

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

*May Day, 1933—Fascism in Germany—Capitalist Weakness, Not Strength—Crisis of Second International—"Revolution" to Defeat Revolution—Growth of Communism—Fascism Raised to Power from Above—Disorganisation of Working Class—Exterminating Marxism Again—Condition of Fascist Maintenance of Power—Rôle of Social Democracy for Fascism—Communist Party Unbroken—Capitulation of German Social Democracy—New Downfall of Second International—The End of a Blind Alley—“Without Glory and Without Honour”—Mutual Accusations within Second International—Social Fascism Proved—British Labour Manifesto—Abdication of Leadership—United Front with Bourgeoisie—Identity with German Social Democracy—Practical Support of Fascism—How Reformism Builds Fascism—Responsibility of Social Democracy—United Working Class Front—Barbarism or Communism*

**O**N this May Day of 1933 we are faced with a situation whose gravity requires no emphasis. Fascism holds temporarily the upper hand over the strongest working-class movement in the capitalist world, and is seeking to exterminate all working-class organisation and agitation in the centre of the world working class outside the Soviet Union. The intensity of the world crisis has brought the class struggle to this extreme point, shattering all the illusions of capitalist democracy. The forces of reaction in every country are accelerated by the success of the offensive in Germany to carry forward their attacks in other countries. The advance to war on the Soviet Union is hastened by the victory of Fascism in Germany, and is visibly carried forward both in the East and in the West. The Four Power Pact approaches the Rome and Washington negotiations, the drawing together of the Black International of MacDonald, Hitler, Mussolini and the

Pope, the hastening secret diplomatic and strategic preparations, the anti-Soviet campaign in England, all point to the supreme offensive of reaction and war that is gathering. The capitalist offensive of the past twelve years is reaching its most intense point. In this moment of storm the Second International, as in 1914, is performing its supreme betrayal, is directly opposing working-class unity, and is at the same time breaking up as previously and dissolving into its constituent parts ; its principal section, German Social Democracy, breaks away in order to enter the service of Fascism, thus revealing the inevitable outcome of the line of capitalist democracy in every country. The Communist International is alone carrying forward the working-class fight. The need of the most active working-class resistance and organised unity to meet this offensive is of an urgency that will be readily understood by every socialist worker. This May Day must see a big step forward in the building of the united front that is now gathering in every country.

**W**E need to face clearly and plainly all the issues raised by the victory of Fascism in Central Europe. The victory of Fascism in Germany represents the highest point yet reached by the Counter-Revolution since the war. But this victory of the Counter-Revolution does not represent the growing strength of capitalism. On the contrary, it is the direct result of the extreme aggravation of the world crisis and of the instability of capitalism, of the shattering of Versailles and all the peace settlements, of the growth of social contradictions and mass discontent, bursting all peaceful and legal forms ; that is to say, of the very advance of all the forces which finally make for the victory of the proletarian revolution, since the proletarian revolution can alone solve these contradictions, which Fascism can only intensify.

**E**VER since the war the inevitable downfall of capitalism in Europe and the impending victory of the proletarian revolution has been an open book for all to read. The bourgeois régime, conscious of its weakness, is compelled to resort to ever more desperate expedients to prolong for a little

longer its lease of life. For fifteen years the bourgeoisie has depended on the direct support of Social Democracy to hold back the workers and maintain its rule. But in the last few years the hold of Social Democracy on the workers has begun to weaken, as shown in its declining numbers, its increasing left manœuvres and the growth of Communism. In face of this growing revolutionisation of the workers, the bourgeoisie has hastened to act, while there was yet time, before Communism has yet won its visibly approaching majority position in the working class, while the disorganisation of the workers by Social Democracy could still prevent successful resistance, and has brought into play the dangerous hazard of Fascism to smash the working class.

