instructions to their deputies, in the spirit of the S.R. agrarian program, Lenin, in September 1917, proposed, in order to draw the peasants onto the side of the revolution, that this S.R. program, which the S.R.'s themselves repudiated *in practice*, be adopted. He did so with the following argument: "The peasants wish to maintain their petty farms and to divide them up in an equalitarian fashion, and periodically to redivide them again. . . . Let no single far-sighted Socialist part with the peasant poor for this reason. If the land is confiscated, *this means* that the domination of the banks has been undermined; if the farm implements are confiscated, *this means* that the domination of the capitalists has been undermined, and so with the proletariat dominating in the center, with the passage of capitalist power to the proletariat, the remainder will be settled of itself, will be the result 'of the force of example' and will be prompted by practice itself." (*Ibid.*, pp. 112-13.)

When the Bolsheviks prepared for the storm which was to establish the Republic of the Soviets, they nonetheless did not withdraw the slogan of the calling together of the Constituent Assembly, which is a bourgeois parliament and is fundamentally opposed to the foundations of the Republic of the Soviets. In this connection, Comrade Stalin has written:

"How did it come to pass that one month before the insurrection the Bolsheviks admitted the possibility of a temporary combination of the Republic of Soviets with the Constituent Assembly? Here are the answers:

"1. The idea of the Constituent Assembly enjoyed wide popularity among the masses of the population. . . .

"3. In order to compromise the idea of the Constituent Assembly in the eyes of the masses it was necessary to confront these masses with the Assembly itself, to bring them with their demands for land, for peace, for Soviet Power, to the very walls of the Assembly chamber, and thus to put them in the presence of an actual, a living Constituent Assembly.

"4. Only by such means, by their own experience, could the masses learn the true nature, the counter-revolutionary nature, of the Constituent Assembly and the need for its dissolution." (Stalin, *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Bolsheviks*.)

In September and October of 1917 the Bolsheviks were most energetic in preparing the storm, the armed uprising, but beginning October 10, they discussed and decided all practical questions from this point of view. At the same time during these very months of the storm, when the revolutionary proletariat was already fully prepared to take the offensive, the Bolsheviks, in order to draw the wavering elements onto the side of the proletarian revolution, covered up their offensive actions in a defensive wapping.

In such a manner were the Bolsheviks able in the period of storm to combine the determination to assume the offensive and merciless struggle against the wavering Right opportunist elements in their own ranks, with the flexible tactics that ensured that the broadest masses were drawn onto the side of the revolution.

The Seventeenth Anniversary of the October Revolution is the great celebration of the international proletariat. The international proletariat, and especially the proletariat of the Soviet Union, comes to this Anniversary with no small successes. The revolutionary proletariat, however, celebrates this great Anniversary not in order to rest on its laurels, but in order to draw from the experiences of its heroic struggles all the necessary lessons for the coming great battles in the capitalist countries, for the establishment of Soviet Power, for the World October.

PROBLEMS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT*

By O. PIATNITSKY

OF all the questions I have received, I am replying to those which appear to me to be the most important at the present moment and I have grouped them according to separate subjects. We can expect that the Seventh Congress of the Communist International will deal with questions of the international trade union movement; and therefore I want to make it understood now that it is possible, and even probable, that one or another of the answers I am giving to the questions asked will be changed during the course of preparations for the Congress or at the Congress itself. That is up to the Congress. As for myself I shall answer these questions as I understand them now.

* * *

Question: Is it essential in the work of the revolutionary trade unions at the present time to lay special stress on setting up a united front in the trade union movement, and also on the question of unity of the trade union organizations?

Answer: Undoubtedly yes. We have never stopped talking of the necessity for this. But what is new and decisive at the moment is the fact that even the workers in the reformist, autonomous, "independent", Catholic, and other trade unions are beginning to be convinced of the need for unity. And this means that unity of the trade union organizations is now becoming more possible than ever before.

During all the years that followed the war, the reformist and other non-revolutionary trade unions pursued a policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. The revolutionary labor movement, which swept throughout the whole world after the world war, wrested a number of concessions from the bourgeoisie, which the Social-Democrats and reformists falsely declared were the result of their own reformist policy. However, the bourgeoisie, after having crushed the revolutionary advance of the workers, began, with the help of these very same reformists, to take back more and more of the concessions they had made to the workers. The position of the working class in the most important capitalist countries at the beginning of the economic crisis became still worse than before the war.

The revolutionary trade union movement developed

* These questions and answers represent a digest of the stenogram of the report given to the meeting of Communists in the Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern, August 2, 1934).

its policy on the basis of struggle against the bourgeoisie. In countries where the revolutionary trade union movement was strong, it was able to achieve considerable successes in this struggle. During the period of the crisis, when the bourgeoisie in all countries was systematically worsening the position of the working class, the workers, under the influence of the revolutionary trade unions and the revolutionary trade union opposition, carried on several militant strikes in resistance to the offensive of capital.

With the sharpening of the crisis, the reformist illusions of the workers who still followed Social-Democracy gradually disappeared. In spite of the fact that it became more difficult to carry on strikes during the crisis, the reformist trade unions were compelled to participate in strikes; and joint action on the part of workers' organizations affiliated to different trade union centers became more frequent. In this joint struggle workers in the reformist unions became more and more convinced of the fact that the trade union bureaucrats, while taking part in and even leading strikes, were pursuing the line of capitulating before the bourgeoisie, and that the Communists and revolutionary workers were in the front line of struggle fighting for the interests of the working class.

With the transition of the crisis to a depression of a special kind ("... the transition from the lowest depth of the industrial crisis to a depression, not an ordinary depression, but to a depression of a special kind which does not lead to a new boom and flourishing industry, but which, on the other hand, does not force it back to the lowest point of decline.")* ever broader masses of the workers are becoming convinced that all the talk of the reformists that prosperity will return again soon, that the standard of living of the workers will improve, that the unemployed will receive work in industry and so on, is nothing more than a pack of lies.

Despite the fact that industry is increasing in the most important capitalist countries, unemployment is decreasing only to an extremely insignificant extent, and in several cases is not decreasing at all because of the intensified exploitation of labor. Real wages have remained at the same miserable level as during the period when the crisis was sharpening, and in some countries, as, for example, America, they have even dropped. Together with the worsening of their material position the workers are being deprived

* Stalin, *Socialism Victorious*, p. 9.

more and more of all civil rights and are becoming more and more enslaved, especially in the fascist countries. This worsening of the position of the working class takes place under circumstances when the profits of the trusts and monopolists are steadily mounting.

The experience which the working masses are now gaining from the offensive of capital, especially the coming to power of the fascists in countries where the reformists were leading the majority of the workers—Germany and Austria—is helping the working class lose its reformist illusions more rapidly. An ever broader stratum of workers is beginning to be convinced of the necessity for joint struggle to defend their interests against the class enemy.

Two ways that have already been tried are open to considerable masses of the workers; the way of reformism and class collaboration which set the working class fifty years behind in the economic and political sense in several countries, and the second way of revolutionary struggle led by the Communists against the bourgeoisie, for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of proletarian dictatorship. The first way has led to fascist slavery even in a country where there was a highly organized working class movement like in Germany. The second way—the way of the October Revolution—has led to the victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R. The disillusionment felt by ever larger masses of workers concerning the reformist way, and the indisputable success of the revolutionary way, explain the desire of the workers for unity of action with the Communists, for the united front, for the establishment of unity of the trade union organizations.

But it is not enough merely to talk about the need for and the possibility of achieving unity. The Communists must fight still more determinedly, still more persistently for unity of the trade union organizations, by displaying the maximum steadfastness and flexibility in solving this most important task, and by taking into consideration the serious obstacles placed in the way of its realization by the trade union bureaucrats.

In spite of all the existing difficulties, unity of the trade union organizations is nevertheless possible if a systematic, stubborn, skillful struggle is carried on for it. Today, with the increased activity shown by the masses organized in reformist trade unions and the common desire of the workers for unity, the background for this struggle is more favorable than it has ever been, shall we say, during the last ten years. Of course, it is considerably more difficult to bring about unity of the trade union organizations than to establish a united front action, if only because of the fact that the united front has been realized in actions on separate questions or groups of questions and over a definite period of time, while

trade union unity requires unity of organization.

It should also be borne in mind that the trade union movement is extremely scattered and takes on different forms and tendencies in different countries. In France, for example, there are the reformist, the Red, the autonomous, the Christian, and other trade unions. In Spain—the reformist, anarcho-syndicalist, Red, autonomous and national trade unions (Basques, etc.). In the United States of America — trade unions affiliated to the American Federation of Labor, trade unions affiliated to the Trade Union Unity League, the independent trade unions, not to mention the company unions, into which the employers, with the support of the government, have managed to drive as many as five million members. In Poland and Czechoslovakia—all the parties (of which there are not a few) have their own trade unions. Only in England the reformist trade unions are the biggest mass organizations, having no big rivals in the form of a trade union movement of other tendencies.

For us, Communists, the fact that the task is a difficult one means, least of all, that we should refuse to find its solution. It only means that we cannot achieve unity of the trade union organizations in the different countries on the same basis or in the same way. We must take as our starting point the concrete condition of the trade union movement in each country separately, in order to develop the struggle for unity *outside*, and especially *inside*, the reformist and reactionray trade unions.

There can be no question of success in the struggle for unity of the trade union organizations if the Communists do not at last undertake the work seriously inside the mass non-revolutionary trade unions, and if they do not carry on systematic work in the factories to explain to the organized as well as the unorganized workers the need for the united front and for unity of the trade union organizations.

* * *

Question: Are there any really essential changes in the objective situation, which influence the application of our united front and unity tactics, or is it a question of correcting mistakes in the application of our unity tactics (like the united front from below tactics) and improving the leadership of the spontaneous movement of the broad masses on behalf of unity?

Answer: I consider that in comparison with the Sixth Comintern Congress and the Fifth Profintern Congress, big changes have, without doubt, been taking place of late in the working class and in the labor movement. After the temporary defeat of the German working class in January, 1933, and the breakdown of German Social-Democracy, and, in particular, after the February events in 1934 in Austria, a twofold process could be seen taking place

in the working class; not only was there disillusionment at the reformist policy and in some places desertion from the Social-Democratic Party, but the more class-conscious section of the workers in the reformist unions also displayed a growing desire for the united front, for organizational unity and, in certain places a desire for joining the Communists. Of course, the Social-Democratic and trade union leaders attempted all kinds of maneuvers with a view to retarding this deep-going process, but can they maneuver now with the same success as they did, for example, in 1918-20? No, it is not possible for them to do so now, first and foremost because these changes in the working class and in the labor movement are taking place in circumstances of profound economic crisis, when the crisis of capitalism is sharpening.

How did the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucrats circumvent and maneuver at that time?

In Germany, the Social-Democratic Party, when in power, shot down the revolutionary workers during those years; Noske's guards fired into the demonstrations in January, 1920, as they passed by the Reichstag in connection with the debate on the factory workshop committees bill. But at the same time this same Social-Democratic Party tried to throttle the revolutionary movement of the working masses with reforms which were of importance to every worker: collective wage agreements, the eight-hour working day, the usual civil rights, the right of shop committees to participate in drawing up internal factory regulations, etc.

After the war, in several countries the workers enjoyed more civil rights than before the war, when the trade unions had had to fight a struggle for recognition by the employers, etc. Labor legislation in Austria was introduced on a broader scale than in Germany. In England unemployment insurance was established. In France, legislation was passed granting health insurance, and the workers there also found their position relieved somewhat as compared with previous times. In a word, at that time the Social-Democratic leaders and trade union bureaucrats were compelled to "introduce" several reforms to improve the position of the workers, although at the very same time they were shooting down revolutionary workers and Communists. A large section of the organized and unorganized workers who benefited somewhat from these reforms, left the revolutionary organizations; and all these crimes and betrayals by the reformists passed off with impunity for them in those days.

Can the reformists now speculate on what they allege to have achieved for the broad strata of the workers? Not at all. During recent years, in every single country, the bourgeoisie have tried to find a

way out of the economic crisis at the expense of the toilers and with the help of the Social-Democratic Party, by abolishing or adversely modifying the legislation introduced immediately after the war. With the help of the reformists, the bourgeoisie have worsened the economic position of the workers.

In several countries an ever broader mass of workers is becoming convinced that the reformist policy with its "peaceful", easy way to socialism ultimately leads to fascism. Side by side with increased exploitation and an even greater denial of civil rights for the workers, the latter are ever more rapidly losing their Social-Democratic and reformist illusions. And so the Social-Democratic Party cannot now deceive the working class as it did in 1918-20. This gives the Communist Parties and the revolutionary trade union movement an opportunity of utilizing the dissatisfaction felt by the broad masses towards the reformist policy and their desire for unity. Thus the struggle to realize the united front of joint struggle and unity of the trade union organizations is now the center of our work.

This new feature demands that first of all we make our tactics more concrete, that we modify them somewhat and, most important, that we improve our methods of working, the form in which our work is expressed and its content.

How should the united front tactics be pursued? From the way in which this question is formulated it would seem that we now reject the tactics of a united front from below. This, of course, is not true. *The united front from below has always been, and still remains, the fundamental form of the united front.* But this in no way means that we exclude the adoption of tactics for a united front from above. In many cases even now it will be possible to get a united front only from below, *but there cannot be a united front which comes only from above.*

Let us take Great Britain. The Labor Party, the trade unions, the co-operatives, still refuse to establish a united front with the British Communist Party. And the broad masses follow them. Should the British Communist Party cease to adopt the united front tactics in its daily economic and political struggle? Of course not. The Communists should redouble their efforts in the struggle for a united front from below, using at the same time every opportunity of raising again and again before the leadership of the Labor Party and the trade unions the question of unity of action in the struggle against the capitalist offensive, against fascism and the danger of war.*

* Despite the leadership of the Labor Party and the General Council of reformist trade unions, the united front made a considerable step forward in England: On September 9, 1934, in response to an appeal of the Communist Party and of the British Independent Labor

But I may be told that the Communist Party of Great Britain has established the united front with the Independent Labor Party by an agreement from above. True, but this agreement was arrived at because the National Council of the I.L.P. was forced to enter into the united front with the Communists under the pressure brought to bear upon it by its members, thanks to the fact that the struggle of the Communists for a united front from below was successful.

Let us take France, where an agreement has now been arrived at between the leadership of the Socialist Party and the Central Committee of the Communist Party for joint action on certain questions. Why, only quite recently, in the beginning of 1934, the Central Committee of the Socialist Party and the Socialist Party Congress refused—although with quite a considerable minority objecting—to negotiate on the question of the united front. But after this refusal the rank-and-file organizations of the French Communist Party again made an appeal directly to the rank-and-file organizations of the Socialist Party, proposing joint struggle against fascism; as a result, the united front began to be realized in practice in Paris and other industrial towns. And this pressure from below turned out to be so strong that the leaders of the French Socialist Party, Faure and Blum, were compelled to go on record at their National Council to the effect that the united front is gaining great success in spite of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party, and that they would only stop their members from establishing without authorization the united front from below by themselves entering into negotiations with the Central Committee of the French Communist Party from above. Can it be said after that that the united front in France was brought about by agreement only from above? Of course not.

Surely it is no time to talk about the united front from above now that in several countries (France, Great Britain and even more so in Austria) a considerable section of the members of reformist trade unions and of the Social-Democratic Party is, in many cases, not only beginning to insist upon achieving the united front, but is establishing it independently of the decisions of the leaders. The Communists never denied the fact that it is also per-

Party, more than 100,000 workers staged a counter-demonstration against fascism, notwithstanding the call of the Labor Party and of the leadership of the reformist trade unions urging the workers not to participate in the demonstration. Moreover, 34 rank-and-file regional trade union organizations; two trade union organizations of London; two Central Committees of Trade Unions, and 30 regional (district) rank-and-file organizations of the Labor League of Youth joined the call for the demonstration and actively participated in it.

missible to adopt the united front tactics from above. Therefore, what is new now in pursuing united front tactics is not that we are changing the appraisal in principle of one or another form of the united front, but that we are much more persistent, bolder and more flexible in operating these tactics, that we fight to the utmost to spread them, and that we are starting a determined offensive against Social-Democratic leaders and trade union bureaucrats who sabotage the united front of struggle. By doing this the Communists are eliminating the weakness which they have shown in the past in the question of struggling for the united front. We only too easily submitted to the sabotage of the united front by the reformists and displayed insufficient energy in the direction of striving for the thing we aimed at.

Now the support of the broadest masses is ensured for the cause of united struggle; now the Communists are fighting systematically and stubbornly for the united front; and this is the guarantee of victory for unity of struggle.

Can it be said that the desire for the united front today is only a spontaneous phenomenon? Not at all, the Communists have always pointed to the need for a united front, and during the last two years, in connection with the offensive of fascism and the growing danger of war, the question of the united front has never left the pages of the Communist and revolutionary trade union press, and this in turn has forced the Socialist press to talk about the united front as well. The events in Germany and Austria, and partly in France as well (the fascist demonstrations on February 6) considerably alarmed the broad masses of workers and they began to respond more actively to the appeals of the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions for the united front. Both the need for the united front of struggle and the possibility of establishing it have increased of late.

Until now the united front has been achieved on the initiative of the Communists, and two kinds of tactics have been adopted. In certain cases the united front was realized on separate questions between the leadership of parallelly existing trade unions or political parties, and the Communists and revolutionary trade unions simultaneously appealed to the members of those organizations as well as to the broad masses of workers for united struggle. In other cases, when the central leadership of the reformist trade unions and Socialist Parties refused to establish a united front, the revolutionary trade unions and Communist organizations appealed to the parallelly existing lower organizations of the reformists, over the head of the reformist leadership.

We know that in France on February 9 and 12, 1934, a considerable number of the French proletariat, including members of reformist trade unions and the Socialist Party, came out and demonstrated

in response to the appeal of the French Communist Party, in spite of the fact that the leadership of the reformist trade unions directly appealed to their members not to take part in these demonstrations, and the Socialist Party even called a general strike for the same purpose of preventing the working masses from participating in the demonstrations. This shows that when the Communist Party and the Red trade unions were able to choose a suitable moment for action, to put forward correct slogans which appealed to the masses, and to popularize these slogans extensively and carry out all the necessary organizational measures, the result was that the Communist Party and the Red trade unions were able to draw into the struggle against the fascists the workers who followed the reformists and Socialists in direct opposition to the will of their central leadership.

As we know, the Socialists called a "down tools" strike on February 12, but without any demonstrations, without any meetings, etc. The Communist Party of France joined in this strike, but at the same time called upon the workers to demonstrate. The result was that large masses of the workers turned out to demonstrate in response to the Communist Party appeal.

It is this that is inducing the leadership of the Socialists and individual reformist trade unions to accept the united front proposals of the Communists.

In several countries, the reformist leadership continues its old tactics of openly sabotaging the united front. In these countries the Communist proposals for a united front are being accepted by the lower reformist organizations (England and Czechoslovakia) and result in class solidarity in the struggle.

Thus, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the united front has been achieved as the result of the activity of Communists and revolutionary workers, who have been able to rely upon the desire of the working masses for joint struggle against the economic and political offensive of the bourgeoisie and against the fascist danger and fascism.

What does the united front of struggle bring to the workers? First and foremost it increases the power of the working class for struggle against the bourgeoisie. This is why it has enraged the bourgeoisie of France. Second, it increases the fighting capacity of the proletariat and their confidence in their own power. Third, it raises the authority of the Communist Party in the eyes of the masses, and breaks down the legend that the Communists split the labor movement. Fourth, it puts the Social-Democratic workers on to the road of class struggle. Fifth, by encouraging a rapprochement between the Communist and Social-Democratic workers it increases the power of the Communist Party to influence the Social-Democratic workers.

Let us take another case. The Social-Democratic Parties and the leaders of the trade unions refused to establish a united front, and the members of these organizations and the workers who follow them, responded to the appeal of the Communists and revolutionary workers and acted jointly with them. In this case the conducting of the united front is a big step forward again in the cause of directly freeing the workers from the influence of their leaders, who openly try to prevent the united front. It will be easier for the Communists to continue to work in future among these workers. These workers will help and support the Communists in their work in the reformist organizations. Of course, this is on condition that the Communists really work well and pursue the correct policy, that they are tactful in their approach to the reformist workers. Thus in both cases the workers will gain by the united struggle.

We are still only at the beginning of conducting the united front. We have done only very little so far in this respect, but what has already been achieved in some places has meant an important step forward in the cause of bringing the Communists closer to the broad masses of the workers. In this way the solution of one of the most important tasks of the Communists is facilitated: the liberation of the working masses from reformist illusions, their transfer to the position of class struggle. The Communists must be ten times more strenuous in the struggle for the united front. They must intensify the work of establishing it in practice.

* * *

Question: (a) What is the platform for creating a united trade union movement, what is the platform of unity in places where the question has already been concretely raised (France, Spain)?

(b) How should the question of a united trade union movement be raised in countries where there is a centralized Red trade union movement (France, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Cuba and the United States of America); how can unity be achieved in these countries?

(c) How should the campaign for a united trade union movement be conducted in countries where there is no centralized Red trade union movement, but where there are only a few individual Red trade unions (for example, Belgium, Switzerland)?

Answer: In spite of the fact that all the countries enumerated in the first two questions have a centralized trade union movement, the question of unity of the trade union organizations must be raised in a different way in each country.

Take Czechoslovakia for example. Here we still have national-socialist trade unions of the Benes type, in addition to the reformist ones. Is unity

possible with the national-socialist trade unions? The leadership of these trade unions will never agree to unity. This means that it is only possible to unite with them to the degree that the membership of these trade unions becomes freed from the leadership.

Is it possible to achieve trade union unity with the German and Czech Social-Democratic trade unions? Yes, it is possible, and this must be the starting point in bringing about unity of the trade unions in Czechoslovakia. But what is the attitude of the reformist trade union bureaucrats to this kind of unity? They are in the government and they support the entire program of the bourgeoisie for getting out of the crisis at the expense of the workers. There, unity will become really possible only to the degree that the trade unions of individual branches of industry break away from the common, central leadership, or replace their leaders.

In fighting for unity, the Red trade unions must put forward conditions which the broad masses of workers will understand, like the struggle for State unemployment insurance without any contributions on the part of the workers, instead of the Ghent insurance system; for the abolition of all the legislation which places the burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the workers (passed with the help of the Social-Democratic Parties); for wage increases, for the unrestricted right to strike, etc.

There is not the slightest doubt that the organized and unorganized workers of Czechoslovakia will most certainly gain by uniting on a minimum platform of this kind plus the guarantee of inner trade union democracy, proportional elections and the right of criticism. The fact that the trade union movement is divided is one of the biggest reasons why the proletariat of Czechoslovakia has not up to now waged a real struggle against their constantly worsening standard of living. The fact that the trade union movement is divided suits the bourgeoisie, and it is not surprising that the bourgeois press is up in arms against the united front and working class unity. The reformist and national-socialist leaders of the trade unions who collaborate with the bourgeoisie against the workers, are also against a united trade union movement. But the members of these trade unions and the lower trade union organizations will accept unity of the trade unions.

Agitation for this unity must be carried on skillfully and persistently among the workers inside and outside their organizations. The Czechoslovakian Communist Party must energetically start work in the reformist trade unions (Czech and German) and in the unions under the influence of the Benes party, showing themselves before the workers as the determined champion of unity of the trade union organizations in the interests of the workers.

What about the question of unity of the trade unions in Spain? As we pointed out above, there are a few trade union centers in the country: Red trade unions, anarcho-syndicalist, reformist trade union centers; and lastly there are a host of autonomous trade unions as well.* Should the Red trade unions there raise the question of uniting all the existing trade unions? They not only must but it appears altogether feasible at the present time, because members of trade unions of all tendencies participated in recent strikes even when the leadership of the reformist and anarcho-syndicalist trade unions did not call their members out on strike. Having in mind the revolutionary situation in the country, the platform put forward by them for unity should include approximately the following demands: the repeal of all anti-labor legislation, the fight against reaction, freedom of strike action, a 40-hour working week without cuts in pay, increased wages and the introduction of all forms of State insurance without any contributions from the employed workers, etc. The demand should be made for organizational guarantees as in Czechoslovakia: proportional representation at elections, the right of criticism and internal trade union democracy.

It is essential to note that our struggle for unity of the trade union organizations in Spain is retarded because of the fact that when the Red trade unions were organized, the work in the trade union unity committees was completely dropped, as a result of which these committees were actually reduced to

* The fragmentary condition of the Spanish trade union movement played a fatal role in the October events in Spain. The "*Alianza Obrera*", which called the general strike, which subsequently turned into an armed struggle, consisted of Communist and Socialist organizations and of Red and reformist trade unions. But the anarcho-syndicalist trade unions were absent in the *Alianza Obrera* (only in individual localities did the anarcho-syndicalist trade unions join the local *Alianza Obrera* despite their central leadership). The anarcho-syndicalist unions are very strong in the most industrial sections of Spain—in Catalonia.

The vacillations of the Socialist Party and the reformist trade unions (they did not call a strike of the railroad workers), and the treachery of the anarcho-syndicalist leaders who sabotaged the strike and who called for a cessation of the struggle, brought about a temporary defeat of the Spanish proletariat. The workers took power into their hands only in Asturias, where the provincial organization of the Communist Party of Spain had and continues to have a great influence upon the workers and where the Red trade unions are very strong and active. In Asturias the workers proclaimed a "Republic of the Workers, Peasants and Soldiers". The *Alianza Obrera* armed the proletariat in Asturias and that proletariat is fighting heroically against the government forces to this day.

nothing. It is essential that the trade union unity committees should resume their work in some form or another and become real factors in bringing about the unity of the trade union organizations.

The question of unity of the trade unions in France is in a somewhat different position. Here living events have put forward a new form of trade union unity. Here also the trade union bureaucrats are doing their utmost to sabotage trade union unity. Not so long ago the *Confederation Generale du Travail* (reformist trade union center) replied to the appeal of the *Confederation Generale du Travail Unitaire* (Red trade unions) for unity, by proposing that the Red trade unions join, and become dissolved in, the reformist trade unions entirely unconditionally. Moreover the leaders of the reformist trade unions declared that only after the Red trade unions have joined the reformist organizations will they raise the question as to whether or not to convene the National Trade Union Congress. In simple language this proposal means: we, the reformists, will first of all see what the relation of forces will be after the Red trade unions have joined us; if the revolutionary workers turn out to be in the minority in all the trade unions, then we shall call the Congress and make our control secure; if the revolutionary workers are in a majority in the big trade unions, then we shall postpone the Congress and convene it again only when we have won the workers over.

If the trade union bureaucrats approach the question of unity in this way, it is clear that when the Red trade unions join the reformist trade unions on such conditions, the trade union bureaucrats will first of all take steps to expel the former Red leadership, on some pretext or other, from the united trade unions. The French trade union bureaucrats are very experienced in that sort of thing.

Before the trade unions split in France, whole organizations that had declared against class collaboration were expelled. Can the Red trade unions of France walk into such a trap? No, they cannot and are hardly likely to do so. But this means that they must fight for unity of the trade union organizations on the basis of at least a minimum platform, guaranteeing themselves suitable conditions for working in the united trade unions.

Is it right to drop the idea of unity of the trade union organizations in France, once the trade union bureaucrats turn it down? On no account, the more so since it is just in France that the broad masses of working men and women and office employees, including a considerable section of the reformist and autonomous trade unions, are already beginning to get accustomed to the broad united front, despite the trade union bureaucrats. These participants in the united front of struggle both want, and will adopt unity of the trade unions. It is the task of the Red

trade unions to make use of this mood and to broaden the campaign for a united trade union movement. To do this, it is necessary for the Communists, having started work inside the reformist trade unions, to rally around themselves all members of reformist trade unions who are dissatisfied with the reformist policy of their leaders, and to build up an influential revolutionary trade union opposition inside the reformist trade unions.

This opposition should raise the demand inside the trade unions for unity of the trade union organizations, at the same time supporting the struggles of the Red trade unions on behalf of the daily interests of the workers. From this point of view, the important fact is that we already have many cases where individual, parallelly existing trade unions, Red, reformist and autonomous, in leaving their own central trade union organizations, or still remaining connected with their own trade union centers, join forces and amalgamate into independent trade union organizations in one industry in the town or region. In this way, in France, 166 amalgamated trade union organizations have been set up and in particular 105 for railwaymen, 27 for tobacco workers, 12 for transport workers in the Paris region, 3 for miners, etc.

The joint meetings of the Red and reformist unions of the building workers and navies in Paris discussed the question of amalgamation of this kind. The executive committees of the Red and reformist trade union organizations of the railwaymen of the southern railways called an emergency congress of their organizations to discuss the question of unity. The movement is embracing trade unions in other branches also. This form of unity cannot fail to bring pressure to bear upon the reformist leadership as well, however much they may try to put forward their own counter-plan for the unconditional entry of the Red trade unions into the reformist organizations.*

* The session of the council of the reformist (Amsterdam) International passed a resolution on the report of Jouhaux delivered in the beginning of September in Weymouth (England), in which, following the example of the French *Confederation Generale du Travail*, it is proposed that instead of achieving trade union unity by way of uniting trade unions of different tendencies, that the Red trade unions "dissolve, and their members return" to the reformist trade unions. However, in the same decision of the Amsterdam International nothing is said as to whether it is prepared to discontinue its practice of expelling revolutionary workers from trade unions; or prepared to extend to members of Red trade unions joining reformist trade unions the right and opportunity of fighting for elective posts on the basis of trade union democracy. At the same time the Weymouth resolution shows that the leaders of the reformist trade unions are already unable merely to ignore the desire which is developing among the work-

Should the Red trade unions refuse this method of uniting? No, they should not. The Red trade unions should try to unite trade unions of different tendencies in one or another branch of industry even in this way. The trade unions which unite, when they leave the existing reformist (C.G.T.) and Red (C.G.T.U.) central organizations, or even remain linked up with them, may be playing a positive role in the cause of trade union unity. I consider that the Red trade unions, for their part, should do everything possible to come closer to those trade unions which are prepared to break with the central reformist leadership, as well as the autonomous trade unions, and to do so without any hesitation or delay. Since the Red trade unions are leading strikes and defending the interests of the workers and office employees, they will be able, provided the approach to the reformist workers is the correct one, to bring other unions into the joint struggle, which in itself is an important step towards the unity of the trade union movement.

We have spent years trying to prove that work in the reformist trade unions is necessary. It would appear that this need is no longer denied in words, but in actual fact there is still no steady improvement in this work for the period since the Sixth Congress of the Communist International.

Why is it that the decisions concerning work in reformist trade unions have not been put into practice?

The main reason is that the Communist Parties have not always been able to adapt these decisions to the peculiar conditions to be found in their own countries. For instance, in countries where Red trade unions exist, the Communists have not distributed their forces so as to guarantee that the work in both the Red trade unions and in the reformist unions was carried on simultaneously. In other countries, the revolutionary trade union opposition centered its work outside the reformist trade unions instead of inside, because of insufficient or incorrect leadership. In the third group of countries, the Communist Parties, having organized illegal Red trade unions which led individual strikes but which, because of the terror used against them, were unable to develop into mass unions, did not carry on any work in the Kuomintang (China) and the fascist (Italy) trade unions.

Not infrequently decisions were carried out mechanically; the slogans issued and agitation carried on were not always understood by members of the reformist trade unions, and the general approach to the masses was often of a sectarian kind.

ing masses for unity of the trade union organizations, and are compelled to adopt more astute and cunning maneuvers than hitherto in rejecting the proposals of the Red trade unions for unity.

One should add to the reasons enumerated above one other: that the decisions concerning individual countries did not always take into consideration the concrete situation existing or the difficulties to be met with in carrying out decisions in the given concrete circumstances.

The fact that these weaknesses and mistakes were present has given certain comrades cause to draw the conclusion that since we did not meet with enough success in our trade union work, then the trade union policy on the whole was wrong. This is not true. The experience of the work of Communists in the reformist trade unions of England, and then Sweden, Holland, Poland and the United States of America, has shown that where work in the reformist trade unions was carried on skilfully and persistently, undeniable results were to be seen from it. If the work inside the reformist trade union of one industry, or one town or one country, gives positive results, then there is no reason why similar work should not give similar results in another industry, town, or country, given more or less equal conditions, and if the peculiar circumstances of each case are taken into consideration.

What is the new trade union policy proposed by those comrades who are dissatisfied with the old one? The trade union policy they propose, it appears, should be that the Red trade unions should go over to the reformists unconditionally without any fight being put up for conditions. . . . Maybe the trade union work would then improve. It is unlikely, however, that we will get any improvement in our trade union work on these lines.

May we exclude entirely the possibility of individual Red trade unions transforming unconditionally to parallelly existing reformist trade unions? No. This is possible in individual cases—in cases where the members of the Red trade union, who transfer to the reformist trade union unconditionally, are actually permitted an opportunity of carrying on a struggle therein for the elective positions and of directing their activities towards the struggle for the workers' interests.

Can individual cases of this kind become our general policy at the present time? No. Why? First, because, as a rule, there is not and cannot be any reason to believe that the reformists will give an opportunity to the members of one or another of the Red trade unions who affiliate unconditionally to work inside the reformist union. Second, with the ripening of the revolutionary crisis, the Communist Party cannot liquidate mass trade union organizations under its influence which embrace workers on a broader scale than the Communist Party, and through which it can spread its influence to broad masses of unorganized workers. Is it wise from this point of view to transfer the big Red trade unions

in France and Spain unconditionally to the reformists? I do not think it is, because both in France and in Spain, there is frequently to be found in one and the same city, a large number of small unions in addition to the big Red trade unions, and to transfer in this way unconditionally might lead to the actual liquidation of the Red trade unions, and to throwing them upon the mercy of the reformist leaders.

A short time ago one of the foreign organs of the Profintern advised the Profintern supporters in the Lausanne trade union council, which has a Social-Democratic majority, but nevertheless had left the Swiss general reformist trade union center, to return to the latter unconditionally, despite the fact that the trade union council has the support of the majority of the members of the Lausanne trade unions. This would mean returning unconditionally, without even the present secretary, without the present active fighters who have always struggled and are struggling against the reformist trade union center. Moreover, it would be a rather curious state of affairs: the Right Social-Democrats and the Communists in the Lausanne council would be in favor of returning unconditionally, while the "Left" Social-Democrats would be against.

Let us take this example: suppose the unemployed organization in Holland, which includes 15,000 and over whom the Dutch Communist Party has influence, would go over unconditionally to the reformists, who are about to create a union of unemployed because they will receive some kind of concessions for the unemployed from the government. And suppose it did that even before it has been discovered exactly what concessions these are, whether the existing organization of the unemployed could not get the government to give it the same conditions as the reformists and whether the reformist union of unemployed has any chance of becoming a broad mass organization. Meanwhile the Dutch Communist Party has 6,000 members, and the unemployed organization has 15,000, and therefore covers a broader section of the workers than the Party. We know that the Communists played a big role in the recent events in Holland, which began after the government had cut down benefits to one category of unemployed and ceased payments altogether to another. There is not the slightest doubt that the Communist Party of Holland during the eventful days relied in the main upon this unemployed organization. Would not such a step of liquidating the existing organization of the unemployed have had consequences for the revolutionary movement in Holland?

When the Presidium of the Comintern passed its resolution on events in Germany which contains the statement that the Social-Democratic workers also bear the responsibility for the temporary defeat of

the German proletariat (resolution of April 1, 1933), I had more than once to defend this position. The comrade who objected to this point argued in this way: we have always said that the rank-and-file members and even the active members in lower organizations of the Social-Democratic Party are not the same thing as the Social-Democratic leadership, and that our approach to them must be different from our approach to their leaders. How can you assert now, they ask perplexedly, that the responsibility for the temporary defeat of the German proletariat lies with the Social-Democratic workers also? We explained at the time that it was and still remains quite true that the approach to the rank-and-file members and to the lower functionaries should be different from the approach to the leadership. Nevertheless, they also bear a certain amount of responsibility for the fact that they blindly followed that treacherous leadership at the decisive moment, and that thanks to that they did not adopt the united front; and this in spite of the fact that the Communist Party, as well as its local organizations and individual Communists, did their utmost to make it easy for the Social-Democratic workers to understand the need for the united front of struggle and to bring them into the joint struggle against fascism.

So to the extent that the Social-Democratic workers did not take part in the united front of struggle against fascism, in spite of all these efforts of the Communists, part of the responsibility for the temporary defeat of the proletariat lies with them. Since fascist dictatorships were set up in Germany and Austria, the mood of the broad strata of Social-Democracy, even of the "democratic" countries, has changed considerably: an ever larger section of them are beginning to lose their reformist illusions and demand that their leadership conduct a joint struggle with the Communists against fascism. The decision of the Presidium, which revealed to the Social-Democratic workers of Germany the role they objectively played in not supporting the anti-fascist struggle of the Communists, has helped the Social-Democratic workers considerably to learn from their own experience.

A similar thing is happening now again on the question of the attitude towards reformist trade unions. The Comintern has told the Communist Parties more than once that the character of the work of the Communists inside the reformist trade unions must be improved and has emphasized the fact that positive results can be obtained from the work when it is conducted sufficiently skilfully and systematically. Certain comrades, having learned this perfectly correct viewpoint, begin to argue in the following way: "If the work of Communists in reformist organizations, when carried on correctly, gives positive results, then why not liquidate the Red

trade unions and transfer their members *en masse* to the reformist organizations without putting forward any conditions? Then, of course, much greater successes will be achieved.”

I think that comrades who reason this all out so simply do not follow the question to its final conclusion and do not take into consideration the concrete circumstances in which we have to fight for unity in the trade union field. It is very praiseworthy of them to seek new ways to improve the work inside the reformist trade unions, but the road they propose as the easiest of all would result in weakening the revolutionary trade union movement and not in strengthening it. It is therefore absolutely impossible to agree to these proposals.

Let us consider the other side of the same question. Can the Communist Parties depend only on mere Party organizations when great events are unfolding, and be left without any strong, broad mass workers' organizations which bring the broad masses of workers under their influence? I do not think so. This refers primarily to those parties which are going forward directly to the decisive struggles. In this case the question must be especially carefully considered as to the advisability of liquidating even a small mass organization which is under our influence, if by doing so there is no chance at all of really winning influence in a broader organization still under the influence of hostile leadership. Let us take two examples in this sphere.

In Germany in 1923 there was a revolutionary situation, which no one is likely to deny. But at the same time not a single trade union on a national scale followed the German Communist Party, and the German Communists (both “Rights” and “Lefts”) refused to set up Soviets. True, the German Communist Party had unquestionable influence in the factory committees at that time, but these committees were not united in all the industrial centers, they did not have strong leadership and were not strongly linked up with the masses. The central organizations in the cities were not elected at meetings of those elected representatives of the factory committees, whom all the factory committees would have followed fully, or at least the majority of the members, but were elected at meetings of the members of the factory committees where by far not all the members of all the factory committees participated and which did not always have the support of the majority in the factory committees.

And even if the policy of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party had been correct in 1923 (and we all know that its policy was absolutely wrong), it would not have been able to put it into practice, because the Party was not linked up organizationally with the broad masses of the workers. It is not enough to have a correct policy. That

is very important, but not everything. It is essential to organize the work of putting the policy into practice. At that time the Communist Party of Germany had no broad working class organizations through which it could make organizational contacts with the masses; it had no driving belts connecting it with these broad masses. The Central Committee of the German Communist Party did not even know the mood of the working masses in the biggest factories of the industrial centers at that time. And the German factory committees, which had a Communist majority but were not linked up with the masses, differed extremely from the factory committees in Russia during the period between February and October, 1917, which had deep roots in the factories, which knew what was happening daily inside the factories, and which set the whole tone and led the workers in actual fact.

I would remind the comrades of an example from the history of the struggle of the proletariat of pre-revolutionary Russia just before October, 1917. On August 12, 1917, the Provisional government and representatives of all the bourgeois and reformist parties arrived in Moscow from Petrograd, where the revolutionary struggle was rife, for the purpose of arranging a council of state. They had fled from revolutionary Petrograd to “conservative” Moscow. The Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party decided to celebrate their arrival. It was decided to organize a 24-hour general strike. In Moscow, as in other Russian towns, a broad mass organization already existed at that time—the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—but the Moscow Soviet where the Mensheviks and S.R.'s were in the majority, was against the strike. The Moscow Committee of Bolsheviks sent out a call, consequently, to the trade unions, and the Moscow trade unions endorsed the appeal for a strike together with the Bolsheviks. And so, the Bolsheviks, backed up by the trade unions and the factory committees which supported them, organized a general strike over the heads of the biggest mass organization—the Soviet. The Soviet published an appeal against the strike; the Menshevik, S.R. and bourgeois newspapers shouted against the strike, and yet the strike was a brilliant one. Could the Bolsheviks have organized this strike without having influence in the trade unions and in their leadership? No, they could not have done so.

How did the Bolsheviks maneuver between February and October, when they still had no majority in the Soviets and when they still had no majority in all the trade unions in Leningrad? When it was necessary, they relied upon the factory committees and the soldiers' committees in their fight against the Soviets and the trade union council. In Moscow the trade unions and factory committees were used

against the compromising Soviets. All this was possible because the Bolsheviks worked extremely skillfully and energetically, in all the mass organizations of the workers, soldiers, peasants and office workers. Having decided upon the correct line and concrete slogans, the Bolsheviks fought for them inside all the mass organizations in which they were in the minority. Inside these organizations they actively supported all the activities of the Bolshevik Party, mobilizing their supporters to participate in these activities.

Situations of this kind are not a national peculiarity of Russia; they may arise again in other countries. The Communist Party that is out to seize power should have broad organizations, which in turn spread their influence over even broader strata of the organized and unorganized workers. Of course, the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917 were in a better position than the Communist Parties in capitalist countries of Europe and America are today. The Russian Bolsheviks were working in a revolutionary situation, when the masses rapidly became revolutionized and did not hold fast to their old organizations and parties, when the latter had ceased to satisfy their revolutionary requirements. In addition, although political parties supported by the workers had existed in Russia for a long time (illegally), the trade union organizations, although in existence since 1905 legally, had not been organized in all industries and in all towns, and they dragged out a miserable enough existence. Only after February, 1917, did the organizations of the workers, peasants and soldiers gain considerable strength, and the toilers' organizations become true mass organizations.

Despite the fact that many political parties existed in Russia, before the October Revolution, the mass organizations of the workers were on the whole not divided; the mood of the masses was one which made the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries hesitate as a rule about expelling the Bolsheviks from the mass organizations and splitting these organizations. All parties had an opportunity of fighting more or less freely for influence over the mass organizations. This was a very favorable moment for the Bolshevik Party; the Bolsheviks had an opportunity of fighting inside the mass organizations for ideological influence and were able to make their successes secure organizationally. In the summer of 1917, the Bolsheviks had no formal majority even in the greater part of the workers' and soldiers' organizations, let alone in all of them, but in many towns they had a majority in individual trade unions, in district soviets, in factory committees, and in company and regimental soldiers' committees. They fought to gain influence through them and through the Communist fractions in all the mass organizations. That is why,

when it was necessary in the interests of the revolution, the Bolsheviks were able to make use of the mass organizations which were under their influence against others where the reformists still held a majority.