**T**HE consequent confusion and disarray of Social Democracy and the Second International, which simultaneously finds itself under attack, while protesting its faithful service (under attack, only because its lower organisations have passed beyond its control, and therefore require to be broken by the bourgeoisie), and simultaneously seeks to cringe to the hand that strikes it and adapt itself to the new régime, is an inevitable accompaniment and by-product of this turn of bourgeois policy. The lowest level of this degradation is revealed by the Labour Party, who have not yet developed sufficiently to come under the harrow in their turn, and meanwhile accompany the desperate cries for help and assistance from the victims next door, who are suffering because they put their faith in capitalist democracy, with pious hymns on the virtues of capitalist democracy.

**B**UT the advance to Fascism means the destruction of legality, not by the revolutionaries, but by the bourgeoisie, and the laying bare to all of the class struggle as a direct conflict of force. In order to hold off the revolution, the bourgeoisie is compelled to play at revolution, and to seek to "outbid the revolution." They are compelled to preach to the masses contempt for peace and legality, which were formerly their best protection. To prevent the working-class

revolution, they are compelled to stage a sham "revolution," and even to dub it a "socialist revolution" (Goering's speech to the Nazi factory cells). The Junkers, Barons and industrial magnates, in order to maintain their power, are compelled to place themselves at the head of bandit hordes with cries of "Down with Interest-Capital," "Down with Unearned Income," "Nationalisation of the Trusts," "Nationalisation of the Banks," "Socialisation of all enterprises ripe for socialisation, &c." (Nazi Twenty-five Points Programme—in certain respects markedly similar to the Labour Party Programme). The modern Black Hundreds have to proclaim themselves "Socialists," and enemies of "capitalism," in order to win a hearing and save capitalism. Such is the measure of the strength of capitalism revealed in the present victory of the Counter-Revolution.

**N**OT *the weakening of the revolutionary advance, but its rapid growth, lies behind the present turn of the bourgeoisie to Fascism.* This was notably shown in the last election before the Fascist Terror in November, 1932. Not only Social Democracy, but also Fascism, was revealed as in definite decline, and only Communism was advancing. The Fascists with 11.7 million votes lost two million votes. The Social Democrats with 7.2 millions lost 700,000. The Communists with 6 millions gained 700,000. The results in Greater Berlin were still more striking. The Communists, who had been previously the third party, advanced to the position of the leading party with 860,000 votes. The Fascists fell to second place with 719,000. The Social Democrats fell to third place with 646,000. This was the movement of forces revealed in the last elections in Germany before the suppression of all free elections. Communism was advancing. The Fascists wave was ebbing, and visibly in danger of dispersing as rapidly as it had arisen. This was the situation that led the bourgeois dictatorship hastily to intervene before it was too late, to suppress all democratic elections, and to hold out a saving hand to Fascism and place it in power where it could use the state apparatus to revive its forces.

**F**ASCISM thus did not come to power on a flood tide in Germany any more than in Italy, as it would now like to paint a mythical picture in both cases. On the contrary, it was immediately after the overwhelming vote of no confidence from the country, represented by the loss of two million votes, alongside the actual increase of the aggregate "Marxist" vote and majority over the Fascist vote, that Fascism was hastily called to the government, solely from above, by the direct intervention of Hindenburg (elected by Social Democracy to the defeat of the candidate of the Fascists), and entered on its task to wipe out "Marxism"—that is, to wipe out the majority, relative to which it was a minority. There could be no clearer demonstration of the operation of the bourgeois dictatorship from above, and the rôle of Fascism as its instrument. Fascism on the ebb was jerked up to power solely by intervention from above. This is all-important to remember, when the myth is now attempted to be created of Fascism as a great "national movement from below" sweeping forward and conquering power. No more in Germany than in Italy was Fascism capable of fighting and conquering power (unless the police were present to help them, the Fascist mobs were mainly notorious for their speed in dispersal as soon as it came to fighting; gang assaults and the stab in the dark were their principal tactics; and even to-day their heroic bullying exploits are only performed when they are sure of numbering twenty to one, and with especial zest against aged persons and women). Alike in Italy and in Germany Fascism was lifted up and placed in power solely by the higher authorities, represented in Italy by the King, and in Germany by Hindenburg.