In many countries of Europe and America, the Communist Parties were forced, at their very formation, because of the splitting policy of the reformists, to organize parallel non-party workers' organizations. We all know the enormous harm which these splitting tactics of the reformists caused the working class. On the one hand, they prevented the Communists from fighting for influence in the reformist mass organizations where the majority of the organized workers were members, since the Communists concentrated their work upon the Red organizations which existed side by side; on the other hand, the existence of the parallel organizations, for which no one was to blame but the reformists, complicated the joint struggle of the workers against capital.

Thus, in splitting the working class, the reformist leaders fulfilled their tasks as the agents of the bourgeoisie among the working class. Now that the influence of the reformists is declining and the workers are prepared to fight in the united front against the offensive of fascism and increased exploitation, the Communists and revolutionary workers must make use of the more favorable situation and lose no time in waging a determined struggle on behalf of unity of the trade union organizations. The struggle should be begun all along the line: by a standing appeal from both the central and local leaderships to the parallelly existing reformist trade unions and trade union organizations of other tendencies—an appeal which will contain concrete proposals for unity of the trade union organizations to suit the situation in each particular case—by strengthening the work of the Communists and revolutionary workers inside the mass trade union organizations of other tendencies, for the purpose of converting these organizations into ones which will defend the interests of the workers and support unity of the trade union organizations. But this does not at all mean that the Red trade unions should agree to unity without putting forward any conditions at all. If individual Red trade unions and other mass workers' organizations go over to the reformists unconditionally, they will be unable to carry on any successful work inside these organizations. The reformist leadership of these organizations will continue as before their method of expelling the active Communists and revolutionary workers in order to deprive the Communists of the opportunity of depending upon the only remaining mass organizations, and especially so when the time comes when it will be necessary to act and to call the masses to action.

All that has been said above applies to the revolutionary organizations which already exist side by side with the reformist organizations. It is quite another question whether the Communist Party should build up its own trade unions in countries like England. On this particular question the answer is no.

The Communists cannot as a rule dissolve the already existing mass organizations under their ideological and organizational influence and recommend that they join the reformists, without any guarantee of conditions there under which Communists and their supporters will be able to carry on their work freely inside the reformist organizations for transforming them into organizations of class struggle. But this on no account lessens, but on the contrary increases, the importance of a determined and skillful struggle for unity of the trade union organizations on definite conditions, and first and foremost the duty of Communists to explain persistently, patiently and convincingly to the reformist workers that the Communists put forward these conditions in the interests of the victorious struggle of the workers.

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Question: How should the question of unity in the trade union movement be raised in countries where illegal Red trade unions and legal reformist unions exist (Poland, the Balkans and the Baltic countries)?

Answer: The Balkans cannot be taken as one whole. In Bulgaria and Greece the position is different from that in Rumania and Yugoslavia. The question is quite different in Poland and in the Baltic countries. The question must be studied thoroughly in each country separately. In countries where the Communists have strong mass organizations, they can propose unity of the parallelly existing organizations through straightforward, direct negotiations with the reformists. In the event of the negotiations being successful (when the reformists agree to introduce trade union democracy, freedom of criticism and proportional representation), the members of the illegal Red trade unions affiliating to the reformist unions then get an opportunity of working legally.

In other countries, say in Yugoslavia, it may be advisable for the Red trade unions to transfer to the reformists without putting forward any conditions and as an organized opposition to put up a fight inside the reformist trade unions for influence, for all the elective posts, for converting these mongrel trade unions into class organizations of the proletariat. This would be the correct way of utilizing legal opportunities.

As for the Baltic countries, in the majority of them there are no illegal Red trade unions, and in these countries it can only be a question of actually

working in legal reformist trade unions and carrying out in practice the decisions passed in this connection.

As for Poland, the weak point in the Communist Party of that country is that it carries on insufficient work in the reformist trade unions. One of the most important tasks of the Party is to get this work going properly. As for unity of the trade union organizations, this question in Poland is very confusing because of the larger number of trade union organizations that exist. As is known, the Polish Communist Party has influence in the small unions. They should, in the first place, make a proposal to the parallelly existing trade unions controlled by the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund, for unity on lines similar to the conditions already mentioned.

If the unions controlled by the Polish Socialist Party refuse to accept these conditions (the Bundists organize only Jewish workers in the trade unions), then the question arises as to whether the Red trade unions should unconditionally join the unions controlled by the Socialist Party. As a general rule, it would be unwise to do this for the reasons I already mentioned. It is my opinion that the Red trade unions should continue to exist as independent organizations, endeavoring to become mass organizations, strengthening moreover all forms of the struggle for unity of the trade union organizations, systematically seeking to conduct the united front with the reformist trade unions, relying in the struggle upon the opposition which must be extended and strengthened inside the reformist trade unions.

In Poland more than in other countries, with the exception of Germany and Spain, there are sharpened class contradictions. There the economy continues to collapse, the poverty and distress of the broad masses is unbearable, the revolutionary crisis is ripening with accelerated speed. In these circumstances, even the small organizations which support the Polish Communist Party can play an enormous role, if they work energetically and skillfully among the Polish, German, Ukrainian, White Russian and Jewish workers, and especially if they co-ordinate their actions and rely upon the revolutionary opposition inside the non-revolutionary trade unions. The Polish Communist Party should develop strong opposition groups in the unions controlled by the Polish Socialist Party, inside the fascist trade unions and inside the different mass organizations which are led by the enemy. But, unfortunately, the Polish Communist Party has not yet managed this, and the Communists continue to work poorly and only to a small extent in the trade unions controlled by the Polish Socialist Party and the fascists. The fact cannot be denied that when the Polish Communist Party, in the beginning of 1934, called a general mass strike, the broad masses did not respond to its call; and when the Polish Socialists call a strike and

the Communists join with them—the reformists calculate that the Communists cannot afford not to join such a call—then the masses come out on strike.

What does this prove? First of all that the unorganized workers support trade unions controlled by the Polish Socialist Party; secondly, that the Communists are so weak inside these trade unions that they cannot even mobilize one trade union controlled by the Polish Socialist Party to participate in a mass strike in response to the appeal of the Polish Communist Party and over the heads of the central leadership of the Socialists. But the Polish Communist Party can and must improve its work in the non-revolutionary trade unions, without liquidating the Red trade union organizations that support it. The membership of the Communist Party has doubled during recent years. Consequently it can and should redistribute its forces so as to ensure that the greater part of it, the most active part, moreover, should work inside the reformist trade unions. In the course of this work, the Communists must energetically raise not only questions of wages and the struggle against cuts in insurance benefits and against the worsening of labor legislation, but also the struggle against “unifying” all the trade unions under fascist leadership.

Experience has shown that the Communists not infrequently get control of strike committees, but as a rule are not sufficiently strong to lead the strike to the end. Why is this? Because either before or during the strike the Communists put forward correct demands which correspond to the mood of the masses; they put through organizational measures which place them at the head of the strike struggle; but, as the struggle develops, as a result of the arrest of the active Communists on the one hand, and the maneuvering of the reformists on the other, the Communists are unable to maintain the leadership to the end. This is quite understandable; the Communists are illegal, the reformists are legal, and when it is a question of breaking strikes, the latter have the whole of the State apparatus on their side. As a result the reformists often wrest the leadership of the strike out of the hands of the Communists. This will be partially eliminated when the Communists win important posts inside the reformist trade unions.

All that has been said about the reformist trade unions applies to the mass trade unions of Pilsudski and the Christian unions as well. Therefore the question in Poland resolves itself into this: the work in reformist, Christian and fascist trade unions must be increased a hundredfold; the revolutionary trade union opposition inside them must be given constant and correct leadership by the Party organizations, and at the same time the trade unions which support the Polish Communist Party must be converted into

strong mass organizations. If there is no positive reply to their proposals for unity of the trade union organizations the trade unions which support the Communists should appeal to all trade unions in one or another industry which exist side by side with them and should propose the establishment of a united front. For this purpose they can propose the setting up of unity committees. The main task is to get a correct combination of the work of the trade union organizations which support the Polish Communist Party and the work of the Communists inside the trade unions of other tendencies.

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Question: The current slogan in France today is that the trade union movement should be independent of the political parties. It is repeated by our press as a condition under which the trade unions should unite, and, moreover, is repeated without any critical remarks at all. Lenin continually condemned the theory that the trade unions should be neutral, saying that it led to deadening the class struggle. Are not the French comrades, at the very beginning of the broadly developing movement for unity, distorting one of the fundamentals of our united front and unity tactics?

Answer: I think that the comrades who raise this question are wrong. Neutral trade unions are non-existent. That is well known. Trade unions cannot be neutral towards the bourgeoisie, provided they wage a struggle against them. It follows that trade unions cannot really be neutral towards the party that wages the class struggles against the bourgeoisie—namely, the Communist Party. This is clear. But in the given case, it is not a question for neutrality but of the trade unions being independent of political parties.

Let us approach this question concretely from the viewpoint of the situation in France. In France there are the two parties—Socialist and Communist—and two large trade union organizations which support these two political parties respectively.

The French Communist Party has set itself the task of uniting both these trade union organizations. If the French comrades raise the question in the following way, that the reformists must recognize the Communist Party as the leader of the united trade unions, can unity be achieved? We can say in advance that in the circumstances which exist today, unity of this kind cannot be achieved. If the reformists in turn raise the question as follows, unity on the condition that the Red trade unions recognize the Socialist Party as the leader, then it is probable that even those comrades who would even be in favor of having the Red trade unions join the reformist trade unions unconditionally, would not accept such a condition put forward by the reform-

ists. You must not make a dogma even of the most correct position. It would be making a dogma of a correct position to refuse to take into consideration the concrete circumstances in which the struggle for unity in the trade union field is developing in France.

The comrades who work in the French revolutionary trade union movement wrote in their main resolutions—with a view to fighting against the anarcho-syndicalists—that they recognize the leadership of the French Communist Party. I do not know whether it was wise to pass such a decision even at that time; let us suppose, however, that it was necessary for the struggle against the anarcho-syndicalists. But when the Committee of Twenty-two, which was headed by the downright reformist Chambellan and which was joined by certain leaders of the unitary trade unions, railwaymen on State railroads, dockers and bakers, began its demagogic campaign for unity of the trade union organizations on the basis of trade union independence, the French comrades should have made it possible to fight more successfully against this Committee by avoiding any demonstrative emphasis of their old formula, and withdrawing instead the official recognition of the Communist Party leadership of the Red trade unions. The question of leadership of the trade union movement is not a question of a mere declaration, but the question of the correct policy and tactics which win over the masses to the side of Communist Party leadership. Unity in the trade union movement makes it possible for the Communist Party to influence broader masses than at the present time. Therefore the French comrades acted correctly when they avoided making the question of trade union independence an obstacle to unity. What does this independence mean? Does it mean that Communists give up their Communist fractions in these trade unions or give up the right to pursue their own policy there? Of course not. Even the Socialists do not give this up.

In its articles on unity of the trade unions, *Le Populaire* (No. 4215 of August 25, 1934) writes: "The right of every member of the trade union to defend his viewpoint inside the trade union should remain intact. . . . We will leave the false slogan of no politics to the reactionaries. For indeed, all trade union work is based upon a definite political philosophy." Presumably, the victors in the trade unions will be those who work best and most energetically in the united trade unions, those who are able most convincingly to prove the correctness of their policy to the majority of the members. Either the Socialists will be better organized than we are, will pursue their reformist policy more skillfully than the Communists pursue their policy of class struggle, and they will gain from unity of the trade unions, or the Communists will be able to convince the majority of the members that not only their line is

the correct one, but they also work better than the reformists, raise all the trade union questions more opportunely, manifest more initiative in organizing strikes and formulating demands, etc.—then the Communists will soon be the victors. In this respect I am starting with the supposition that there exists true working class democracy in the united trade unions.

If the Communists want to take a step forward in France in regard to unity of the trade unions, they should agree to the independence formula, without in the least rejecting the task of doing their utmost to influence the activities of these trade unions through their fractions.

What use is it for the Red trade unions in France to declare at their congresses that they recognize the policy of the Party as correct and subordinate themselves to it, if the work of the Red trade unions is not improved by these declarations, if, even up to quite recently, they have been unable to make use of the favorable situation and the unquestioned increase in their influence, for the purpose of organizational consolidation, of increasing the membership? It is not the verbal declarations and formulations that count; it is important that the trade unions in actual practice should support the Communist Party. Therefore, the Communists cannot make the formal recognition, in advance, of the leading role of the Communist Party in the united trade unions one of the conditions of unity, but by their work in these trade unions they should convince the majority of the membership in actual practice of the correctness of Communist leadership.

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Question: What should our supporters in the united trade unions take as their basic methods and forms of work?

Answer: I have already partially replied to this question. When the Communist fraction inside the united trade unions puts forward its demands during the daily struggle, it should as a rule put forward demands which the trade union can really win if correct and persistent work is carried on.

The Communists should give especially careful thought to the demands they put forward during strikes, popularizing them among the trade union membership and striving to ensure even before the beginning of the strike struggle that a compact mass will support them. If this is not done, the supporters of reformist methods will make use of the first failure of the trade unions to discredit the Communists. The Communists should make use of trade union democracy in the united trade unions to develop to the utmost the initiative and activity of the membership, helping them in every possible way to mobilize their forces for the struggle. We should avoid sharpening the conflict around secondary, formal

questions and we should make concessions at times to the reformists on petty points, in order to be able all the more strikingly and convincingly to defend our viewpoint before the membership on more important questions. The Communists should combine the maximum flexibility with their steadfastness in principle. The broad masses of the members will then understand our policy more rapidly and the Communists will gain from the unity of the trade unions.

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Question: What is the correct way of presenting the question of recruiting into reformist trade unions; and in particular, is the slogan "revolutionary workers, join the reformist trade unions", a correct one?

Answer: If there are Red trade unions in existence in the country, then obviously the Communists will recruit into these trade unions. But that does not mean that in the factories where there are no Red trade unions the Communists cannot recruit into the reformist trade unions. Should the Communists, moreover, stress the point in the following way: only revolutionary workers join the reformist unions? No. We can increase our influence in the trade unions, in this case, in a simpler way. Suppose the Communists carried through a successful strike in a certain factory. Their very first task afterwards should be the immediate organization of trade union groups in that factory, and having organized them, they can decide, on the basis of what will help to strengthen the revolutionary trade union movement most, where it is most advisable to direct them; into the Red trade union if one exists in that branch of industry, or into the reformist union.

In case the groups join the reformist trade union, the Communists should recruit to the utmost in the given factory for this trade union, for the bigger this factory trade union group is, the stronger will the Communist influence be in this reformist trade union. Therefore, in this case, the slogan, "only revolutionary workers join the reformist trade union", would be wrong. It is clear that the Communists should not only recruit many members into this trade union, but should work among the members they have recruited in order really to gain or extend their influence among them. Is this possible? I think it is, although in practice our comrades are not always able to work in the reformist trade unions as Communists, and at the same time recruit new members—recruit not simply to increase the numerical composition of the reformist trade union, but to strengthen the influence of the Communists inside it with a view to converting the union into an organization of class struggle. If Communists work to recruit members into reformist trade unions, then it is not only the revolutionary workers who should be appealed to. The Communists should work among

the recruits, so as to increase through them their own influence.

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Question: Why is it that the decision of the Fifth Profintern Congress concerning the withdrawal for Germany and Poland of the slogan "join the reformist trade unions" was mechanically adopted in almost all other sections of the Profintern?

Answer: I am not aware of the special reasons for withdrawing this slogan in each country. The general reasons for arbitrarily and incorrectly withdrawing the slogan in all those countries where it was withdrawn, except Germany and Poland, were that it is not an easy thing to carry on revolutionary work in the reformist trade unions, and in the majority of cases it is not safe. It was often not easy for individual Communists to work inside reformist trade unions without proper leadership on the part of a Party organization and without forming a properly functioning Communist fraction, the more so since they were faced by old-time reformists, who were both cunning and experienced.

Instead of really trying to help individual Communists to start this work, our Sections frequently shirked this work as they did with recruiting. Moreover, all kinds of sectarian reasons were put forward as excuses, as for instance, that the reformists are reactionary. Besides, the Fifth Profintern Congress did not release the Communists of Germany and Poland from the duty of working in reformist trade unions; no such decision was made or could be made. If the Communists have a strong opposition in any reformist trade union in Poland, there can be no question of this opposition being forbidden to recruit into the reformist trade union where it is working for the express purpose of increasing its influence there. The comrades who arbitrarily withdrew the slogan: "go into the reformist trade unions" (in countries where there are no Red trade unions, apart from Germany and Poland), made a very serious mistake, and if it were possible to find the actual guilty ones, they should be condemned.

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Question: How should the question now be raised of winning the leadership of the trade unions?

Answer: Now, just as during the Tenth and Twelfth E.C.C.I. Plenums, a fight should be waged for every elective position, whether it be the central apparatus (president, secretary, or simply a member of the central apparatus of the trade union of any industry), or whether it be an elective position in the central council of all the trade unions on a national, country, town, district, or branch scale. In short, a fight must be put up for every elective post (and this means serious work to win and then to maintain the position), by demonstrating to the members of reformist unions in actual practice that the Communists

really want and really know how to work in the trade unions. During the last few years, the Communists in England, Sweden and other countries have managed to win elective positions in the reformist trade unions where they have been working well. This proves that the Communists can, especially now that the trade union bureaucrats' powers of maneuvering have begun to weaken, win most important posts from them in certain circumstances, and even be elected as members of the central leadership of individual trade unions.

The resolutions of the Twelfth E.C.C.I. Plenum on this question quite definitely spoke of the need for a determined struggle for every elective position in the reformist trade unions.

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Question: What about the question of defending the trade unions, if they are under the influence of the reformists?

Answer: If there is the danger of the reformist trade union organizations in a country being smashed by the bourgeoisie, the Communist Party should come out and defend them against fascism. The Communists should moreover speak to the reformist workers somewhat along the following lines: the reformist leaders have converted the trade unions from instruments defending the interests of the working class into instruments for collaboration with the bourgeoisie. When the members of the reformist trade unions understand that and choose to fight against the trade union bureaucrats in order to change the policy of the reformist trade unions, they will be able to do so; individual cases of this kind already exist. The Communists have always appealed, and will not cease to appeal, to the workers to change the policy of the reformist trade unions. The Communists are against the reformist policy of the trade unions, but they are still more against workers' organizations being destroyed by the bourgeois State. And so, while trying to change and calculating upon changing the policy of the reformist trade unions, the Communists are now ready to do all in their power to prevent their being smashed by the bourgeoisie. The Communists in Germany issued the slogan "Defend the unions! Workers, unite to defend the unions!" during the period when the fascists were "unifying" the trade unions. That was quite right, but it does not mean that the Communists are defending the reformist policy, tactics, and organizational methods, etc. The Communists, at the same time, said to the reformist workers: let us defend the reformist trade unions together, but we shall try inside these trade unions to change their policy, tactics and organizational methods.

* * *

Question: What is the difference in our tactics towards the reformist trade unions and towards all

the other kinds: Christian, "democratic", and fascist—in countries where there is not yet a fascist dictatorship?

Answer: It is difficult to answer this question in this general form. The Communists should work in all mass trade unions, but as a rule the Communist Party should concentrate its attention more particularly upon the reformist trade unions. Why? Because the reformist trade unions have their pre-war traditions which are not so bad; the pre-war reformist trade unions defended the interests of the workers, if only their narrow craft interests and if only by means of reforms. It is easier to urge the workers organized in reformist trade unions forward to the strike struggle, then, let us say, the workers of the Catholic unions.

In Poland there are fascist unions in the biggest industries and the largest factories. It is a big mistake actually to refuse to work in them.

Suppose in China, for example, there existed mass Kuomintang trade unions and smaller reformist trade unions; where should the Communists work the most? Of course, in the Kuomintang unions.

It cannot be decided indiscriminately in advance as to which trade unions the Communists should concentrate their work in first and foremost; the conditions in each individual country must be examined concretely first. One thing is clear: the Communists must work in all trade unions which have mass support. They must distribute their forces to ensure that the Communists are here, there and everywhere; but the main force must be concentrated in those workers' organizations which have the support of the basic proletarian masses.

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Question: To what extent is there a change in the appraisal by the Comintern of German and Austrian Social-Democracy as the main social support of the bourgeoisie and how should these changes be reflected in our trade union tactics in Germany and Austria?

Answer: I think that we should first of all see what we had in Germany before fascist dictatorship and what we have today. We all know that before Hitler's advent to power, the reformist trade unions and the Social-Democratic Party entirely supported the bourgeoisie, supported all the governments, one after another. The trade unions hindered the struggle, both political and economic. Take even the November transport workers' strike in Berlin just before Hitler came to power. After Hitler came to power, the reformists handed over the trade unions to the fascists. On May 17, 1933, the Reichstag Social-Democratic group voted in favor of the fascist foreign policy, and if the question of the domestic policy of the fascists had been taken up the same day, the Social-Democratic Party would probably not have dared to speak against it either. At that time the trade unions

and the Social-Democratic Party still existed; at that time the Social-Democratic Party in Germany was still the social prop of the bourgeoisie. We cannot be sure that if and when its former influence would be restored to it in one form or another, it would not again become the same support.

But at the present moment, there are no reformist or any other kind of trade unions in Germany; no other reformist mass organizations exist at all. Neither does any centralized Social-Democratic Party exist. The Social-Democratic groups which show any signs of life at all, are, without doubt, against the fascists. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility, of course, that the bourgeoisie will turn back—it would seem as if they were turning a little bit already in the direction of the reformist trade union bureaucrats, and entering into negotiations with them through certain intermediaries, as the *Manchester Guardian* reports. Fascism has brought about the destruction of all the trade unions, all the mass working-class organizations, but it has already come up against the mass, though spontaneous, resistance of the workers who, with an overwhelming majority, boycotted the election of the factory trustees.

Now that there are no mass organizations supported by the workers, such as at one time supported the reformists (the fascists have been unable to secure this), the bourgeoisie is beginning to think about forming new organizations through their centralized system which would keep the workers under their influence. We do not know as yet what sort of organizations these will be. Perhaps they will again be reformist, or mixed reformist-fascist trade unions, created with the assistance of the reformists. And then, if these organizations managed to become mass ones, the reformists would again be able, to a certain extent, to play the role of social prop of the bourgeoisie. At the present moment, however, can we say that the Social-Democratic workers, who are carrying on agitation in small groups against the fascists, who are publishing leaflets and sometimes distributing Communist literature, not to mention cases where they are joining the German Communist Party, are persecuted and arrested, and in places establish a united front with us—can we say that they are the props of the bourgeoisie? I think not.

What is the position in Austria? Recently the appeal of the Revolutionary Socialists and the Communist Party was published, calling for anti-war demonstrations on August First. The platform of joint struggle which has been accepted is almost entirely a Communist one. Is this the same Social-Democratic Party that it was, not only before 1934, but even at the moment of the February struggle against fascism, when the Social-Democratic Party as such still continued to follow leaders of the type of Bauer, Deutsch, Seitz and others? Of course it is not the

same. Can we say that tomorrow Otto Bauer, Deutsch, Renner and Seitz will not get their party together again and that it will not once more support the bourgeoisie? We cannot be certain of this. True, some of the leaders, like Bauer for various reasons, and first and foremost because of the fear of losing influence among the masses, display much radical demagoguery. We know that Bauer even "speaks in favor" of proletarian dictatorship. He says, we are in favor of proletarian dictatorship, but when we have established it, then we shall turn to democracy. What sort of democracy? For whom? Bauer and those who imitate him in other Social-Democratic Parties play with the words "proletarian dictatorship" but flee from the Soviets like the devil from incense; they do not even mention the Soviets at all. They do not want Soviet democracy—real, true democracy for the toilers. They need proletarian dictatorship for the purpose of introducing bourgeois democracy. It is clear that they have not given up their class collaboration, that at the first call of the bourgeoisie they will go openly to them, and at the first opportunity they will try to knock together a party as well.

But today such a party does not yet exist, and so the position of Social-Democracy in Austria has changed essentially and we cannot consider that individual Social-Democratic organizations which fight against fascism are also the prop and stay of the bourgeoisie at the given moment there. It would be wrong to use the same estimate of Social-Democracy at all times and ignore the fact that great events have changed the situation.

What are our tactics on the trade union question in Austria and Germany? In Austria the Communists and Revolutionary Socialists are trying to defend and strengthen the reformist trade unions, which the fascists have not been able to compel to stop their activities. In Germany the Communists today aim at restoring free trade unions together with their best pre-war traditions, in order that they, first and foremost, organize a struggle against the legislation of January 20, 1934, which deprived the workers of Germany of all the rights they had won in struggle during the last fifty years. At the same time the German Communists must carry on work in the fascist mass organizations.

* * *

Question: Should the revolutionary trade union opposition at the present stage be built up as an organization (with a membership and so on) or as a broader, less definitely shaped movement?

Should the revolutionary trade union opposition correspond to the system of those unions in which it works (of course, not including groups in factories), or always be built up on the industrial principle, irrespective of the system of the reformist trade unions?

Why is it that in the majority of countries, the revolutionary trade union opposition embraces mostly those workers who are not organized into trade unions?

Answer: I think that the question of the organizations of the revolutionary trade union opposition cannot be decided for all periods and for all countries in the same way. Take fascist Germany and Austria. In the free trade unions which must be restored after they had been destroyed by the fascists, the Communists will be able to limit themselves to forming Communist fractions. If it were possible to create trade unions capable, as mentioned above, of fighting against the legislation of January 20, 1934, they would be more or less revolutionary organizations, and the Communists could limit themselves to forming fractions inside them.

Take England. Should the Communists have a revolutionary trade union opposition there with an apparatus complete from head to foot and parallel with the apparatus of the reformist trade unions, which would, as a general rule, organize strikes, not through the trade unions but separately from them, etc.? No, even if they wanted to do it, it would not work there. The Communists in England are still very weak, and this form of revolutionary trade union opposition would only isolate them from the trade unions. Consequently the type of revolutionary trade union opposition in England must be different from what it was, say, in Germany, before the fascist seizure of power.

There is no need to dwell on the revolutionary trade union opposition in Czechoslovakia or in France, where there are Red trade unions. In these countries the immediate task is to create a trade union opposition in the reformist trade unions, and then it will be possible to decide upon the organizational form it will take.

In the United States of America there can be no question of the Communists building up a revolutionary trade union opposition with membership dues and so on, parallel with the existing unions of the American Federation of Labor. There the task is to penetrate deeper into the A. F. of L. on the crest of the wave of working masses who are surging into these unions, to unite the radicalized workers in these unions, to win leading posts and get whole trade union organizations of the A. F. of L. under their influence. The experience of recent mass strikes, and especially of the general strike in San Francisco, has shown that it is quite possible to accomplish this task if only the forces of the Party are concentrated in action and not merely in words, upon work in the A. F. of L. unions.

In all countries the revolutionary trade union opposition should work inside the reformist trade unions, show some initiative, organize the conducting of

strikes, and, if suitable conditions exist for this, make use of its influence among the masses of the membership of reformist trade unions to get support for the strikes begun by the Red trade unions. It is this that will define its organizational form. In all that remains, the role of the revolutionary trade union opposition cannot be the same for all countries. We must study the national peculiarities and local conditions in each country before choosing the form of the revolutionary trade union opposition that best suits the given country.

It was a complete mistake to try to build up a revolutionary trade union opposition in all countries on the lines of the organization which existed in Germany before Hitler's advent to power. In Germany itself it was quite right at the time for the revolutionary trade union opposition to build up its apparatus parallel to the reformist one, and to try to organize and lead strikes independently, but it was absolutely wrong that the revolutionary trade union opposition in Germany did not work inside the reformist trade unions, and this brought enormous harm to the German Communist Party and to the German working class as a whole. The question of membership, of membership cards, and so on, should be decided from the viewpoint of ensuring that the largest number of workers come under the influence of the revolutionary trade union opposition according to the conditions existing in each country and in each industry.

I will now come to the second part of the question. I consider it to be inadvisable to make it a rule that the revolutionary trade union opposition should be built up on the industrial principle, because, if organized in this way, it would find itself divorced from the trade unions inside which it should be working. The revolutionary trade union opposition should be built up to correspond organizationally with those trade unions in which it is working. If it is working inside an industrial union, then obviously it must be organized in the same way. But if, let us say, it is working among the metal workers in England, where there are several metal workers' unions, or among the textile workers, where the situation is the same, then the revolutionary trade union opposition should be organized to correspond with these unions, in order to work more easily inside each of them. But, of course, this does not mean that the revolutionary trade union opposition of all the metal workers' unions or of the textile workers in England cannot all be linked up for the purpose of coordinating their work; they may even have a joint committee which coordinates their activities.

The main reason why in the majority of countries the revolutionary trade union opposition has primarily embraced the unorganized workers is that the Communists have been unable to convince the members

of reformist trade unions that the revolutionary trade union opposition is not a parallel trade union organization. Many members of reformist trade unions did not want to be members of two parallel trade union organizations at one and the same time. They looked upon the existence of the revolutionary trade union opposition as an attempt to split the unions and they feared this. The Communists did not sufficiently explain to trade union members the role of the revolutionary trade union opposition, as an opposition *inside* the reformist trade unions. On the other hand, the revolutionary trade union opposition was unable to transfer its own members, who were unorganized in trade unions, into the reformist trade unions, with a view of increasing its influence inside the trade unions through these members. We must not deny the importance of the fact that a member of the reformist trade union who joined the revolutionary trade union opposition had to pay membership dues twice, even though the membership dues to the revolutionary trade union opposition were not large. The

unorganized workers who joined the revolutionary trade union opposition also had no desire to pay an extra subscription when joining the trade union, and so they did not join the reformist unions. Try, for instance, to get the workers in England to pay membership dues twice in the trade union organizations. They are accustomed to paying directly to the trade union; through the union they are automatically organized politically; the trade union pays into the political organization—the Labor Party—for them. Therefore, in future, perhaps, the revolutionary trade union opposition should as a rule stop taking membership dues and adopt the method of voluntary, non-compulsory, contributions, since the dues prevent the revolutionary trade union opposition from increasing its membership. In any case, this specific question must be approached in each country with an eye to the concrete situation just as is the case with the question of the general construction of the revolutionary trade union opposition.

BASIC LESSONS OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ITALY AGAINST FASCISM UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF THE "TOTALIZED" REGIME

By K. RONCOLI

VERY frequently, comrades from other countries ask us Italian Communists questions somewhat like the following:

"You claim that the vast majority of the working class are opposed to fascism, and that there is great discontent and despair among all strata of the toiling population of town and village. There are plenty of reasons for this—the constant worsening of the conditions of life of the toilers, the enormous spread of unemployment, the almost unceasing wage cuts, the increase in the burden of taxation, the disastrous position of the poor and middle peasants, and of the small and middle traders. In short, the whole of the policy of the fascist government is operated in the interests of monopolist capital, against the working class and even against the small and middle bourgeoisie—the strata which used to form the mass social basis of fascism. But if it is true, as you say, that the feelings of the broad masses are those of despair and hostility to fascism, how can you explain the fact that the development of the mass movement in Italy lags behind as compared with that in many other countries, that all the contrasts and contradictions which you point out do not, with very few exceptions, come to the surface, and that in the long run the fascist regime gives the impression of stability, consolidation

and strength, a thing which is not the case in Germany, for example? In the latter country, fascism, after a year and a half in power, is already showing signs of crisis, and the internal contradictions in the regime are showing themselves day by day in ever more acute forms."

An answer should be given to this question, which is earnestly asked by comrades who have no adequate acquaintance with the situation in Italy. It is particularly important to do so now, on the eve of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, because this will make it possible for us to give a characterization, at least in general terms, of the successes and failures of our Party during the past few years, *i.e.*, a summary of the work and experience of our Party with which it comes to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

It has been repeatedly remarked, and Comrade Ercoli dealt with this matter at the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., that we must first of all recognize one important circumstance in making a comparison between the situation in Italy and in Germany, namely, that whereas Hitler came to power in 1933, when the relative stabilization of capitalism had *ended*, the "march on Rome", on the contrary, took place in

October, 1922, *on the eve* of relative stabilization of capitalism, which fascism was thus able to use for its relative consolidation.

What results arise from this fact?

Firstly, a period of seven years passed from the time when fascism came to power in Italy to the time when the results of the economic crisis began to make themselves felt in Italy and throughout the world. During these seven years fascism was able to strengthen greatly its State apparatus owing to the favorable economic situation, the inflow of foreign capital, etc. It was able to create and develop its mass organizations and to a certain degree to preserve its mass social basis in the towns and especially in the villages and to become the big and only party of the Italian bourgeoisie.

Secondly, Hitler came to power after 14 years of the existence and struggle of the Communist Party of Germany. During these 14 years, the German Communist Party became strong, developed, and grew into a big mass Bolshevik Party, a Party with many cadres and with a leadership and a leader known and loved by the broad masses. It enjoyed the complete confidence of the Communist International, and was the second Party in the Comintern. In contrast to this, the Italian Communist Party came into being in January, 1921, at the moment when the terrorist attack of fascism was in full swing, when Communist activity was almost completely illegal, actually if not formally, and when the mass movement (despite a number of examples of brilliant fights at this period) had, on the whole, subsided. On the other hand, the Communist Party of Italy was not as yet a real Bolshevik Party during the first years of the fascist dictatorship, which coincided with the first years of the existence of the Party. On the contrary, the Party was imbued from top to bottom, to a great extent, with the ideology of Bordigism, which, as we know, is the embodiment of a shallow "Maximalism" and the narrowest sectarianism.

In the succeeding years, especially in 1924-26, it is true, the Party, under the personal leadership of Comrade Antonio Gramsci, trained a considerable number of skilled cadres who helped the Party to make big steps forward along the path of Bolshevization. But the blows struck by the police, at the time of the exceptional laws and in subsequent years, almost completely deprived the Party of its old cadres and compelled it actually to labor like Sisyphus to create continually cadres which, to some degree, could take the place of those arrested.

Therefore, to use a somewhat crude comparison, we may say that German National-Socialism, at the time when it began its attack on the working class, found in the Communist Party an adult, strong and healthy, while Italian fascism, on coming to power, saw before it a youthful creature which was still

weak and dangerously sick with "Bordigan Leftism".

While fascism sets itself the task of isolating the Communist Party from the masses, of breaking its contacts with the mass organizations, of physically destroying the cadres of its activists, the weakness and sectarianism of the Party in turn handicap the work of the Party among the masses. All this made it easier to carry on the fascist policy, which was directed first of all towards the disorganization and scattering of the toiling masses, and later to organizing them and controlling them through its own fascist mass organizations.

If we do not take account of these basic facts, at least, it is difficult to understand why the mass movement in Italy lags behind in comparison with many other countries, why the internal class contradictions show themselves in Italy in a comparatively weak form, and why the fascist regime in Italy produces the impression of stability.

OPPORTUNIST TRENDS IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ITALY

The ideological weakness of the Communist Party of Italy as a whole and the spread of non-Leninist tendencies in its ranks find their first explanation in the character, traditions and development of the Italian working class movement. It is probably unnecessary and too lengthy a matter to analyze these facts here, in view of the aim of the present article. The objective situation created by fascism at the same time greatly assisted Right and "Left" opportunism, the basic features of which we will try to set out in general terms.

The Rights said:

"The alignment of forces is still unfavorable for the proletariat. Fascism is able to bring enormous terrorist pressure to bear on the masses and to keep them in a state of almost complete immobility. Until a strong *spontaneous* mass movement arises or until other factors intervene [*i.e.*, the interference of some section of the bourgeoisie] to cause a breach inside fascism, to force it to moderate its reactionary pressure, to give our Party certain freedom of action, so long as the objective situation, irrespective of the work of the Party, does not undergo a big change in our favor, the Party has nothing to do but wait, partly abroad and partly locked within itself in Italy, until a new situation exists giving it the possibility, together with other anti-fascist parties, of standing at the head of the masses, *who are already in motion*, and leading them to the overthrow of fascism."

The "Lefts" said and still say:

"At the present moment, when the masses are subjected to such tremendous pressure and control by fascism and cannot put up any serious resistance, when they are organized by fascism and are under its influence to a greater or less degree, any work done

by our Party which is directed towards fusion with the masses, and everyday leadership of them will, on the one hand, make easier the repression exerted by the police, will lay bare our activists, and on the other hand may lead the Party to the violation of the revolutionary purity of its line and incline it towards legalism, towards capitulation to fascism. The main task of the Party at the present moment is thus to maintain its purity, not to pass the threshold of its 'ivory towers', to guard and improve our organization and cadres, without going into mass work further than the distribution of illegal literature and teaching the vanguard of the proletariat the principles of the Party on the basic questions of the working class movement. As a result, all this will lead to the working class recognizing the Party as its leader and guide at the moment of upsurge."

There is no need to make a profound analysis of these two points of view—the Right and the "Left"—to see that on the whole they coincide. Each of them condemns the Party to complete passivity—to waiting for better times! It is also not difficult to understand that the development of such views was greatly assisted by the tremendous material and ideological pressure which fascism for 12 years exerted on the working class, and consequently also on the Party of the working class.

It should be noted that though the Party, under the leadership of the Comintern, acted with sufficient energy and rapidity against the open opportunist trends and against their representatives (Taska, Serro, Santini, Blasko, Ferocci and Pasquini) and against the factional work of the Bordigists, nevertheless, it did not carry on a sufficiently determined struggle against sectarian and "carbonarian" tendencies which hid behind "Left" phraseology and opportunism, which was equally dangerous and harmful for the Party.

THE CAUSE OF THE WEAKNESS OF THE PARTY

In 1929-30, the Party was able to give a correct analysis of the characteristic peculiarities of the economic crisis in Italy and in the course of it to foresee the further developments of a strong worsening of the conditions of life of the toiling masses, a growth of their fighting powers, and to foresee the sharpening of the contradictions in the ranks of fascism which the crisis would inevitably bring out.

On the basis of this analysis and perspectives, the Party carried on a struggle against the defeatism and gradualism of the opportunists, and brought about a gradual change in all of its work. But only later, very much later, the Party, and afterwards the Y.C.L. and the General Confederation of Labor, clearly realized some of the facts which are of exceptional significance for determining and character-

izing the situation in Italy (the cause of such lateness is to some extent the almost complete separation of the Center from the Party rank and file, and the rank and file from the masses, which was caused in 1928-29 by the blows of the police terror).

1. Seven or eight years of the fascist regime and three or four years of "totalitarian" fascism have had a strong ideological influence on the broad strata of the working class, especially among the youth, not in the sense, of course, that they have become *fascists*, but in the sense that they have lost faith in their own forces, and in the revolutionary role of their class. They have absorbed the point of view that "the crisis demands sacrifices from *all classes*", and that, therefore, during the crisis all its burdens should be accepted without a murmur. They look upon war as the only way out of the present situation (a very widespread formula, "let war come, and then we shall get arms and shall be able to overthrow fascism" is only another form of this conception), etc. In this respect it should be noted that the everyday propaganda of the old Social-Democratic cadres who remained in Italy had no other aim and results except to assist in inculcating passivity and disappointment among the masses.

2. After the coming of fascism to power, very important changes took place in the very organizational structure of the working class. Considerable sections of the old cadres of the working class in general and of the Communist Party in particular were driven from industry, *i.e.*, were arrested or deported. Some were forced to emigrate or were doomed to chronic unemployment. These cadres were replaced by young workers, who were also dissatisfied with the fierce exploitation, but who had no experience of organization in the class struggle and who were strongly influenced ideologically by fascism, under which they grew up.

3. Under the influence of the crisis and its results and especially after the appearance of the first symptoms of the mass movement which came forward in this period, fascism made quite deep changes in some forms of its policy, so as to prevent the collapse of its social basis, to deaden the discontent of the masses, to hinder the mass movements, to include the masses in its organizations and handicap the work of the Communist Party. This change included the treaty with the Vatican, various attempts at compromise with various groups of the Social-Democratic leaders of Italy and abroad, the slogan, "Face to the people", the development of the organization "Dopo Lavoro", and organization of aid for the unemployed and children's summer camps. The demagogic campaign for public works and for the application of the 40-hour week *on an international scale*, the campaign which was the synthesis of all the latest fascist policy under the slogan, "For the corporative super-class State",

and on the other hand, the tremendous growth of the police apparatus and the constant increase of repression against the Communist Party, against any "disidentism" inside of the Fascist Party—all these facts, and others which could be given, are features and forms of the fascist policy, the object of which was to counteract the despair of the masses. These are indications of the maneuvering ability of fascism, even in the relatively narrow limits permitted by its "totalitarianism", indications of its flexibility to which unfortunately there do not always correspond a similar flexibility and similar maneuvering powers on the part of our Party.

4. The old formula "fascism disunited and scattered the working class and the masses of toilers", which was true until 1924-25, and from which there arose one series of tasks for the Communist Party, was no longer true in 1929-30, and thus the tasks of the Party had to be changed accordingly. In reality, after fascism had "disorganized and scattered" the toiling masses, destroying their organizations, removing their leaders or forcing them deeply underground, it changed the situation, but not in the sense that it returned the freedom of organization to the masses, but, on the contrary, utilized the weapon of monopoly and violence, for the possibility of uniting the majority of the active population of the country (in its own organizations in the mass fascist organizations—trade unions, "Dcpo Lavoro", cooperative societies, mutual aid societies, etc.). In the first years of the fascist dictatorship, when the fascist organizations controlled only an insignificant number of toilers, it was possible to understand such tactics which did not place in the foreground the work in these organizations. Under the new conditions, however, such tactics have inevitably helped to isolate the Party from the masses and have hindered the leadership of the masses.

The fact that the Party was late in estimating, understanding and solving the problem of Party tactics and organization arose, on the whole, from the sectarianism which still prevails in the Party. It expressed, on the whole, the relics of Bordigan "anti-situationism" (the denial of the significance of changes in the situation for our tactics).* Insufficient energy and consistency in the struggle were displayed

* "The study of the situation is a necessary condition for the solution of practical problems, but to the extent that the Party has, in its consciousness and critical experience, already foreseen a definite development of the situation and has thus pointed out the tactical possibilities which should be developed in various phases", the Party "must try to foresee the development of the situation so as to have as much influence on it as possible. But to wait until the situation gets more complicated so as to come under its effect eclectically and from incident to incident, and to submit to it, is the character-

against manifestations of this Bordigism in concrete work.

THE PROGRESS OF PARTY SUCCESS IN 1930-32

It should not be thought that the Party, in struggling for a change in 1929-30 and in the struggle to bring this change into effect, did not see the necessity of standing at the head of the organization and leadership of the masses, among whom the first signs of an upsurge were to be noticed. All its polemics against the opportunists, all its policies, all its everyday activity, were openly *directed* towards this aim. And with this aim, the Party developed and extended its activity after 1929. But, on the other hand—and this side of the question must be stressed—the *type and character* of the work of this period did not differ in essence from that of previous years, after the "March on Rome".

In 1930-32, the Party Center restored contacts with the majority of the existing lower organizations, which developed great activity. The illegal press reached many tens of thousands of toilers, showing to the masses that the Party and the General Confederation of Labor were alive, and bringing their revolutionary slogans to the masses.

The energetic and bold conduct of thousands of Communists before the special court sessions which sentenced them to long terms of imprisonment, in many cases from 15 to 22 years, also helped to increase the sympathy of the workers towards the Communist Party and won the admiration of the workers for the heroism of the Party members. At the same time, thanks to active work among the masses, the Party greatly increased its membership. During a period spreading over a little more than two years, the Party membership increased five times! In some of the provinces, where there had only been a few passive individual Communists on the eve of the "coup" in 1931-32, there were already cells, district and federal committees. The Communist Party of Italy, which in 1928-29 was reduced almost down to a tiny Party of "emigrants", was already a fighting and organized Party in 1931-32, having thousands and thousands of bold active members of the Party inside of the country, full of revolutionary enthusiasm.