**N**OT by its own strength, nor even by the superior strength of the bourgeois dictatorship, but mainly and decisively through the paralysis and disorganisation of the working-class forces by Social Democracy, Fascism to-day holds power and is able for a time to have the upper hand of the superior working class forces. The accession of Fascism to power was made possible only through two conditions.

First, through the combination of all the bourgeois forces and the state machine to build it up and assist its advent to power, expressed in the coalition of Hindenburg, Von Papen, Hugenberg and Hitler, that is, in the coalition of the state machine, of the general staff, of the Junker landlords, of the industrial magnates, of the millionaire press, and of the Fascist gangs and demagogy. Second, through the disorganisation and immobilising of the working-class forces by Social Democracy and its refusal of the united front repeatedly proposed by the Communist Party during the decisive preparatory period of Von Papen and Schleicher and immediately after the accession of Hitler. Only through this combination of conditions was the final accession to power of Fascism possible in a state like Germany with an overwhelmingly predominant industrial proletariat, fifteen years after a victorious workers' revolution. But this means that the continuance of Fascism in power depends on its being able to maintain the disorganisation and division of the working-class, without which its power could not last a week. Therefore Fascism sets itself with feverish haste to the main task of smashing and breaking up the organisations of the working class.

**F**ASCISM sets itself to exterminate Marxism, that is, to exterminate the independent working-class movement and the fight for Socialism. The attempt is not a new one. A hundred years ago "all the Powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise the spectre of Communism: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies." The collapse of 1848 was heralded as the collapse of Socialism. In the decade after the Commune, on the basis of thirty thousand corpses, Thiers boasted that "we have heard the last of Socialism." In the following decade Bismarck set himself to stamp out Socialism in Germany with all the power of the most highly organised Prussian police and bureaucratic system, and after twelve years had to recognise that he had met his master. Down the long gallery of the years the ghosts of the past, Cavaignac and Gallifet, Thiers and Bismarck, Pobiedonostsev and Stolypin,

Kornilov and Kōlchak, the hangmen and butchers and gaolers of bourgeois rule may welcome with a spectral sneer the new accessions to their ranks, Hitler and Goering and Goebbels, taking their place alongside Horthy and Tsankov and Chiang Kai Shek. But these older attempts were against a still early and newly rising movement. To-day the attempt is against a powerful and developed movement on the eve of power. That it will fail like every previous attempt and end in ignominious collapse requires no demonstration.

Wherever, in whatever shape, and under whatever conditions the class struggle obtains any consistency, it is but natural that members of our Association should stand in the foreground. The soil out of which it grows is modern society itself. It cannot be stamped out by any amount of carnage. To stamp it out, the Government would have to stamp out the despotism of capital over labour—the condition of their own parasitical existence.

(Marx, *Civil War in France*.)

But what is in question now is not the inevitable future collapse of Hitlerism. What matters now is the *speed* with which the international working class can gather its forces and drive back this offensive, before it has developed further, before it has developed to the point of world war and the direct attack on the Soviet Union, can prevent the enormous losses and sacrifices which a prolongation of this struggle will mean, and can rapidly transform the present situation to the revolutionary offensive.

**T**HE continuance of Fascism in power depends on the maintenance of the disorganisation and division of the working class. It is just here that the rôle of Social Democracy remains of critical importance also after the accession of Fascism to power. The rôle of Social Democracy, and especially of the Social Democratic control of the trade unions—this is the weak point within the working-class army on which Fascism has continuously built in its rise to power and now continues to build after its accession to power. To draw to itself the Social Democratic leadership and especially the leadership of the trade unions now becomes the aim of Fascist policy. On the one hand, to smash and terrorise the

lower organisations of the workers ; on the other, to corrupt and win over the social democratic and trade union leadership, this is the method of Fascism to break the working class. And already the Social Democratic leadership is pressing forward to show its readiness to comply with this rôle. The same process that showed itself with D'Aragona and the the reformist trade union leadership in Italy rallying to Mussolini, with the reformist socialist and trade union leadership in Spain around Primo de Rivera, with the rallying in Bulgaria to Tsankov, and in Poland to Pilsudski, is now revealing itself with lightning speed also in Germany.