The underestimation of these facts, of these successes, would be a very serious mistake, which might cause a dangerous disillusionment among the members of the Party with very harmful results.

It would be equally a mistake to think that the leaders of the Communist Party of Italy did not set themselves, during this period, the task of working in the fascist organizations. In a number of docu-

istic method of Social-Democratic opportunism". (Theses of the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Italy, January, 1933.)

ments and articles issued in 1929-31, the necessity for this work was emphasized, and at almost all meetings of the leading bodies this problem was discussed and elaborated.

But in this period the utilization of legal possibilities was still regarded as *one* of the many tasks of the Party and the General Confederation of Labor. This task was not placed in the foreground. There is no realization as yet that the work in the mass fascist organizations in a "totalitarian" State, where these organizations include the majority of the workers of the country, and, at a time when the masses are trying to get out of a state of passivity and act in defense of their immediate demands, the work in these fascist mass organizations must not only form the basis of *all the mass work* of the Party, but must also determine all the forms of organization and leadership. In the long run, this must determine *all the forms and the nature of the Party's work* from top to bottom, from the leadership of campaigns to the methods of concealing our illegal activity, from agitational and propagandist work to anti-militarist work.

The Party did not understand this position and continued to work until the end of 1932 using the old methods, the methods of the period of semi-legality (1922-26), which were partly incorrect even for that period, and were partly unsuitable under the new conditions.

BASIC MISTAKES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ITALY IN MASS ORGANIZATIONAL WORK

Thus, during the period under review:

1. The leadership of the lower work was mainly not carried out by groups from the "legal" elements, unknown to the police and living day by day the same life as the rank and file, in unbroken contact with the masses in the factories and in the main fascist organizations. It did not strive first and foremost to develop its initiative, ability to lead, or the critical spirit, and the political cooperation of the comrades in the lower organizations with the Center.

On the contrary, this leadership was always carried out through "illegal" instructors (*i.e.*, comrades already known and sought for by the police), who, being in danger of arrest, were forced to live an abnormal life, which interfered with their contacts with the masses. In view of the fact that these instructors could not remain more than a few weeks or at the most a few months in one place, they had no time to develop the ability of the lower committees to lead, and thus they always showed a tendency to replace these committees. Therefore, if an instructor succeeded in avoiding arrest, he nevertheless almost always left the organization in a situation differing very little from the one in which he found it. After his departure and until the arrival of a new instructor, the absence of real leadership was felt again, and in-

sufficiently constant and detailed information about the given place arrived at the Party Center.

2. The election and changing of the composition of the leading committees was not carried out, in the vast majority of cases, with consideration for the wishes of the rank and file (in a form permissible by conspiracy) from among the comrades who had showed themselves in practical work and especially in mass work to be the most active and capable. The elections were not carried out on the basis of a political struggle against Right and "Left" opportunism, and for the Party line, but were carried out by an instructor from the Center on the basis of old information, on the basis of the general political orientation of the "candidate" and by an investigation on the spot which was bound to be hurried and shallow. This circumstance helped to separate to a greater degree the Center from the rank and file and therefore from the masses.

3. The Party organizations (and together with them the Y.C.L., the General Confederation of Labor and the Red Aid) lived a closed-in life, instead of obtaining wide contact with the masses, which means concealment in organizations containing a large number of workers (in the fascist unions, in the local sections of "Dopo Lavoro", in the mutual aid societies, cooperative societies, etc.), and thus gaining the possibility of carrying on work for the organization and leadership of the workers in these organizations and, with the help of the latter, in the factories and among the unemployed.

In the majority of cases, the cells were organized according to the old system of street and village organizations. The functions of the so-called "factory cells" consisted simply of very rare and brief meetings of members of the Party organizations and the exchange of printed material in the streets or houses. With such methods it was impossible to organize systematic work and really win leadership of the masses by the Party organization either from the conspirative or the political point of view.

4. There was practically no real division of labor between the members of the Party, a division of labor according to which some would carry on strictly conspiratorial work, while others, connected with the former only by a thin and elastic thread, would carry on "legal" or semi-legal work for information, propaganda, agitation and the leadership of the masses in the fascist mass organizations.

As for the basic work of all the Party members, it consisted to the extent of 90 per cent or sometimes entirely of the distribution of literature and the recruitment of new members, which was done *entirely on the basis of the distribution of literature, i.e.*, on a strictly conspirative basis. It is obvious that, irrespective of the political orientation of the comrades, the conducting of strictly conspirative work day after

day was very dangerous, that it paralyzed the *open* work of the comrades among the masses so as to rally them on the basis of legal fascist organizations, and to attract them into the struggle.

5. The sympathy, the efforts of non-Party workers and peasants or those belonging to other political tendencies to approach the Communist Party, their sympathy for the U.S.S.R., were not utilized in most cases to carry out the united front, to draw these workers not directly into the Party, but into a mass of "other organizations, calculated on the public at large, and therefore possibly less definitely formed and less conspirative", organizations, "with the most varied functions". (Lenin.)

The work in the various fascist organizations, the reading and distribution of literature, etc., were all used entirely for recruiting into the Party. On the other hand, recruiting, on the whole, was not conducted on the basis of mass work, on the basis of the fighting ability, the courage and boldness shown by the best workers during mass actions, but, as we have already pointed out, always on the basis of the distribution and reading of illegal literature. Frequently anyone who distributes Party literature is looked upon as a Party member. In this way the Party grew formally from among the non-Party workers, Socialists, anarchists, etc., who had not yet sufficient political, organizational and *conspirative training* necessary for a Party member. This meant the confusing of sympathizers with Party members, "erasing the boundary between them, losing in the mass the conception, which was already tremendously dimmed, that in order to 'serve' the mass movement we need people especially devoting themselves entirely to Social-Democratic activity, and that such people must patiently and stubbornly *make themselves* into professional revolutionaries". (Lenin.)

This mistake was also of a sectarian character, though at first sight it may seem different, because it arose from the fact that the comrades looked on the Party as the only organization of the working class and forgot the necessity of having a "system of transmission belts" from the Party to the masses. The results of this mistake in practice were the political weakness of the lower organizations, which had its effect on all their work, and their fragility from the point of view of conspiracy. This fragility caused frequent and big losses owing to police activity and led to extraordinary narrowness on the question of the organization of masses of sympathizers and their utilization for the fulfillment of various Party work.

6. The trade union class organization—the General Confederation of Labor—should have had the character of a "secret organization, but so 'free', unformed, 'lost', as the Germans say, that conspiracy for the masses of members amounted practically to zero" (Lenin), an organization which has, so to

speak, its "address", its fundamental basis of work, in the mass fascist organizations; which based itself in its work on the utilization of all existing legal possibilities (fascist, mass organizations and meetings, trusted people in the fascist unions, worker correspondents, the conclusion of collective labor agreements by the fascist unions, the demagogic slogans of the union leaders, etc.). Instead of this the General Confederation of Labor was looked on as an organization having the same nature, the same degree of illegality as the Party, and in the long run it became simply a duplicate of the Party. *Among other tasks*, was included that of carrying on work in the fascist unions. In these conditions, it is not surprising that in practice no work was done in the hostile organizations at all or else it was pushed into the background.

From the same limited point of view—or possibly still more limited—the Y.C.L. approached its work and its organization forms, which for these reasons was and still is nothing but a duplicate of the Party, *i.e.*, it is not an organization of the "Communist youth" but of "Young Communists", organizationally narrower than the Party and weaker from all points of view.

7. The press at this period was the chief branch of Party work. In the long run it had to satisfy all the needs of the Party in the various fields of its work—trade union work, agitation, propaganda among the youth, among women, among the nationalities oppressed by Italian imperialism, struggle against war, etc. In reality the press far from fulfilled these tasks, even to the extent that this was possible. The result of the political weakness and the absence of initiative among the rank and file of the Party was above all the weakness of the lower press, the only one which can follow up the problems of the workers of various places and factories day in and day out, that can promptly raise these questions for solution and give suitable slogans.

In general, the organizations limited themselves to the distribution of literature published and edited in the Center. If for some reason literature did not arrive from the Center, this activity completely stopped. But the central press was too far removed from the real life of the workers. As a whole it had a too general character in spite of attempts to concretize it, and very frequently replaced the concrete and everyday needs of the masses and the preparation of slogans which could mobilize the workers on the basis of which they can really be mobilized at a definite moment, and in a definite place, by general slogans which did not correspond to the concrete circumstances and which were frequently too far ahead. It did not call attention day after day to the policy, acts and slogans of fascism, and its language was not always plain to the workers, who for years read only the fascist press every day and

for years have not had the possibility of participating in political life. All this paralyzed the efficiency of the Party and the trade union press.

THE CAUSES AND RESULTS OF MISTAKES

All these weaknesses, which found their sharpest expression at this period in serious mistakes which were made in the most delicate sphere—conspiracy—prevented the Party from securing the greatest possible results in the struggle against the employers and fascism, from utilizing the growing discontent of the masses, their increased fighting powers, and the growth of their sympathy toward the U.S.S.R. and Communism.

Of course, the slogans of the Party, and its everyday work in its own ranks, assisted towards the fact that in spite of these shortcomings the Party struggled among the masses against the ideological influence of fascism, made these masses feel that they were not absolutely without leadership and orientated them on the struggle. It is no chance, of course, that the periods of the widest and most rapid development of the movement coincide with the periods of the widest and most intense Party work.

But owing to the weakness of the Party and its mistakes in the sphere of conspiracy, the Party organizations had not sufficient initiative, were not deeply connected with the masses. Party work suffered from long and serious intervals which almost always corresponded to periods of a relative fall of the mass movement. The Party is by no means always capable of rousing the masses on every occasion when this is objectively possible and inflaming their will to struggle, even in actions which are not spontaneous in character. Though the total number of actions increased in 1931-32, they were entirely spontaneous. They lasted only for brief periods. They were not linked up with each other or raised to a higher level. They were not accompanied by serious resistance to violence and to the fascist maneuvers.

The work of the Party and the mass actions connected with it developed in breadth, *in quantity*, but their *type*, their character, did not change to such a great extent as to lead to a decisive change in the relationship of forces between fascism and the working class (to force fascism to undertake more extensive maneuvers and thus make it possible for the Party of the working class to come out from underground conditions, to which it has been doomed for many years).

Where can we find the cause of these weaknesses of the Party?

At the beginning of the article we touched on causes of an objective nature, *i.e.*, the pressure of fascism, the peculiarities in the formation of the Party, the loss of almost all the cadres who were

formed in the struggle against Bordighianism. It is useless to return to this.

If we want to analyze the ideological origin of these weaknesses we may state that it can be reduced to the widespread tendencies of sectarianism and the bowing down before spontaneity, which do not mutually neutralize each other, as might be expected from a shallow analysis, but, on the contrary, are linked together and strengthen each other.

Sectarianism, "carbonarism", as Manuilsky correctly defined it in the specific case of the Communist Party of Italy, leads to the Party being locked up in itself, and takes away from the comrades all flexibility and maneuvering powers under the pretext of preserving the "purity" of the Party. Under Italian conditions, though especially under the "totalitarian" State, before an enemy who is undoubtedly agile, strong and cruel, it is necessary to be very flexible, to work out great maneuvering powers, so as to fuse with the masses and in spite of all bring about their unity in the struggle.

On the other hand, we come up against the resistance to attempts to utilize legal possibilities, to convert the work in the fascist organizations into a basis for all mass Party work, to begin a mass movement with the simplest, most elementary "legal" demands. The conception of mass work as consisting entirely of the distribution of illegal literature, the too general character of this literature, slogans which ignore the level of the movement which has been reached, the absence of any response to demagogic fascist agitation, the difficult language of this literature—all this in essence was an expression of the conviction that the workers themselves without the *everyday interference of the Party*, would *spontaneously* be able to make up for the shortcomings in Party work. It was an expression of the conviction that the leaflets, the newspapers, the call to struggle are sufficient to rouse the workers to action and raise the movement to a higher level, to ever more radical aims.

HOW THE PARTY WORKS IN ORDER TO HEAD THE MASS MOVEMENT

The working out of its own experience, the analysis of its own mistakes, changes in tactics and in the methods of work—all this was done by the Communist Party of Italy during these years under the continuous and strong fire of the enemy, the attacks and severity of which never ceased for a single moment. Any mistake, any attempt improperly to correct it, every additional experience cost the Party almost entire organizations, scores of activists and leaders. In spite of this, in spite of very heavy and very frequent blows, despite the necessity for constantly restoring its organizations under extremely difficult circumstances, of restoring its cadres and part of its leadership, the work of the Communist Party of Italy

never ceased for a moment throughout these years.

Even at the time when the Center was almost without contacts with the rank and file for several months—in 1927-28 and in 1932—the latter continued their work, though with many mistakes and shortcomings.

In general, even in the years when the exceptional laws were in operation, there was not a single district in Italy in which the Party did not exist—even though interruptedly—and even there where its voice could not be heard calling on to struggle. In the midst of the Italian working class, the Party always found the necessary energy for carrying out this work.

Mussolini stated in one of his first speeches after the "March on Rome" in February, 1923, that he had "broken the back of the Communist Party". This statement of Mussolini proved to be just as unfounded as his other statement of the same period, when he promised greatness and welfare to the entire Italian people in a short time. After five years of power, after a year of "totalitarian" policy, Mussolini was forced to admit publicly at the end of 1927, that fascism has by no means won the majority of the working class. Not long ago Mussolini, Bottai, and others, found it necessary to polemize with our Party and sound the alarm against the Communist danger. In spite of 12 years of fierce reaction, in spite of the fact that this reaction has, probably, no equal in the history of Communist Parties in its "perfection" and cruelty, nevertheless the Communist Party of Italy, stands continuously at its fighting post. On the contrary, during the last few years, especially last year and this year, under the leadership of the Comintern, it has corrected its worst mistakes to a great degree, has eliminated some of its shortcomings, and can therefore look confidently towards the future.

Since the beginning of 1933, the leading Center of the Communist Party of Italy directed all its efforts mainly to the formation of new cadres capable of utilizing legal and semi-legal possibilities, to the development of the capability and initiative of the rank and file and the strengthening of the factory and local organizations, simultaneously transferring the center of their activity to the fascist mass organizations in the localities and in the factories. It widely carried out the division of labor among its activists, throwing the greater part of its forces into the work in the mass fascist organizations, ensuring a greater degree of safety for the comrades carrying on strictly illegal work. It carried on an energetic struggle so as to raise the meaning of being a Party member, so that though the number of Party members, from the former point of view fell from 1931 to 1932, nevertheless the Party became stronger, and its work, its contacts with the masses, improved, just as its work and its contacts with the masses in the Federation of Youth and in the General Confederation of Labor improved. The central Party press, the press of the

youth and of the Confederation, had great success and, at least partly, took on a character which was not merely agitational, it served the aims of direct leadership in the Party and in the masses.

But the result of these improvements, which were sometimes very palpable, were nevertheless extremely modest and limited. Under Italian conditions, experience of the whole Party is very slowly passed on, from the Center to the rank and file, and from the rank and file to the masses. The mobilization of all the forces of the Party or those forces which the Party can mobilize among the working class on definite grounds and for a definite aim, takes place very slowly.

But, nevertheless, results can be seen. In the last year, especially during the last few months, the number of actions taking place under the leadership and influence of the Party, has continually increased.

A widely spread method of work was participation in the meetings of the mass fascist organizations with the aim of putting forward there the most urgent demands of the workers, of protesting against the greed of the employers and the plunder carried out by the fascist leaders, to get workers' commissions elected for carrying on negotiations directly with the factory owners or the authorities over the heads of the fascist leaders. This participation in fascist meeting has become a mass phenomenon, it may be said, an extremely *popular* method which the workers use according to the instructions of the Party even in many cases where the Party is actually not there.

We frequently have to do with forms of mass activity, still very timid and cautious but important, simply because they are extremely widespread.

The main task of the Party at this period is to widen and extend still further the activities of the workers in the fascist organizations, convert them into an open struggle for the most important economic and political demands, so that all the workers will recognize the Communist Party as *their Party*, the Party which leads them to the overthrow of fascism and for the winning of power.

At present, as we have already stated, the Party has by no means achieved such results. A proof of this, unfortunately, is the extremely poor way in which the whole Party and the masses reacted to the comical plebiscite on March 23 and to the Austrian events in February and July, 1934.

But the improvement of Party work, the growth of the activity of the masses, the continual intensification of the objective situation, the growth of discontent among the toiling strata of the population in view of the recent general wage-cut, the tremendous sympathy towards the U. S. S. R., symptoms of discontent and disorganization in the ranks of the Fascist Party and in the very leadership (the arrest of Arpiniati and scores of other fascist leaders), the

enthusiasm brought about by the first information about the carrying out of the united front between the Italian Communist Party and the Italian Socialist Party (which removes the last hindrance to unity of action between Communist workers and those who are still connected with the Socialist Party for sentimental reasons; it will disrupt the attempt of Mussolini to drive these workers along the path of compromise through the help of various Socialist leaders—Caldar, Veratti, etc.—who in Italy have entered the service of the “corporative State”)—all these facts serve as a sign that a rapid and profound explosion is possible.

But the decisive factors, of course, are the mass movement, the activity of the Communist Party as the leader of the working class and of the whole mass of toilers. Between this activity and the development of the objective situation there is still a fairly deep gap. In the leadership of the economic struggles and its conversion into political struggles, in the work among the peasants and among the oppressed nationalities, in winning especially the youth to the struggle against war, against chauvinist ideology and

against the passive waiting for war, the Party must secure great and rapid successes if it does not wish to be left behind by the developments.

The revolutionary enthusiasm of thousands of Party members, their loyalty to the cause of the working class, the experience which they have obtained at the cost of great sacrifice in the course of 12 years of the bitter struggle against the merciless enemy, the strict self-criticism to which they subjected all their activity, and mainly the absolute feelings of discipline, and absolute loyalty to the Communist International—all this gives a guarantee that the Party will be ready to solve the serious tasks put before it by the situation, *i.e.*, the task which tomorrow, the Seventh Congress of the Comintern will put before it in the name of the world proletariat. This the Party can do if it can eliminate all its serious shortcomings in everyday practical work, in organizational work and particularly in mass work, if, in short, the Party succeeds, as we are sure it will, in developing to the necessary extent all those gains which have been made during the recent period.

THE CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE NEW MAN- EUVERS OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS IN INDIA

By G. SAFAROV

THE PSEUDO-SOCIALISM OF THE CONGRESS

AN all-Indian Congress Socialist Party* has been organized in India. At its conference in Putna it adopted a program full of many promises.

Here is this program (re-translated from the Russian—*Ed.*):

1. The transfer of all power to the producing masses.
2. The development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the State.
3. The socialization of the commanding branches of industry, such as steel production, cotton, jute, railways, shipping, mines, banks and enterprises of social utility, with a view to the progressive socialization of all the means of production, distribution and exchange.
4. The State monopoly of foreign trade.
5. The organization of cooperative societies for production, distribution and credit in the non-socialized sector of economic life.
6. The elimination of the princes and landlords and all other exploiting classes.

7. The redistribution of the land for the benefit of the peasants.

8. The State to encourage and develop the cooperative and collective cultivation of the land, with a view to the full collectivization of the whole of agriculture in the country.

9. The annulment of the debts of the peasants and workers.

10. The emancipation of the adult producing population.

A first glance at this program makes it clear that Congress socialism is a forced tribute to the revolutionary process going on among the broad masses of workers, peasants and the petty-bourgeois strata of India.

Even in India, which is strictly isolated from the rest of the world by prison bars and the police-imperialist dictatorship of British imperialism, the news of the great victories being achieved by socialism in the Soviet Union is reaching the broad masses. All the surrounding circumstances make the masses particularly receptive to this.

During the last few years, India has passed through a period of big mass struggles. *The general textile strike* which ended recently, marks a serious step forward along the path of the class awakening and solidarity of the Indian proletariat. In the

* It was organized as part of the Indian National Congress, within the framework and on the platform of the National Congress.

course of the years 1930-33, the revolutionary peasant movements, which swept in a mighty wave over the whole country, from Burma to the Northwest frontier, from the Presidency of Bombay and the United Provinces to the feudal states of Cashmere and Alwar, set the Indian villages in motion. The petty-bourgeois masses of the towns, driven into an impasse by the capitulatory policy of the Indian National Congress, are striving towards a decisive struggle against imperialism. The Communist vanguard is beginning to rally together and win influence over the working class movement.

But at the same time imperialism is continuing its offensive against India, from which country it drained over 2,000,000,000 gold rupees and mountains of devaluated raw material during the years of the economic crisis. Many millions of peasant farms, crushed in the vice of imperialist exploitation and servitude to the landlords and money-lenders, have been finally ruined. Hundreds of thousands of peasant families have been driven off their plots of land. A narrow stratum of new compradore elements of the trading-usurer type has grown rich and improved its position out of the ruin of the peasants. This stratum has done its bit to increase the whole system of oppressive exploitation and dependence, the system headed and directed by British imperialism.

The offensive on the working class of India by British and Indian capital, whipped up by Japanese competition, is continuing. After the close of the textile strike, wages were again cut by 7 per cent. The British government is carrying through a bill on "conciliation courts" which deprive the workers not only of the right to strike, but even of the right to send their representatives into the arbitration bodies. No one who has been prosecuted can serve as a representative of the workers, and, in addition, the Anglo-imperialist arbitrators are given the right of removing all representatives of the workers of whom they do not approve.

After stopping its campaign of civil disobedience, the National Congress is "getting up steam" for participation in the "legislative councils"* and for further compacts with imperialism. A number of groups, sharply conflicting among themselves, are taking shape among the upper ranks of the Congress.

All these things taken together are compelling those elements of the working class and the petty-bourgeois strata who are in process of becoming politically more active, to seek *their own* reply to the questions of the struggle; all these things are causing

them to strive to comprehend the process of the mass struggle, and to sum up its lessons.

It is to these very elements that the Congress Socialists are appealing. A mere acquaintance with the points of their program immediately suggests a cunning forgery, a desire to counterfeit revolutionary sentiments.

"All power to the producing masses". It is well-known that the utopian Fourier considered the industrial bourgeoisie to be a producing class. It is well-known that in the days after the October Revolution the Social-Democrats based the whole of their struggle against the proletarian revolution on frightening the masses at the destructive effects which would follow on the expropriation of the expropriators, the violent removal of such a "productive" element as —capital.

The Congress Socialists have most carefully removed all mention of the bourgeoisie from their program, and along with this they loudly announce for all to hear that their aim is "an Indian independent socialist State". In other words, they confuse the program of the bourgeois-democratic revolution with the program of the socialist revolution, without very skillfully saving the Indian bourgeoisie and "national" Indian capital from harm.

The Congress Socialists avoid speaking even of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasants. But this is natural. They are trying to make capital out of the influence of the victories of the Soviets without taking any obligations on themselves in respect to the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution in India.

The picture becomes quite clear when we further analyze these radical hieroglyphics. In reply to the publication of the program of the Congress Socialist Party, the "Congress Working Committee" (the executive body of the National Congress) condemned the class war as incompatible with the tactics of non-violence.* The Secretaries of the Congress Socialist Party immediately hastened to give their explanation:

"The symbol of faith of the Congress is the achievement of *Purna Swaraj*** (*By peaceful and lawful means.*) In our program adopted at Patna, there is nothing that contradicts this symbol of faith in any way. We are also striving to achieve independence and the very fact that we are in the ranks of the Congress shows the peaceful and lawful methods which we have adopted. We ask how the idea of the class war serves as a challenge to

* The repudiation of violent methods, including strikes.

** *Purna Swaraj*—the hypocritical and elastic formula of Gandhi, containing the demand for a scanty autonomy for India while actually preserving the domination of British imperialism.

* The Provincial Legislative Councils have no legislative power and to the extent of one-third consist of persons appointed by the Governor under whom they exist.

the (Congress) symbol of faith. As for confiscation, our aim, as already stated, is the socialization of industry, trade, etc. The program as can be gathered from the resolution adopted in Patna, will be carried out by the Indian state after the achievement of political freedom. This, of course, will be brought about by legal means". (Re-translated from the Russian—*Ed.*)

In the election of the leading body of the Congress in Bombay, the Congress Socialists again emphasized their loyalty to Gandhite methods of non-violence.

The Congress Socialists are for "Purna Swaraj", i.e., for the Gandhite conception of the national liberation of India, in the spirit of a bargain with British imperialism, while preserving for the latter its dominating position in their enslaved country.

They are for peaceful and lawful methods of struggle! They do not want to go outside the framework of British imperialist "legality". Within the framework of this imperialist lawlessness and license, the Congress Socialists promise to bring about political freedom and the further introduction of socialism by "legal means".

For many years bourgeois-nationalism has exploited the humiliated and down-trodden state of the enslaved people of India, their patriarchal peasant belief in the success of revolt while on their knees, the unconscious trust of the masses in the bourgeois leaders and liberal landlords, in order to emasculate and destroy the mass anti-imperialist struggle, by betraying the struggling masses at every stage. The doctrine of non-violence served as a means to this end. The bourgeoisie laid the path to their political influence between fire and water, between revolution and imperialism, by constantly calling on the British financial oligarchy to: "Give way to us, otherwise these rebellious masses will take it by force". The Indian bourgeoisie concealed their conciliatory policy very cleverly and well by their defeatist speculation on the invincibility of the military-police colossus of British imperialism.

The actions of the workers and peasants and the mass anti-imperialist struggle in general, during the period 1930-34, made many breaches in the psychology of non-resistance. The deepening and sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism found its reflection on Indian soil in the deepening and sharpening of all the contradictions of the colonial regime. The expropriation of the peasant masses by British finance capital, the semi-feudal landlords and the moneylenders, has assumed enormous proportions. The offensive of British and Indian capital on the beggarly colonial standard of living of the Indian workers has sharpened the antagonisms between labor and capital. In the imagination of the masses,

awakened by the struggle and the severe worsening of their conditions, the tasks of the struggle for national liberation from the imperialist yoke have approached and become intertwined with a craving to smash ruthlessly the rotten agrarian system which is supported by the parasitism of foreign finance-capital and the semi-feudal monopoly of the Indian landlords over the land.

To assure support among the landlords for the claims of the National Congress, the "holy" Gandhi sent his assurances to the zemindars (landowners), which he decorated with the palm branches of "native socialism" as follows:

"Our socialism or Communism [!] must be based on non-violence and on the harmonious collaboration of labor and capital, of the landowner and the tenant. If an attempt is made to deprive you unjustly of your property, you will find me fighting on your side. As soon as you turn over a new page in the relations between the Zemindars and the ryots [peasants], you will find us on your side, eagerly guarding your private rights and property". (Re-translated from the Russian—*Ed.*)

Until now, Ghandiism has fed the masses with the promises of national liberation and independence, and has at the same time tied the masses up with its tactics of non-violence.

The relationship between politics and economics has now changed somewhat. The results of the economic crisis and the lessons of the struggle have "settled" in the minds of the masses, and have introduced a new element into their psychology, raising the question in a revolutionary way of the relations between the anti-imperialist struggle for national liberation and the struggle of the working class against capitalism, and the struggle of the peasants against the rotten parasitic agrarian system.

This Congress pseudo-socialism hastens to help traditional Ghandiism. It widens—the extent of the promises made! It promises not only independence but socialism as well, ready-made and all in order, with the "power of the producing masses", with the socialization of industry and the banks, and even the collectivization of agriculture, in a word, almost the same can be obtained by means of the universal means—"non-violence" as is in being on the other side of the Himalayas.

The anti-imperialist revolution together with the anti-feudal revolution and even a socialist coup are fused into a single—nebula in the sky! Why should the workers quarrel with the capitalists, why should the peasants raise their hands against the land-owners, why should the revolutionary struggle against imperialism be let loose in a plebian manner under the leadership of the proletarian vanguard, when all this can be conducted into legal and peaceful bounds!

All that needs to be done is to add a prayer for socialism to the prayer for independence.

It is with this that the Congress Socialists come to the masses. They calculate on the general "all-national" illusions of unity with the conciliatory bourgeoisie still being strong among the masses, and that all that is necessary is to *renovate* these illusions with a sprinkling of socialist balm.

And they play at opposition to Gandhi and Gandhism. One of the mouthpieces of the Congress pseudo-Socialists takes up a pose and declares:

"We are coming forward in an endeavor to save the country from the confusion of thought created by Gandhi's socialism." (*Bombay Chronicle*, August 11, 1934. Re-translated—Ed.)

In India, the gap between the level of the *spontaneous* process of the revolutionization of the masses of workers and peasants and the broad strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the *political* shaping of this growth of revolutionary tendencies is extremely great. Up to the present time, in spite of all the partial breaks in the front of "non-violence", the Indian bourgeoisie have been able to keep the mass movement within the bounds of their leadership. *But what is characteristic of the present stage of the anti-imperialist, workers' and peasants' movement is the striving of the masses of workers, peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie ever more powerfully bursting to the forefront, to draw their own lessons from the bankruptcy of national reformist conciliation.* It is on these elements who have begun to grow active that the Congress Socialists are palming off their program, in the attempt to distract their attention from criticism of the methods of non-violence, from the basic question of struggle.

The question of the methods of struggle and organization of the masses are naturally brought to the forefront by the whole course of events. The last civil disobedience campaign died out in the individual civil disobedience of Gandhi, who alone had developed as far as using disobedience in the spirit of completely repudiating any idea of violence. The Swarajites cooperate with imperialism. All the Congress leaders are absorbed in plans for "winning" the legislative council. But along with this, the workers have behind them the experience of the general textile strike and the experience of the preceding clashes with imperialism and the employers; the peasants have behind them the experience of a series of uprisings; the rank and file of the petty bourgeoisie in the National Congress have been educated by the lessons of the struggle since the Lahore Session of the Congress in 1929*.

* At this session the Congress hypocritically announced that its aim was the independence of India.

The revision of the Congress leadership, and of the Congress programs and methods, arises out of the new situation. The Congress leadership has led a number of mass movements into an impasse; despite the heroic efforts of the masses in the struggle for independence, the Congress program has not absorbed a single grain of this revolutionary state of the masses; the Congress methods, which showed their bankruptcy in the campaign for civil disobedience, have evolved only further in the direction of sham constitutional collaboration with British imperialism. The conclusions from the lessons of the mass struggle differ irreconcilably from the orders, exhortations and doctrines of the Congress leaders.

The Congress Socialists pretend that they want to satisfy the rightful demands of the masses. They are against imitating the masses who are losing their obedient posture before Mahatma Gandhi's exhortations about the eternal character of capitalism and of the land-owning system, etc. Those exhortations, by the way, are termed by them "Gandhi Socialism"!

It is just for this very reason that the Congress Socialists come into the foreground with the demand for Purna Swaraj but with socialism—for the Congress, but with wide rank-and-file democracy—for non-violence, but with *sham socialist illusions!*

Possibly the advanced elements of the mass movement have not enough consciousness and organization to draw independent political conclusions in an organized fashion and to consolidate them organizationally and politically. This is what the Congress sham socialists are hoping for, imagining that flanking tactics are much more preferable than a head-on attack.

"2. The Elimination of the Princes, Landlords and all other Exploiting Classes or the Elimination of the Irreconcilables from the Working Class Movement."

One of the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party, Jhabwala, explained in very great detail the practical views and intentions of the Congress Socialists.

First of all he set out his attitude to the "conciliation" bill:

"Conciliation is but an expedient in particular stages of all true labor movement, which is fundamentally based upon class consciousness.

"Strike is not to be engineered. If men voluntarily come out, the Union leaders may lead, but leaders themselves should never ask the men on their own initiative to down tools. I am against the last textile strike, not that the workers had no complaint, but because we were not prepared in the true sense of it to fight a strike. When our own house is not in order how can you give battle to others? That was purely why the strike collapsed. There was quite good smooth sailing for the men so far as the wage-cut was concerned; the

men would have won, but for the incorrigibles, irremediables, the impossibles in labor today.

"The Socialist Party may help a great deal in eradicating the irreconcilables from the ranks of Labor. Then the Congress must revive its relations with the mill-owners and other industrial companies by giving them a guarantee of consumption of manufactured goods on the strength of proper Swadeshi propaganda on the others' acceptance of a gradual socialization of all the industries."

It is difficult to believe that a person with such views was one of the Meerut prisoners who deservedly obtained authority in the ranks of the proletariat far beyond the confines of India.

The arguments of Jhabwala are arguments typical of an agent of capital in the working class movement. He gives his blessing to arbitration and conciliation, though without too widely advertising the participation of the British Secret Service, at the very time when this "conciliation" means conciliation with the continuation of the ever more impudent offensive of British and Indian capital. Jhabwala is copying Gandhi.

The "holy" Gandhi promises the landlords a warm defense of their property. The Mahatma speaks weightily and distinctly about the defense of their rights as landlords to exploit the peasants, and proclaims the *eternity* of landlord property as the unshakable foundation of Indian national life, at the very time when the ruin of the peasant farms by semi-feudal land-owners and usurers has reached unprecedented dimensions, when the further preservation of the semi-feudal agrarian system, which has become fused with imperialist exploitation, may be bought only at the price of the direct *expropriation* of hundreds of thousands and millions of peasant farms, at the price of the enslavement of the many millions of the peasant masses.

Gandhi prefers the expropriation and ruin of the peasants by the landlords and usurers to the expropriation of the landlords by the peasants.

There is nothing surprising in this. During the period of the economic crisis, new contacts have developed between the Indian bourgeoisie and the strata of *new landlords* who have come forward and who have seized quite large quantities of peasant land.

Jhabwala raises the question of the workers in exactly the same manner as Gandhi puts the question of the peasants. In a situation where the capitalists are making a frantic attack, strikes, in his opinion, can only be a spontaneous, unavoidable evil. The "true leaders" of the trade unions must not organize strikes. Jhabwala goes further in his warm efforts to hand over the *non-union* workers, bound hand and foot, to the onslaught of the imperialists and the Indian capitalists. He joins the voice of the

Congress Socialists to the united chorus of British imperialists and Indian employers who are demanding that the working class movement be purged of insidious agitators, irreconcilables, Communists. He offers the services of his party in the fulfillment of this task. And at the same time, instead of organizing the proletarian front of resistance against the onslaught of capital, he offers the workers the mediation of the National Congress. The National Congress must obtain the consent of the capitalist sharks to its "gradual socialization", in return for which the sharks must be guaranteed the sale of their goods by means of "swadeshi".

The entire tight-rope walk of the newly-hatched Congress Socialists is bounded by the framework of traditional Gandhism. The rope is stretched from Purna Swaraj and non-violence to swadeshi, to the demand for the consumption of goods of only local "national" production. The Congress Socialist acrobats are balancing on *this* rope with the "power of the producing masses", "socialization", "collectivization", and "planned economy" in their hands. The starving workers, who are thrown out of the factories in thousands so as to increase the productivity of "national industry", must turn into *commercial travelers for their exploiters* as part of their "national self-discipline". "Swadeshi", the doctrine of the consumption of only "national" cloths and national products, can no longer claim popularity in the old form of a commercial advertisement put out by the national capitalists.

Let us stick a socialist label on the "swadeshi", say Jhabwala and Co. This will help Indian capital in the struggle for the home market against dying Lancashire and Japanese dumping. The workers can be told that the capitalists will become kinder if the whole nation becomes one big commercial office for the sale of the manufactures of "their own" capitalists.

Thus, when we look more closely at the program of the Congress Socialist Party, all its mysterious contents become plain.

"Power to the producing masses" includes the participation of the "national capitalists" who have given a vague consent to a still more vague "socialization". "Planned economy" (this has to be mentioned after the victory of the Bolshevik Five-Year Plan), turns out to be "swadeshi" in the plan of the "socialist" reconciliation of capital and labor. The socialization of industry and the banks, not only of local capital but also of the financial capital of Great Britain, proves to be a *plan for buying out the imperialist "commanding heights"*, stretched over a whole number of generations, plus the buying out of the factories belonging to the local capitalists. The collectivization of agriculture without the previous confiscation of the irrigation works and the land belong-

ing to the imperialists, the princes and the land-owners, turns out to be a plan for *buying out the land* from the imperialists, princes and landlords.

The Congress Socialists are thirsting to load the workers and peasants of India with benefits just as the Russian Cadets wanted to pour blessings on the peasants of Tsarist Russia by proposing to buy out the land-owners' land at a "fair price".

However, this counter-revolutionary and niggardly phantasmagoria has *its own logic*, strange though it may seem. It is the logic of Purna Swaraj and non-violence. The achievement of almost independence within the bounds of a dominion constitution has been regarded by the Indian bourgeoisie throughout all the post-war years as their rightful possession. One of the heroes in the works of the prominent Russian satirist, Schedrin, claimed that truth is the product of legal proceedings. The Indian bourgeoisie has steadily tried to convince all and sundry that national liberation can only be the result of negotiations and commercial undertakings between them and British imperialism.

Gandhi and his inseparable pandit Jawaharial Nehru, who was the inspirer of the new Congress pseudo-Socialist Party, constantly called on the oppressed and enslaved India to give up any idea of violence, thus clearing a path for themselves *through the mass movement* to negotiations with the Viceroy and to the Round Table Conference. They could not and cannot at the present time give up the support of the masses. Should they do so their solicitations towards British imperialism would lose the force of political pressure. It would not be possible, were such the case, to bolster up the claims of the bourgeoisie with a certain amount of popular support. This would contradict the class interests of capital in a colonial country, and its strivings towards national independence. But the Indian bourgeoisie have carried on a policy of conciliation with imperialism with rare consistency and still carry it on as a counterpoise to the struggle for the revolutionary liberation of India. This policy *contrasts* the Indian bourgeoisie to the struggling masses.

The Indian bourgeoisie can only guarantee their political hegemony in the mass movement by artificially maintaining a definite proportion, a definite relationship between their class diplomatic-conciliatory activity and the mass movement, which is ever more flowing over the dam of their conciliatory policy. Hence, the peculiar national *masking* of the treacherous policy of conciliation systematically carried on by the elastic Purna Swaraj, which is treated both as "independence in general" and as "independence" within the framework of the British Empire. Hence the national specific bourgeois *method of emasculating* the revolutionary contents from the mass movement with the help of the doctrine of non-violence.

The vicious circle of the national-reformist capitulatory-conciliatory policy consists in the fact that the bourgeoisie of a colonial country cannot *give* anything worthwhile to the masses in the sense of satisfying their urgent demands. At the same time they do not dare and do not wish to suggest that the masses should take what is not given to them. Hence the necessity for the systematic *deception* of the masses, adapted on each occasion to the concrete political and economic situation. Hence the constant *fabrication of illusions*, which exploit the thirst for national emancipation that exists among the masses in a colonially enslaved country. The stronger and more stubborn the pressure of the rank and file, the more powerfully events drive forward towards a general differentiation of classes, then the more are the bourgeoisie forced to *re-write their promissory notes, supplemented by new deceptive promises*. In the promises of the Congress Socialists to "introduce socialism" by the Swaraj "buying-out" method, there is just as much political reality as in the Purna Swaraj which they claim can be carried on by non-violence.

In the introductory part of their basic resolution, adopted at Putna, the Congress Socialists made the following declaration:

"Taking into account that the introduction to the resolution of the Putna Congress regarding fundamental rights declares that in order to put an end to the exploitation of the masses, political liberty must include real economic freedom for the starving millions, in order that *the basis of the struggle for independence be widened*, in order to guarantee that after the achievement of Swaraj the masses will not remain the victims of exploitation, the Congress must adopt a program which is socialist in its direction and aims.

"The All-Indian committee of the Congress recommends to the Congress that it declare its aim to be a socialist state, and after winning power, to call together a constituent assembly (on the basis of granting the right to a vote to the whole adult population with the exception of those who resisted the struggle for freedom; representation must be organized according to occupation) so as to set up the constitution of the Indian state on the following political, social and economic principles." (Re-translated—Ed.)

This is followed by the program of the Congress Socialist Party.

In conclusion the resolution says:

"The All-Indian Committee of the Congress recommends the *method of organizing the masses on the basis of their economic interests as the only effective method of forming a mass movement*, the organization of 'Kissan' and 'Maxdoor Sanghas' (workers' and peasants' associations) by the Con-

gressites, and affiliation to similar associations where they already exist with a view to participating in the everyday struggle of the masses with a view to leading them in the possible struggle for their final aim." (*Hindu*, May 18, 1934. Re-translated—*Ed.*)

The workers and peasants are "important" for the Congress, state the Congress Socialists. They cannot do without them. A choice must be made—either let these mutinous forces take their own way, or else subject their struggle and their organization to the leadership of the National Congress. In the former case, the separation of the Congress from the masses is only of benefit to the irreconcilables, who have to be cleaned out of the working class movement. In the latter case, there are chances of isolating these irreconcilables, by surrounding the commanding heights of the Congress with a new chain of fortified positions in the trade unions, and peasant and student organizations. The pseudo-constitutional illusions regarding the achievement of independence by the methods of non-violence must be enlivened and expanded to the extent of pseudo-socialist illusions.

Along with the class awakening and consolidation of the proletariat and under the influence of the latter, there is to be observed in modern India, the political awakening of the petty-bourgeois strata, who are beginning to seek for positions of independent bourgeois democracy, independent of the guardianship of the national reformist bourgeoisie. The big influence which the terrorist groups have on urban petty-bourgeois circles, and on the students, teachers, etc., is in part an expression of this process. At the same time, the most politically active section of these strata are increasingly striving towards direct participation in the working class movement and in the movement of the peasants. These strata, to a much greater extent than others, are feeling the crisis of the national reformist policy of conciliation and capitulation as a crisis of their whole world outlook. No wonder the demand for Marxist literature in India has increased so tremendously in recent years.

The Congress Socialists act as errand boys for the national reformist bourgeoisie. They include in their program a mixed collection of the demands of the bourgeois democratic stage and the demands of the socialist stage of the national colonial revolution, in a way calculated in advance. They dress up bourgeois democratic demands in "socialist" clothes, and place the "redistribution of the land for the benefit of the peasants" side by side with all kinds of promises of "socialization", so as to *take the revolutionary sting out of all the demands*, whether bourgeois democratic or socialist.

Time and time again in India have bourgeois democratic illusions in a *national emancipation dress*

saved bourgeois national reformism. The terrorist movement of the petty-bourgeois elements demonstrates this with sufficient clearness. It has not yet broken away from its political dependence on bourgeois national reformism, and the bomb and the revolver, which serve as the weapon of terror of isolated individuals against the British invaders, are not directed by a movement which has in the slightest degree taken political shape in *opposition* to the National Congress.

In 1930-33, heavy *peasant* reserves came into action in India, which indicated that they are being awakened by the flames of insurrection against the imperialists, landlords and money-lenders. This repelled the petty-bourgeois youth still further away from the national reformist conciliators. While the national-liberation bourgeois-democratic illusions of the petty-bourgeois strata have hitherto been utilized by the Indian bourgeoisie constantly to *postpone* the struggle "for the sake of more certain victory", nowadays on the other hand, in addition to this, events have placed the utilization of bourgeois-democratic illusions in the *economic* sphere on the order of the day.