**E**VEN while the workers who have followed them are being harried and butchered by the Fascists, while their organisations are being broken up, while the local buildings of their party and of the trade unions are being sacked and destroyed, while the corpses are still unburied and the flames still burning, this leadership is seeking to curry favour with the Fascist masters, to vow their docility and to enter into their service. Noske writes to Goering to plead his services to the bourgeoisie and beg the continuance of his pension. Wels, as leader of Social Democracy making the official declaration of the party at the opening of the Reichstag—the only opportunity for any leader of the workers to make a public statement in Fascist Germany—uses this opportunity to pour out a stream of sickly servility : that this and that statement of the Chancellor is “ endorsed by Social Democrats ” ; that the next statement of the Chancellor is “ one to which we subscribe ” ; that he protests against “ exaggerated reports abroad ” ; that the Government needs to “ protect itself against crude excesses by its critics ” and must “ take strong measures ” ; that only Social Democracy has made possible the advent of Hitler, a working man, to power (“ we have helped to create a Germany in which the path to the leadership of the state is open not only to counts and barons, but to men of the working class ; you cannot go back on that without sacrificing your own leader ”), &c. Stampfer, the former Editor of *Vorwaerts*, writes in the bulletin of the party to

declare that "the victory of the Government parties makes it possible to govern strictly in accordance with the Constitution"; "they have only to act as a legal government, and it will follow naturally that we shall be a legal opposition; if they choose to use their majority for measures that remain within the framework of the Constitution, we shall confine ourselves to the rôle of fair critics." Kautsky writes ("What now? Reflections upon March 5th") that "the Dictatorship has the mass of the population behind it." Leipart officially on behalf of the Trade Union Federation writes to offer its services to the Government, "to be of service to the Government and Parliament through its knowledge and experience." The hordes of Social Democratic officials in the State and municipal offices, police presidents, &c., hasten to desert to the new masters. German Social Democracy passes out of the Second International in protest against the publication of "exaggerated accounts" critical of the Fascist régime, that is to say, demonstratively denies even the pretence of internationalism in order to win favour with National Fascism.

**W**HILE the Communist Party, against whom the main and heaviest attack of Fascism is directed, stands firm from top to bottom in face of all the terrorism, and is carrying forward its activities on an ever extended scale (as shown in the 300,000 sale of the first issue of the illegal "Rote Fahne," and in the big increases of the Red lists in such factory council elections as have been allowed to be held—since these victories, further factory council elections have been forbidden for six months), Social Democracy is going through a double process of disintegration above and below; below, it is either directly dissolving in the case of many local organisations, crumpling up or passing out of action, its best workers joining up with the Communist fight; above, it is either directly passing over to the enemy or preparing terms of agreement. In this way Social Democracy at once voluntarily dissolved all its supposed fighting organisations, Republican Banner Iron Front and the rest, as soon as the crisis for which they were supposed to have been formed arose.

In the same way Social Democracy has officially welcomed the appointment of Fascist Commissars over the trade unions, and is now offering the trade unions for a bargain with Fascism. The critical fight of the revolutionary workers at the present point becomes the fight to save the trade unions for the class struggle.