Up to the present time, the bourgeois politicians and manufacturers of illusions have called on the petty-bourgeois masses to restrain their revolutionary impatience for the sake of the victory of the "national cause". The time has now arrived for the assurances of the Congress Socialists to the effect that socialism will be won along with national freedom and the elimination of the princes and landlords, but a socialism better and more "national" than the Bolsheviks have secured! But—*wait*, wait for Purna Swaraj and don't resort to violence! The greater goal requires greater patience!

The deepening and sharpening of the mass struggle against the imperialists, land-owners and capitalists are rendering it essential for the Indian bourgeoisie to change its *methods of organization and mass work*, and to *depict this change as a change of policy*. The bourgeoisie can no longer maintain their political monopoly in the mass movement by the old methods, with the aid of the old organizational forms. Formerly the masses were sufficiently backward and undemanding to be satisfied by the organization of the Congress on, it might be said, feudal-patriarchal lines. This includes a handful of "recognized" leader-dictators, electing each other everywhere, with Gandhi at their head, the appointed committees of the Congress directing everything, and the unorganized populace merely invited from time to time to express a loud-sounding approval of Gandhi and Co.—at meetings and sessions of the Congress—and to present their backs to the "lathis" of the police during the conduct of campaigns.

Shouts can everywhere be heard now against the

dictatorship of Gandhi and the group of infallible leaders. The differentiation of classes has gone so deep that the struggle for influence over the workers and the peasants has to be conducted through special workers' organizations, the trade unions, and through peasant associations. In order to carry through the conciliatory policy of the bourgeoisie, and to subordinate the mass movement to it, what needs to be done is to penetrate deeper among the rank and file with more radical, almost socialist methods and forms of deceiving the masses. The Congress Socialists have good reason to reiterate the names of Purcell, Lansbury and the English Laborites at every step. The mass work of these gentlemanly pseudo-socialists fills them with envy. But alas! India is not England, but—an English colony. It is impossible to operate in India even with the memory of sops given from above. Only a mist of illusions will save the situation in this case. But even this is being scattered by the revolutionary monsoons which are gathering strength.

THE SHAM CONSTITUTIONAL MANEUVERS OF THE
CONGRESS AROUND THE SLOGAN OF THE
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

From their very first steps, the Congress Socialists established "decent" relations with the Swaraj Party, which openly demands collaboration with British imperialism on a pseudo-constitutional basis. The swarajites, without waiting for the other sections of the Congress, proclaimed the beginning of a constitutional era in India. Since there is a dispute between Baldwin and Churchill, and since they are engaged in a quarrel as to whether the British viceroy of India must be gracious or not, this means that there is a field for the Indian bourgeoisie, who are growing into compradores, to carry on constitutional activity—an almost parliamentary field.

The Congress Socialists sent their credentials for friendly contacts with the Swarajites, to Dr. Ansari and his friends:

"The Congress Socialists have no feelings of hostility for the Swaraj party. They cannot act against an organization recognized and included in the Congress. They merely think that the program of the Swaraj party can and must be improved in the sense of bringing it nearer to Socialism." (*Bombay Chronicle*, May 25, 1934. Re-translated—*Ed.*)

On the other hand:

"Appealing to the Socialists, Mahatma Gandhi said that if they wanted to get into contact with the masses and do work among the masses, they could do this not through the councils [provincial legislative councils without rights, to which the

Congressites are straining in hopes of getting sops from British imperialism—G. S.]. Let them operate among the masses. In England [again the gentlemanly example!—G. S.] not all good people and public men get into the House of Commons. First class people remain outside its doors and give help." (*Bombay Chronicle*, May 21, 1934. Re-translated—*Ed.*)

The All-Indian Congress Socialist Party, according to Gandhi, must play the part of one of the driving belts of the Congress, the leaders of which correspond more and more to the Swaraj party. The Congress Socialist Party must serve to provide contacts with the masses and to agitate among the masses.

The leaders of the Congress themselves, however, are not confident of the possibilities of the Congress Socialist Party obtaining such serious successes as to render more important, so to say, decisive maneuvers, unnecessary.

First of all, the Indian bourgeoisie, drawn along by their *compradore* wing, will not give way and allow the masses to participate in the legislative councils, to participate in the barter around the British imperialist project of a pseudo-constitution, around the "White Paper".

The Indian bourgeoisie are trying to turn to their own benefit the shifting of the textile industry nearer to the source of raw material and to colonial markets, a process which can be seen on a world scale. They are interested in getting profit out of "imperial co-operation", particularly out of the growth of the production of sugar cane and the replanning of crops in connection with the devastating results of the crisis. The questions of money circulation, of the reorganization of banking and tariffs, are all questions of capitalist life. And here again there are hopes of increased incomes and rights for native capital when official posts, parliamentary seats, subsidies, etc., are distributed, with certain pseudo, allegedly constitutional, concessions from imperialism.

The policy of the Congress has failed both at the top and at the bottom. The basic source of this failure is the fact that this policy *could not even to any noticeable extent restrain and weaken the British imperialist offensive on India during the period of the crisis.*

The confusion in the upper ranks of the Congress, the decline of Gandhi's authority, the unauthorized establishment of the Swaraj party, the split-away of a section of the Congress leaders under Malawia, who refused to accept Gandhi's compromise with the Mussulman bourgeoisie and landlords on the question of communal curias, the attempts of Bose to find refuge in the bosom of Italian fascism, the unauthorized formation of the Congress Socialist Party without Gandhi's blessing—all these reflect the clash

of various trends which cannot come to terms with each other as to the necessary *degree of concessions* to be made towards imperialism, on the one hand, and towards the mutinous masses, on the other.

Sufficient has been said about the crisis in the confidence of the rank and file in the Congress.

In just such complex and contradictory conditions, the Congress issued the slogan of the constituent assembly. It becomes necessary to take the line of "convening" a constituent assembly, because this slogan was intended to bribe the masses with its "revolutionary" appearance. At the same time, it makes it possible to *replace* the struggle *against* the British imperialist project of a *fake constitution* by the decorative and fruitless preparations for the calling of a constituent assembly, which is to receive constituent rights, no one knows how or whence.

The slogan of the constituent assembly came just at the right moment for the Congressmen, for the additional reason that it provided additional concealment for the capitulatory compradore entrance of the Congressmen into the legislative councils. It became possible to kill two birds with one stone, namely, to draw the sting of the revolutionary struggle against the slave pseudo-constitution, which is raising a wave of mass indignation at this imperialist mockery, and to conceal the compradore rear of the National Congress, which has become the vanguard of the Congress on the path that leads to the provincial legislative councils.

The followers of Roy, who have long been the purveyors of tactical tricks and acrobatics for the treacherous national reformists, were the first to set going the slogan of the constituent assembly. But it did not rise on Roy's yeast, as some limited sectarian elements in the Communist movement of India attempted to represent matters. The Royites, whom the same confused minds have tried to depict as the only and all-embracing menace, made their debut only as petty commercial travelers, offering the buyer a set of the latest samples. Things took an entirely different course when they got into the hands of the big wholesale firm which supplied their own regular brands of diluted products, when they got into the hands of the National Congress itself. The slogan of the constituent assembly became a means of political self-advertisement for the Congress.

The columns of the bourgeois press, which hitherto had been occupied with a profound analysis of the stops and commas in the speeches of the British county rulers and the influence of this on the fate of India, immediately plunged into a discourse on bourgeois revolutions. It is well known that in the history of bourgeois revolutions, constituent assemblies were usually the result of a revolutionary victory, the victory of a revolutionary uprising, and were convened by the revolutionary power to give

official form to the new government system. The bankrupts of the National Congress pretend that their aim is to convene a constituent assembly which would not only write a constitution according to the demands of the people, but would in a miraculous manner transform the entire State and social order.

They do not think it necessary to enter into explanations as to how it is possible, while the imperialist dictatorship remains and semi-feudal serfdom continues to exist in the villages, to conduct the elections to a representative body capable, if only to a distant degree, to represent the will of the people.

The Congress leaders in *their own circle* state without ceremony that the constituent assembly is simply the National Congress.

The most unceremonious of them brazenly offer the advice in the press that this home-made Congress assembly should be convened for such a time and place as will make it possible to calculate without a doubt on proceeding from this sham constituent assembly direct to a *new round table conference in London*. The latest Congress edition of the constituent assembly is simply a pedestal of papier mache for the glorification of a new pilgrimage to Canossa—that is, to London—to make their bows to the thoughtful, die-hard Baldwin.

Nevertheless, the National Congress would not be the National Congress if its new maneuvers in respect to the struggling masses did not contain a new maneuver towards *British imperialism*. Addressing themselves to Lord Willingdom and his cleverer masters in London, the Congressmen say approximately the following: "You attach no importance to our efforts which aim at quietening down masses who are becoming more radical, and you do not take into account that our maneuvers with socialism and the constituent assembly are taken against our will. But in India there are many millions of people whom you cannot bridle by participation in the legislative councils, and whom you cannot pacify with subtle arguments on constitutional rights. They have forced us to talk of the constituent assembly and socialism, but all the objective and subjective prerequisites are present for them to enter on the struggle seriously, *i.e.*, not in the national reformist manner, for the power of the people, against the pseudo-constitution of the imperialists, and to cleanse India of the rajahs, landowners, and money lenders. Give way to us, who are prepared to grovel in the legislative councils, otherwise they will throw off our leadership and use force over our heads to tear incomparably more from you."

The dual character of the *class position of the national reformist bourgeoisie in India determines the constant zigzags in their conduct, and gives a double meaning to every political step they take.*

The national reformist bourgeoisie are reaping

political capital out of the pseudo-constitutional illusions which they spread regarding the possibility of introducing the best constitution without winning power, and out of cramming this quackery and deceit into the masses. They are speculating on the emasculation of the mass movement, without which they are not in a position to maintain their hold on the leadership of this movement. But at the same time their *trump card* in the bargaining they undertake with imperialism, in enabling them to secure partial concessions, is this very revolutionary scope of the mass movement, the strength and stormy nature of the mass discontent, the fact that the masses are going beyond the framework of "lawful and peaceful means", away from the control of the national reformist leadership. However, this dumping of false illusions costs them the loss of their "all-national" authority.

The Indian bourgeoisie are feeling this now with special force. It is as if they had set out the cards for a game of patience, for fortune telling: (1) at the end of October—a session of the Congress; (2) before this, democratic elections with universal suffrage, for the leading bodies of the Congress; (3) participation in the elections for the legislative councils; (4) in prospect—the constituent assembly and a new round table conference. But it is impossible to angle even the most meagre pseudo-constitution from the legislative councils.

The Indian bourgeoisie and their various subsidiary detachments have so far been able to keep control of the anti-imperialist movement, over the struggle

of the workers and the peasants, by no means due to the exceptional brilliancy of their political talents, but because at critical moments they have always been aided by the difficulty of setting into motion the scattered and backward population of 350 millions on an all-Indian scale, by the lack of organization and the inadequate class consciousness of the workers and peasants who find difficulty in giving up their faith in the bourgeoisie *who have usurped the official representation of the national interests*, and by the fact that the proletarian vanguard lacks political shape and training in tactics.

But the weaknesses, mistakes, and sicknesses of the movement are being overcome by the deepening and sharpening of the mass struggle, the organization of the masses, the development of the political and organizational initiative of the Communist vanguard, primarily in the conduct of the tactics of the united front in the anti-imperialist struggle and in the struggle for the unity of the trade union movement.

The "socialist" and "constituent assembly" maneuverers of the Congress face the Communist Party of India not only with the task of exposing them, but also with the task of struggling for political and organizational initiative in the struggle against the onslaught of imperialism, in the struggle against the offensive of capital and the semi-feudal landlords, in the struggle against the treacherous conciliatory bourgeoisie. The separation of the struggle against national reformism from the struggle with imperialism is the most dangerous evil which helps the national reformist politicians to carry on their capitulatory game.

A SPEECH THAT HITLER FAILED TO DELIVER

(At the Nazi Congress in Nuremberg)

By L. MADYAR

IF Hitler had set himself the task at the Sixth Congress of his Party of telling the truth to his adherents, then his proclamation, which was a sort of report, should obviously have taken the following form.

* * *

Fellow Countrymen:

Our National-Socialist Party has been in power now for more than a year and a half. During this period we have arranged quite a few congresses, complete with uniform and jackboot, quite a few parades and quite a few test mobilizations. A huge quantity of all kinds of stupefying phrases has been pronounced at our meetings. Efforts were made to make the Weimar Republic responsible for everything. We announced that Marxism would be wiped out, and that Communism would be washed off the face of the earth, etc.

We have spoken quite a lot about our successes, about our gigantic achievements, about the unflinching glory of National-Socialism, which will be dominant in Germany for hundreds and thousands of years and which has raised the prestige of our country abroad, a glory which unites the whole of the German people in one State, and which unites all classes of the German people in the holy unity of the community of the people. Enough of these empty phrases, let us get down to business, let us sum up results, let us define the present situation, let us indicate the prospects ahead and determine the tasks facing us.

What is the economic situation facing our country? We came to power with the slogan of the establishment of autarchy. This slogan has turned out to be empty chatter. We have even had to give the

slogan itself up, because in practice it has all turned out to be so harmful, absurd and stupid.

We came to power with the slogan of the consolidation of the position of German economy on the world market. We came to power with the slogan of the abolition of unemployment, of the improvement of the conditions of the toilers, with the promise to keep the trusts and cartels in check, to nationalize the trusts and department stores, and to hand over the land to the toiling peasants, etc.

What has actually happened?

Nothing has come of this autarchy. The economic position of Germany on the world market has become weakened to a tremendous degree, and we are losing our position on the world market. Previously we exported 26 per cent of our industrial production, but now we do not export 14 per cent. Previously Germany's share in world trade amounted to from 12 to 13 per cent, but now it hardly reaches 8 per cent. Previously we occupied a leading position in exports to the U.S.S.R., but now our economic contacts with the U.S.S.R. have weakened catastrophically, and there has been a sharp decline in Soviet orders which used to provide tens of thousands of industrial workers with work. Previously German exporters and importers were able to obtain credit throughout the world, but now sales are made to us only for cash, for we are not in a position to pay even the most urgent promissory notes.

Of course we have important successes in some spheres. We have made a profit of about four to four and a half billion marks out of the devaluation of the pound sterling, the dollar and other valuta. Our foreign debts have declined by this gigantic sum. Many people think that this is not to our credit, and that we obtained these advantages without any labor on our part. But this, of course, is incorrect. For in the person of Doctor Schacht, the Chairman of the Reichsbank, we, the National-Socialist government, handed 600 million marks to our big banks and capitalists, out of our gold and valuta reserves, so that they could purchase their foreign bills at the present ridiculously low prices. Our big banks and concerns made hundreds and hundreds of millions out of this speculation, and I will let you into a secret when I tell you that this speculation alone reduced their indebtedness by more than one billion marks.

We have begun to struggle against unemployment. You are quite well aware of the methods we have used in order to cut down the number of people in receipt of unemployment benefits. We have driven them into the labor camps, we are driving them into the villages, to the landowners, to the kulaks; we have driven and continue to drive them on to social works, on to the construction of fortifications and of underground hangars, etc. We simply deprived them of benefits, and handed over hundreds and hundreds

of millions to our capitalists in the shape of subsidies and credits so that they may once again "wind up" the economic machine.

As the State, we have given orders for hundreds and hundreds of millions (I cannot tell you the exact figure because we are dealing here with war orders, and our foreign enemies would undoubtedly get alarmed if they discovered the gigantic sums we are dealing with).

We have done everything in our power to develop industrial production, but what has been the result? Our gigantic industrial apparatus is to a great extent idle. Today, after all our efforts, there is hardly more than one-half of our huge productive apparatus in use, and it is just now that we are being threatened by a new catastrophe, namely, deficiency of raw materials. It is not we National-Socialists who are to blame that Germany has no cotton, wool and other kinds of raw material, that with the exception of copper, Germany has no light metals, that our superb metal industry has not got a sufficient quantity of iron ore at its disposal, that we have no rubber, that we have to import aluminum and that we have to import many more kinds of industrial raw materials. You know that we are threatening our imperialist rivals that we will withdraw Germany out of the orbit of world economy, a move which would undoubtedly deal a heavy blow at the other capitalist countries. We are trying to produce substitutes to replace the raw materials which we lack.

But I can tell you that all these threats and statements of ours are quite silly. For if we should not be in a position to import raw materials, then a tremendous number of our factories would have to be stopped, for they are adapted to the working up of foreign raw materials. This would mean that hundreds of thousands and millions of workers would have to be thrown onto the streets and that in the next few months we should have a new wave of millions of unemployed. That's point number one.

Point number two: It must be borne in mind that we have not sufficient capital to construct new factories for the production of substitutes. And where could we get this capital, when, as you are well aware, the private capital market has been almost completely paralyzed since the time when we came to power, and new issues have almost completely ceased, and when the State is practically the only financier compelling the semi-government banks and savings banks to finance industry, war orders, constructions, etc.

Point number three: Our best engineers and experts, including Bergius, tell us that the cost of production of substitutes will be much higher than that of the real raw materials, and that only in time of war, and that not for long, will our economy be able to withstand the replacement of high quality cheap raw materials by bad and dear substitutes.

Point number four: The use of substitutes would undoubtedly spoil the quality of our products to such an extent that we would lose our foreign markets still more.

We are not in a position to continue our famous "fight against unemployment" in its present dimensions. We must gradually cease the State subsidy of private building activity, and we are compelled to dismiss tens and hundreds of thousands of workers from the so-called social works. There is no new industrial construction. We have allocated hundreds of millions for the repair of old houses and for the building of new ones, for which the house-owners are very grateful to us. We were able up to a given moment, by means of this policy, to maintain good sentiments, courage and hope among the whole stratum of handicraft workers who received orders and work in connection with this construction. But all this has been cancelled. Our Minister of Finances, Baron Shverin Krossig, an old bureaucrat and monarchist, will not give us any more money for these purposes. What money he supplies will only be for the financing of the construction of strategic roads, because this is what the General Staff demands, but in any case only 200,000 workers are engaged on this construction work and they under compulsion. In the year 1933, we squandered about 17 millions on the construction of roads and fortifications, and incalculable millions on armaments. This capital has been "frozen", withdrawn from our economy which has been weakened and undermined and will not be able to hold out in such circumstances for long.

I will not deal in detail with our other economic difficulties. You are aware that the Reichsbank has a gold reserve in all of 74 to 75 million marks. This is an absurdly miserable amount. When we came to power we found 960 million gold marks in the Reichsbank. In the year 1933 our positive trade balance still amounted to 667 million marks. We received about 400 million marks on Soviet promissory notes. The Soviets paid very accurately. We squeezed 120 million gold marks out of German economy itself. We paid very little on our debts, yet it appears all the same that we have no gold. In the course of 18 months we have expended about two billion gold marks. Don't think that we show such a small quantity of gold in the Reichsbank report just in order to deceive our foreign creditors. Of course we deceive them as far as we possibly can. Some people think that we still have big hidden gold reserves, but this is a mistake. We have hidden gold reserves amounting to about 260 to 280 million marks, and our creditors know about it, but for such a country as our Germany, this sum is ridiculously small. We have actually arrived at such a position when our paper money has a gold cover of only 2 per cent,

whereas when we came to power our mark had a gold cover of more than 20 per cent.

But the stability of the mark is being undermined not only by the decline of its gold backing. You know that our budget is not a balanced one. Our Minister of Finances, Shverin Krossig, has blurted out the fact that we are expending money today which we are hardly likely to receive as income in the year 1938. In actual fact our State finances have a deficit of eight billion marks. None of us has yet determined where we are to get this money and how we are to pay these debts. But we have had at the same time not only to disorganize the budget and to spend our gold reserves but even to undermine the bill of exchange cover of the mark in order to finance the war industry, to keep the State apparatus in our hands and to give subsidies to our most powerful capitalists and concerns. In the portfolio of the Reichsbank there still are bills amounting to three and a half to four billions, but of this amount more than two and a half billions are financial bills of our State which is on the brink of bankruptcy. As you see, in reality we have here already the beginning of inflation. The German mark is not accepted on foreign stock exchanges at our official rates. The cost of living inside the country is going up. We can already see the beginning of the flight of money to material values. And a beginning has been made of the withdrawal of deposits from the savings banks. We are on the eve of the catastrophe of inflation.

But you know the meaning of inflation in our country, which has already lived through one period of inflation which destroyed all the savings of the petty bourgeoisie and which at the same time reduced wages to a colonial level.

Of course, we can hold up for a time the transformation of hidden into open inflation. Experience shows that it is possible to maintain the rate of the mark and its gold cover for a comparatively long time, if the balance of payments is regulated, if there is no decline in the internal commodity turnover, and if the budget is not disorganized too much. But Schacht himself does not know how long he will be able to continue maneuvering.

But it must be understood that our economy is threatened by a new attack of the crisis for the following reasons: No new industrial construction is taking place and no serious renewal of basic capital is taking place, our engineering industry is not really working at full blast, and there are no new issues on the private money market; the expansion of production comes up against the underemployment of the productive apparatus, and the development of the means of consumption comes up against the impoverishment of the masses, while exports come up against our own criminal policy and the insur-

mountable barriers and obstacles raised by our competitors.

The position in the German village is a very sorrowful one. Last year we raised prices and increased the average income of German agriculture by 700 to 800 marks. I must stress the fact that this money fell into the pockets of the junkers, kulaks and well-to-do peasants. Of course we have continued to subsidize the big junkers against whom we raised such shouts previously. We have given, we are giving and shall continue to give much relief to the junkers and capitalists in the sphere of taxation. You are quite well aware that Darré has not touched a single junker estate. It is also a fact that the allotment of land among settlers is going on more slowly now while we are in power than it did under the late Weimar Republic. Our law regarding inherited homesteads was to have consolidated the kulak, and to have established a German Cossackdom. I don't know whether we shall succeed in this. But the law regarding inherited homesteads has increased the differentiation in the village and introduced the class struggle into the peasant family.