**T**HE spectacle of this final fate of the once great party of German Social Democracy, the party originally led and virtually founded by Marx and Engels, is a merciless demonstration of political realities and of the inevitable outcome of the abandonment of the path of the revolutionary class struggle. What first appeared already in the nineteenth century as Opportunism, which Marx and Engels before their deaths directly condemned and called for the necessity of a split; what developed in the first decade of the twentieth century as Social Imperialism; what burst out in its full exposure in the betrayal of 1914 and the line of Social Patriotism; what reached its supreme betrayal in the strangling of the workers' revolution in 1918-19 and the consistent building up of the counter-revolution; this now reaches its inevitable culmination as it abandons, not only the struggle for socialism, but also the struggle for democracy, and merges into fascism. But this ignominious ending is in fact the culminating chapter of a party which has long had nothing in common with the succession of the old German Social Democracy. All that was living in the old German Social Democracy, its revolutionary traditions, its record of unbroken fights, its maintenance of the line of Marxism, passed over long since, already a decade and a half ago, with Liebknecht and Luxemburg and with half a million of the best social democratic workers, to the Communist Party.

**W**ITH the downfall of German Social Democracy, the Second International and its partner, the Amsterdam Trade Union International, are inevitably dragged down. What remains of the Second International? It is crumbling under the pressure of events. Its range

becomes even more limited to Western Europe, to the British-French Entente and satellite countries. French socialism goes through a parallel crisis and split, the majority passing over to voting the war credits already before the coming war. Of the reformist Trade Union International, Jouhaux, Secretary of the reformist Confédération Générale du Travail, writes in the *Paris Peuple* :

One may ask whether the Trade Union International will continue to exist or will disappear. Each day brings fresh news, but none of a comforting character. . . . One could have hoped that from the German working class, more powerfully organised than any other and free from a split of the trade unions, a gesture could have been forthcoming to save the honour of the German movement. There has been none.

**T**HE collapse of 1914 is being repeated once more under new conditions. The meaning of this collapse should be pondered by every worker. 1914 already laid bare the bankruptcy of the whole line of social reformism. But large masses of workers still put their hopes anew in the promises of social reformism, of the "democratic path to socialism." Hence it was possible to create anew the post-war Second International. This new collapse demonstrates once more the emptiness of this path, and that the fight for socialism can only be conducted along the line of revolutionary Marxism, of Communism. *As we enter once more into a period of revolutionary conditions, when the working-class movement can only be carried forward under illegal conditions or go under the will o' the wisp lights of so-called "democratic socialism," that is, of "socialism by permission of the bourgeoisie," inevitably go into eclipse and leave the workers in the bog ; only the clear light of revolutionary socialism burns stronger than ever and shows the path forward.* It is no longer even in appearance a question of two tendencies, of two paths for the working-class struggle ; in the sight of all, the Communist International alone leads the working-class struggle.

**E**VEN the bourgeoisie cannot forbear to cast its scorn upon the decomposing corpse of Social Democracy, its faithful servant. The reactionary Paris organ, the *Temps*, now bought by the Comité des Forges, writes under the title "A Historic Collapse":

Of all the great collapses of history that of German Social-Democracy to-day will live in the memory of generations as one of the most pitiful. German Social-Democracy ends without glory, and even without honour. . . .

One could hope that this will make our socialists more modest. One could hope that, before setting themselves up as censors of "bourgeois" thought and morality, they could turn their judgment on themselves. M. Blum could then explain to us poor "bourgeois" how in the very citadel of Marxism, in the sacred battalion of the Second International, no "revolutionary" could be found to accept the lot of a Delescluze or mount the barricades of a Baudin. . . .

A democrat, even a "bourgeois" democrat, is a man who does not yield before oppression. A democrat is a man who does not salute Gessler's hat. This sentiment lives strongly in Frenchmen, the heirs of those bourgeois and workers who fought 1789, 1830 and February, 1848; it constituted the nobility, even in their errors, of the insurgents of June, 1848, and of 1871.

Such is the point of degradation reached of Social Democracy that this dishonest capitalist hack can actually taunt them with the forgotten memories of revolution; can actually taunt them with the gibe that they, the bourgeoisie, low though they may have fallen, are at any rate higher than Social Democracy in this one respect, that they, the bourgeoisie, are revolutionary in comparison to Social Democracy, that they honour revolutionary traditions, that they can fight a revolution, that they can fight for their liberties. Such is the ironic reversal of rôles when the "party of order" can accuse Social Democracy of desertion even of the standards of the bourgeois revolution and of bourgeois democracy.

**I**N vain the remaining leaders of the Second International seek to shelve their responsibility and throw the blame on the seceding German Social Democracy for its surrender to Fascism. Only a short time back the leaders of the Second International were still repudiating with indignation the charge

of " Social Fascism " laid at their doors by the Communist International, as a " calumny," a " fantastic imagining," a wild and malicious confusion of contraries. To-day it is the leaders of the Second International, it is Vandervelde the Chairman, it is Adler the Secretary, who accuse German Social Democracy, the principal section of the Second International, of passing over to Fascism. Thus once again, as with every question and with every stage of development, as with rationalisation, as with the " American economic miracle," as with the prediction of the world economic crisis, as with the war question, so with Social Fascism, the mercilessly accurate diagnosis of the Communist International, which is at first dismissed on all sides as fantastic and baseless, is steadily day by day more and more completely confirmed by events, until at last it turns into the commonplace of all the wisecracks who first repudiated it with contempt. The Stockholm *Social-Demokraten*, the organ of the strongest parliamentary section of the Second International next to Germany, is compelled to write of Leipart's declaration :

These words can only mean that the trade union movement in Germany has adapted itself to the new political situation, and that it is not only ready to tolerate the new régime, but that it is even prepared to collaborate with the Hitler Government on certain questions. Thus Hitler obtained a very easy victory.

With deep sorrow in our hearts we have to admit this pliancy and yielding of the German trade union movement before its political enemies.

**B**UT in fact it is no break with the policy of the Second International, but on the contrary the direct continuation of the line of the Second International, that leads to the surrender and final merging into Fascism. Take the declaration of Leipart on behalf of the German Trade Union Federation :

The trade unions have come into being as the organised self-help of the working class ; and in the course of their history through natural causes have become more and more fused with the State itself.

The social tasks of the trade unions have to be fulfilled, no matter what the form of the State régime is . . .

The trade unions are fully prepared, even beyond the field of wages and working conditions, to enter into permanent co-operation with the employers' organisations.

A State supervision of such collaboration could in certain circumstances be conducive towards raising its value and rendering its execution more easy.

The trade unions do not claim to influence directly the policy of the State. Their tasks in this respect can only be to direct the just claims of the workers to the attention of the Government with reference to its measures of social and economic policy and legislation, and also to be of service to the Government and Parliament through its knowledge and experience in this field.

*Is not this the very language of the entire reformist Trade Union International, of Citrine, of the Mondist line of co-operation with the employers and of trade union " participation " and " responsibility " in capitalist industry, of the whole Webb theory of trade unionism, of every reformist trade union official? The line of reformist trade unionism, of co-operation with capitalism and co-operation with the capitalist state, logically and inevitably works itself out to its completion as the line of Fascism. In vain the Citrines and Jouhaux seek to excuse themselves and to separate themselves from Leipart ; it is manifest to all that their policy is identical. The same outcome will inevitably follow in Britain, if the workers do not act in time. The profound lesson of this collapse must be learnt by every worker, by every trade unionist, by every socialist. Only the line of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition can save trade unionism ; only the line of the Communist International can lead the working-class struggle.*

**I**T is in this situation that the British Labour Memorandum on Democracy and Dictatorship, in response to the urgent appeal for a united front to fight, the capitalist offensive and Fascism, touches the lowest depths. Even the bourgeois-liberal *New Statesman* and *Nation* is compelled to comment :

Leadership could scarcely fall lower than in the response to this crisis made by official British Labour. The Manifesto issued last

week-end by the National Joint Labour Council betrayed no realisation that the issue is the destruction of the working-class movement throughout Europe. . . . The Manifesto is void of international consciousness, and it makes no attempt to explain to the working class what the situation is or to put forward any policy of its own. It ignores the mass of discontent with existing leadership, and leaves the way open in every area for the spread of violent doctrine. If the "united front" is not the right policy for British Labour in the face of the Fascist reaction, then the only way of saving the unity of the movement is to explain why, and to offer some alternative plan of action.