We have raised prices on agricultural products by 20 per cent, on the average. This has been a heavy blow at the town consumer. The basic masses of the toiling peasants have suffered from the rise in the prices of grain and fodder, for they are occupied in cattle-breeding and the cultivation of special technical cultures, and are compelled to purchase grain and fodder.

This year, our agriculture was affected by the poor harvest. The harvest of grain will, on the most optimistic calculation, be 25 per cent less than last year's. We are compelled to recognize this decline even officially. Speaking between ourselves I may say that in reality the harvest of fodder will be 50 per cent less than it was last year. Our peasant has begun to slaughter his cattle since he cannot feed them. The peasant is not in a position to purchase fodder at ever increasing prices, while the prices of cattle and cattle products are being reduced in spite of our state interference.

In connection with the bad harvest and at the same time in connection with the preparations for war, we, the National-Socialist government, have been compelled to introduce an almost complete military regime into the sphere of trade in agricultural products. We have a position when the German peasant at the present time cannot sell his wheat, rye, meat, cattle, butter, cheese, potatoes, grain, fodder and fruits on the open market, and some idiot of a bureaucrat has forbidden even the free sale of flowers. But, as you know, the peasants also can not sell sugar beets and hops freely. And in spite of all these measures, it is not out of the question that we shall be compelled this winter to introduce the card

system for basic products. We are face to face with a hungry winter.

But not only is our agriculture groaning under the weight of military economy. Our industry is so, too. To regulate the import and the distribution of raw materials and to ensure supplies for the war factories, we have introduced a military order into the sphere of the import of wool, cotton, flax, copper, zinc, tin, rubber and leather, etc.

Schacht has already set up 25 departments after the fashion of the war period. At the same time we have established more than 50 compulsory cartels of general State importance. This is what has really resulted from the check put on the trusts and cartels which we promised.

Some people think that our dictatorship is operating State capitalism. Certain Social-Democrats say that we are directly preparing socialism. But it is surely clear to a blind man that our State enterprises which are preparing industry and agriculture for war do not mean the subordination of the monopolists to our power, but, on the contrary, we are a weapon in the hands of the monopolists. Our measures weaken certain forms of competition, but they lead not to planfulness and organization, but to the growth of anarchy, disorganization and the establishment of new forms and methods of competition.

What shall I tell you about the conditions of the workers? When we came to power, the number of workers, office employees, etc., amounted to 12 millions; now, the figure is more than 15½ millions. Everything would appear to be in order. But the whole point is that the total wages paid to the 15½ million workers, employees, etc., equal what were previously paid to the 12 million workers, etc. At the same time prices of agricultural products have increased on the average by 20 per cent, while the price index has increased by a minimum of 8 per cent. In 1932 our capitalists paid out about 26 billions of marks in wages to 12 million workers, etc., and in 1933, 26 billions of marks were also paid to 15½ millions of workers, etc. The total amount consumed, in value, is being speedily reduced. It amounted to 36 billions in 1929, and now amounts to 21 billions. And since we came to power the consumption of products by the German people has declined not only in value but also in quantity. The toilers in Germany eat less, drink less beer and wine, smoke less tobacco than they did before we came to power. If my little-revered colleague, Mussolini, can boast that during the course of some 12 years the fascists have succeeded in sharply reducing the general level of the standard of living of the people, we, on the other hand, German National-Socialists, can quite justly be proud of the fact that in a period of 18 months we have reached and in some respects have surpassed the Italian fascists as regards the reduction

of the standard of living of the workers in our country.

I will give you one example in the fact that at the present time in Germany every tenth worker among those employed is actually a convict. Two million six hundred thousand German workers are employed in the compulsory labor camps, or driven into the villages as "agricultural assistants", etc. Is this a small success? Is it not an achievement that we have driven more than 200,000 women out of the factory during the course of one year? Is it not a gigantic achievement that we have given the capitalists the right to drive out of production all young workers under 25 years of age, to replace them by middle-aged people? This means that six million people in Germany have not got the right to work in a factory. Is it not a big achievement that we have forbidden agricultural laborers and the village poor to seek work in the towns, and that the village proletariat and semi-proletariat have been deprived of the right of free movement? Why, even in the epoch of feudalism it was only after bloody battles that the forefathers of our junkers succeeded in depriving the German serfs of this right.

We used to spend about five or six billions per annum on various forms of social insurance annuities, pensions, etc. In the year 1933 alone we reduced this sum by from 700 to 900 million marks and at the same time increased the contributions made by the workers. This year we shall reduce this sum by about another million marks. We must put an end to our social legislation. We staved off the revolution with its aid, but now we shan't be able to stave off the revolution by such gifts.

It is quite clear that we are not only losing our foreign markets, but are also suffering from the contraction of the internal market. It is quite understandable that in such a situation, among other good things, we are faced with new economic wars against our imperialist competitors. And what was the task which German monopolist capital set us when we came to power? Our task was to speed up the pace of capitalist investments in Germany, to re-establish and increase the profitability of capital, and at the same time to increase armaments so as to bring about a redivision of the globe in the interests of German imperialism.

We have spent many billions of marks on armaments, on the construction of fortifications, on the establishment of an air fleet and on the purchase of military supplies. We are expending gigantic sums of money on the adaptation of our economy to the needs of a modern large-scale imperialist war. We shall still have to spend many billions of money on our armaments. You must have in view that about one million to one and a half million tons of steel, and about one and a half billion marks are required

to achieve the armament of one million men. We have to arm millions and millions of men, to develop our heavy artillery, our air fleet, and our tank arm, etc. The whole world is crying out that we are arming ourselves. Of course we are arming ourselves. But for the time being we have a second-rate army, and so we have to set up at all costs a first class army, the most powerful one in Europe.

Of course, the adoption of such a pace of armaments construction undermines our economy and has actually led to it becoming shattered. Add to this that we shall have to feed a whole series of big concerns and banks with subsidies. This is the state of things with which we face the hungry winter of 1934 and the threat of economic catastrophe in Germany.

What reserves have we got, what possibilities face us? What prospects lie ahead? We have certain possibilities and certain reserves.

In the first place, Germany has 14 billions of marks of liabilities, and in addition about 5 billions of long-term foreign capital investments have got stuck in German industry. We have made payments on these debts. We have paid little and we are paying less and less. It is true that when we did not want to pay, the screw was tightened a little on us. If we had ceased to pay, if Schacht had actually declared a many-years' moratorium, this would have given us certain relief. This is one of our reserves.

Secondly, sooner or later we shall have to transform our hidden creeping inflation into open inflation, into the open depreciation or devaluation of the mark. Now, there are about 11 billions of marks in the savings banks belonging to all kinds of small people. Of course if we depreciate these savings once again, this will also give us quite a big relief. And insofar as German agriculture has liabilities amounting to almost 14 billions and German industry has also tremendous liabilities, it is quite clear that inflation would give the junkers, capitalists and industrial capital certain advantages.

Thirdly, I have already told you that the workers, office employees, etc., still receive about 26 billion marks in wages. This is why we have declared that our famous labor law must be put into operation by October 1. You are aware that this law implies the destruction of practically all the social conquests made by the working class since the year 1880. This law implies the destruction of the system of wage agreements, the complete despotism of the employer in the factory, and the unlimited arbitrariness and dictatorship of the capitalists. If the capitalists put this law strictly into operation then we shall be able to squeeze another couple of surplus billions out of the German workers, and we shall also be able to ease the position of industry at the expense of the working class.

Fourthly, we, of course, are carrying on negotia-

tions with a view to receiving a foreign loan, if only in the shape of raw materials. The question as to whether we can find idiots in America, England, Holland or Switzerland to give us money after we are in fact annulling our old debts is one which I find difficulty in answering. Perhaps we shall succeed, but very likely we shall not.

It should be clear to you that the application of all the four methods mentioned represents a tremendous political and economic danger. The refusal to pay our foreign debts may call forth a further sharpening of economic war against us. It may call forth a kind of economic blockade of Germany on the part of some of our present competitors. Inflation would in the present circumstances imply dissatisfaction among the petty bourgeoisie and the working class simultaneously. Further reductions in wages and the destruction of wage agreements may call forth such opposition in the factories as we shall be unable to smash by the means at our disposal. But we must take this risk, however heavy and great it is, for there is no other way out. These are the economic prospects facing us. I will now pass to the international situation.

What, in its most general features, is our position on the international arena? We are arming ourselves. Only a powerful country can have allies, only a powerful country can carry on war. Our movement westward is for the time being more or less closed. If we should attack France or Belgium with a program of conquest, it is hardly likely that England will be in agreement. Our path southeastward is more or less obstructed. Our movement forward in that direction is prevented not only by the Little Entente, not only by the French menace, but also by the Italian fascists. And in the long run we get a stupid situation. The first country which mobilized four divisions against us and transferred them to the borders of Austria was fascist Italy. It is absolutely clear that Mussolini himself wishes to transform Austria into his vassal State, and would not tolerate not only the Anschluss, but also the unification of Austria.

This means that there is only one path left, namely the one leading eastward. Of course we shall attempt to break through both westward and southeastward, but the main line in which we shall direct our blow is eastward, that is to say, against the U.S.S.R.

It must be said that capitalist Europe is not favorably disposed towards us. We are proving in every possible way that we have saved capitalism from Bolshevism, that we are the only dam against Asiatic Bolshevism. None the less we are receiving little support. But on the other hand the U.S.S.R. has been invited into the League of Nations.

For the time being we shall have to play for time. This is why we are now declaring that we have no

territorial conflicts with France, with the exception of the Saar region. For the time being we have given up our claims on Alsace Lorraine. This is why in June we made the promise to Mussolini to recognize the independence of Austria, only to organize a putsch at the end of June against Dollfuss, and send him off to another world and attempt forcibly to unite Austria to Germany. This is why we are not shouting about Posnania, about Upper Silesia, and about the gaping wounds in our eastern borders, and have not only ceased to rail at the Poles, but count on having Pilsudski Poland on our side against the U.S.S.R. That is why I compel not only myself but also such good airmen-executioners as Goering and Hesse to pronounce quite pacifistic speeches.

It is true that the proletariat and the toilers in all countries are against us and surround us with scorn and hate. As regards political isolation, we cannot, of course, state that we are completely isolated. We have superb relations with Japan, and the more far-sighted Japanese generals are only waiting for us to be ready with our armaments, to make an onslaught on the U.S.S.R. Military cooperation between Berlin and Tokyo under such circumstances goes without saying. Things are going quite well in our relations with Pilsudski Poland. Of course, the Poles have not as yet formally broken their alliance with France, but it is clear that they are trying to kill not two but three birds with one stone. It is clear that they are calculating on the near prospect of an anti-Soviet war in which they would like to participate and so we are giving them all kinds of promises should such be the case. It seems somewhat strange to me that the Poles do not understand that even a victorious war of Poland and Germany against the U.S.S.R. will be an overwhelming defeat for Poland. We, of course, would gobble them up after such a victory. But it is not our business to worry about the interests of Poland—we are concerned with the interests of German imperialism.

England at the present time does not seem to object to the Eastern Pact although we are against the Pact. But MacDonald and Mussolini have long supported our demands for equality in armaments and did quite a lot to help us to gain time. Let us hope that England's traditional policy which is directed against the U.S.S.R. will once again render us the necessary and deserving support. In any case I must tell you that we have tried to set up an anti-Versailles bloc with a view to the redivision of the globe in our interests. Up to the present nothing has come of this anti-Versailles bloc.

At the same time our activity has been directed towards setting up an anti-Soviet bloc. You see, as I already indicated, that we have some successes in this respect. But the result is somewhat strange. The U.S.S.R. has, in any case, far greater diplomatic

successes than Germany has. We cannot under any circumstances declare that our international position has improved. In the recent period it has become very difficult for us to undertake war for a new re-division of the globe in our favor. We cannot enter into an open adventure if we have such a tremendous array of forces against us.

However, what we have achieved, at any rate, is that we are arming ourselves and nobody is in any way hindering us in this connection, apart from wordy protests. This is a serious achievement.

As regards our internal position, we have become the monopolists of power. After the death of Hindenburg externally supreme power has apparently passed into our hands. But I would not say that our internal affairs are in a good condition. I do not, of course, speak of the fact that we have not succeeded in wiping out Marxism. The Communist Party is alive, is active and is carrying on the struggle against us. I do not speak of the fact that the ideology of Communism is penetrating into the ranks of the Social-Democratic Party, which has organizationally collapsed. I do not wish to indicate that the working class is almost completely against us. For did we not receive an unheard-of vote of lack of confidence during the elections to the Councils of Honor, when the overwhelming majority of the working class employed in industry voted against us? In many cases we did not have 10 per cent of supporters in the large factories. A majority even of office employees, etc., voted against us. The dissatisfaction of the workers does not as yet break down the bounds of fascist legality which we have established. If we succeed in carrying through the labor law, after a struggle and with great difficulty, it will be a serious success for us, and will raise our authority in the eyes of the big bourgeoisie and junkers.

Our State secret police regularly circulate reports among you regarding the activity of the illegal parties. You have been able to convince yourselves from these reports that we have succeeded in smashing Social-Democracy quite thoroughly. It is a fact that during a period of practically two years Social-Democracy has not been able to establish itself as a centralized organization. All that exists is only separate Social-Democratic groups of local importance.

But the position is different with regards to Bolshevism. The German Communist Party has preserved itself as a centralized mass party, under conditions of fascist illegality. In spite of the unheard-of terror, in spite of the executions, concentration camps and tortures, in spite of the fact that we have arrested Thaelmann and murdered Scheer, beaten up and arrested tens of thousands of the best workers in the Communist Party, in spite of all the efforts of Goering and Himmler, the Communist Party has continued to work and preserve its mass contact.

It is said that the membership engaged in industry is on the increase. We are aware that young Social-Democratic functionaries, and many active workers of the Reichsbanner, are passing over to the Communists. After the events of June 30 many Storm Troopers are seeking the road to Communism. The prestige and authority of the Communist Party among the masses have grown tremendously.

We have spoken quite a lot about self-sacrifice and heroism, but we have no heroes. But look, they have got Dimitroff. The trial of Dimitroff was a tremendous defeat for us. They go to the scaffold shouting slogans about the proletarian revolution. The literature they are spreading today is many times more in quantity than the Bolsheviks distributed in the tsarist underground days. We have not coped with Communism. It is growing stronger and developing in the conditions of illegality. It is true that they are not yet able to transform the mass dissatisfaction into mass action against us. But they are now hammering out the proletarian united front. And the unity of action of the German proletariat is the beginning of the end as far as we are concerned. The united proletarian anti-fascist front will draw in the toiling peasants and a section of the petty bourgeoisie as well. And that will be the end not only for us—it will be the end of German capitalism.

I do not refer to the fact that an outburst of dissatisfaction, disappointment and indignation is ripening in the village. We are also losing our influence among the urban petty bourgeoisie who have received very little from us. Even the artisans who received orders and work in connection with house repairs have begun to grumble since the time when we have stopped honoring our bills. We are speedily losing our petty-bourgeois mass basis in the village and town. This could not but influence the state of mind of our party organizations, of our Storm Detachments. You know that this, so to speak, general popular dissatisfaction penetrated into the ranks of the Storm Troopers, and called forth a crisis among the people at the top and disintegration among our rank and file, and led to the well-known events of June 30.

It is very clear that the events of June 30 dealt a heavy blow to our prestige, authority and perhaps our mass influence. The last referendum, of August 19, also showed that things are not all well with us, especially in the big industrial centers and in the Catholic sections of the country. We ourselves have had to recognize somehow that seven million Germans are in one way or another against us. As to the number of Germans who are really against us, as to the number who voted against us during the referendum, well, let us not talk about that. There is no doubt that we are losing our mass basis, and this is understandable. Of the 25 points in our famous program we have, of course, not fulfilled and will not

fulfill a single one. And if there are idiots in our ranks who think that you can establish some kind of a third national-socialist system between nationalism and socialism, we shall simply send them off to make a report to Roehm. Of course, nothing has come of and nothing could come of the popular community of interests, and of the abolition of the class struggle.

Have we any political reserves? We have some. The anti-fascist forces are not yet united. The Communists have not yet succeeded in consolidating themselves in our mass organizations and in carrying on work there. The working class has not as yet undertaken mass actions, and hence the petty-bourgeois and peasant dissatisfaction is not being crystallized around the proletarian core. We can still make some play with chauvinism, especially among the younger generation who did not go through the war. This is a great force in our hands.

We have another one reserve. We can attempt to allow individual Social-Democratic groups and individual reformist leaders to cooperate with us in the Labor Front or the non-political trade unions. Bruckner and Busch of the Labor Front have already carried on negotiations with Leipart and Leischner. We have for the time being dismissed them from the Labor Front, but we can resort to their aid at any moment. Goering also behaved magnanimously with Noske and Loebe—it may be possible to make use of them. Of course we must not overestimate the importance of this reserve, for the authority of Social-Democracy among the workers has been very much undermined. Further, we can attract the German Nationalists and members of the Center Party. But the utilization of this reserve has its dangerous aspect, for it can threaten the "totality" of our regime.

But we have power, we are consolidating the State apparatus and are intensifying the terror, but the trouble is that things are not all well in our own camp. For a fierce struggle is going on among the big bourgeoisie. The industrial magnates are conflicting with the junkers, heavy industry is at loggerheads with the manufacturing industries, the export industry is at daggers drawn with the manufacturing industry, and the export industry is involved in a struggle against the branches of industry which serve the home market. One group of the financial oligarchy is in conflict with the other. We have not succeeded in establishing unity, if only in the camp of the bourgeoisie. We have not succeeded in postponing or even suppressing conflicts, squabbles and disagreements in the camp of the bourgeoisie itself. We have not succeeded in bringing about the real unification of the State power.

We have, of course, abolished the old bourgeois party and their mass organizations. You are all aware that the Monarchists are working at an intense

pace. You are all very well aware that political Catholicism, the Center Party, is carrying on very much work. We must understand that the so-called religious conflicts have also very deep social and political roots. There are still many old officials in the old apparatus, who are not our men and who often sabotage and throw sand in the wheels. But what is very important is that somehow things are not all well with the Reichswehr. You know that we murdered our fellow storm troopers, Roehm and the others, to a very great degree on instructions from the Reichswehr generals. And in all our speeches now we have to stress the fact that the Reichswehr is the only bearer of arms in the State.

That is to say, the proletariat are against us, we are losing our influence among the petty bourgeoisie, and the struggle in the camp of the big bourgeoisie is growing more intense. As you see, our internal position is not especially bright. This is also reflected in the position inside our party. On June 30 we did away with a whole group of party leaders. Since that time we have done away with a whole group of leaders of the Labor Front. The purging of the ranks of the Storm Troopers is going ahead full steam, and we shall dismiss all socially unreliable elements. It is clear that in the very near future we shall have to begin to purge the ranks of our party organization. Corresponding to this, the crisis is also continuing in the leadership of our party. Goering, Goebbels, Hesse, Heimler and Frick are squabbling among themselves.

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This is how Hitler should have spoken had he wished to give a report of the real state of things in Germany. Instead of this, Hitler, in his proclamation and his speeches, talked about the achievements of National-Socialism and of the prospects of establishing National-Socialism in a thousand years. None the less the Nuremberg Congress was not devoid of all political content. The essence of the National-Socialist Congress consisted in the following:

Firstly, Hitler once again sharply and decisively stressed that "the National-Socialist revolution has come to an end", and that now the National-Socialist program will be put into operation by evolutionary means, which may continue for hundreds of thousands of years.

Secondly, he stressed that the Reichswehr is the only bearer of arms in the State.

Thirdly, he insisted on the National-Socialist Party preserving its political monopoly.

Fourthly, besides bending the knee to the Reichswehr, Hitler stressed that the old State bureaucracy cannot be replaced by the National-Socialists in the near future, that this State apparatus must be spared, and that the National-Socialists are insufficiently educated to replace the old bureaucracy.

If the Storm Troopers were in the forefront at the Nuremberg Congress a year ago, this year, on the contrary, this place was occupied by the Reichswehr. Whereas a year ago Hitler very sharply placed the question of abolition of different counties, and of the setting up of a centralized State, this year he postponed this question for a long time. Whereas a year ago Hitler was still in a position to convince his supporters about the prospects of improving their conditions in the course of four or five years, this year he indicated a more distant prospect. The program will be fulfilled and the situation will be improved in the course of hundreds of years or a thousand years. At Nuremberg Hitler declared that there would be no revolution in Germany in the course of the next thousand years. There is no doubt that this was the funniest sentence of all those uttered at the Nuremberg Congress.

The bourgeoisie as a rising class considered capitalism to be eternal, and its domination not as historically passing but as an eternal phenomenon. German capi-

talism is rotten to the roots, it is dying. And from the tribune of the Nuremberg Congress, Hitler announces the thousands of years of life of the "Third Empire". Germany is returning to the ideology of the Middle Ages, of bloody barbarism. Rosenberg hurls thunder against the culture of the towns, and praises the narrowness and idiocy of the outlying villages in the biggest industrial country in the world. The mighty civilization of the bourgeoisie is replaced by praises of the primitive barbarism of the Teutons, while Hitler weaves senseless unconnected phrases about the rebirth of racial culture. Hitler announces the peaceful nature of fascism, but Nuremberg was a military parade throughout.

And here is the main point about Nuremberg, namely, that there is no way out except war and violence directed against their own people, and that there is no salvation except a new world bloodbath. War is the last stake of fascism. But this card is a doubtful, fateful and catastrophic one. For the proletariat is preparing its revolution.

ERRATUM

Due to a typographical error, the sentence beginning on line 36 of the second column of page 681 of No. 20 (Oct. 20, 1934) appeared incorrectly. It should have read: "It is obvious that there must be insistent energetic and flexible tactics by the Communist Parties in the struggle for unity."

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