The bourgeois liberals are compelled to remind the Labour leaders that they are supposed to concern themselves with the protection of the working class, and that if they thus abdicate and wash their hands of all responsibility in the face of direct menace, then this will inevitably lead to the recognition by the workers of Communism as the only leadership of their fight, "leaves the way open in every area for the spread of violent doctrine." This bourgeois liberal commentator sees plainly what these Labour leaders cannot see, or rather refuse to see and close their eyes to behind the mist of sermons, that "the issue is the destruction of the working-class movement throughout Europe." The Labour leaders remain blind to what all the world can see, not because they cannot see, are physically incapable of seeing, but because they cannot face it, because it cuts across all their "democratic" pretences and raises the plain issue of the class struggle, because they cannot meet it, they have no answer, they have no policy—save submission.

**B**ECAUSE they have no policy for the workers, therefore they seek to hide their betrayal behind abstract general disquisitions about "democracy" and "dictatorship." To what end? It is obvious that for the Labour Party, which administers with despotic rule four hundred million colonial slaves without even the pretence of democratic forms, which imprisons sixty thousand Indians for the crime of demanding democratic rights, which smashes and splits the working-class organisations whenever a majority vote turns against them,

for the Labour Party to speak of " democracy " is nothing but a stale and hypocritical pretence ; when they speak of " democracy " they mean it in a highly Pickwickian sense, in the sense of support of the bourgeois dictatorship, whatever its forms. But to what end these abstract disquisitions at the present point ? Let us imagine that the Labour Party has a love for democracy in the abstract as pure and unsullied as they would wish the workers to believe. What then ? To what does this lead in the present situation ? We are faced with a plain and urgent practical issue. The forms of democracy have been thrown aside by the bourgeoisie ; the trust of the workers in bourgeois democracy and legality has led to disaster ; the working-class movement is being broken up. What must be done ? What must be the answer of the workers ? How shall the workers protect themselves ? The Labour Party has no answer save to repeat a canticle on the praises of capitalist democracy. But it is the line of capitalist democracy that has led to the present outcome.

**S**INCE the formulas of " democracy " are thus revealed as incantations divorced from practice or from any practical bearing on the present situation, it follows that the only operative portion of the manifesto is the attack on Communism. The Labour Party refuses the united front of the working class, the united front with Communism, against Fascism. *But the Labour Party accepts the united front with the bourgeoisie against Communism.* In this way the Labour Party lines up with the bourgeoisie, and in practice with Fascism, that is, with the world-wide capitalist offensive against Communism, which is the heart of the present Fascist drive. The present urgent issue is the issue of Fascism in Germany and Central Europe. The workers are demanding what action is to be taken to defeat this offensive of Fascism. By the transparent trick of assimilating the Fascist dictatorship against the workers to Communism, that is, to proletarian democracy fighting for socialism (" against Dictators, Fascist or Communist "), the Labour Party seeks to turn the issue into an attack on Communism. Closely associated with this at

the same time comes the infamous war-provocation of the Labour Member of Parliament, Logan, in conjunction with the Conservative anti-Soviet campaign, directly inciting to war on the Soviet Union :

To him the Communist system was diabolical. It was antagonistic to the most progressive measures of mankind, and the sooner it was got rid of, the better. (D. G. Logan, Labour Member of Parliament, in the House of Commons debate on the Russian Imports Prohibition Bill : *Times* report, April 6, 1933.)

The language of this Labour spokesman is identical with the language of the most Catholic Christians, Hitler, Von Papen, and Goering, no less than of Churchill and the Foreign Office.

**B**Y this manifesto the line of the Labour Party is revealed as identical with the line of German Social Democracy, the line, not merely of surrender, but of direct assistance to Fascism. Both reject the united working-class front ; both attack Communism ; both support their own bourgeoisie. The Labour Party still speaks in words against Fascism ; for Fascism is not yet the system of the British bourgeoisie ; and Chamberlain and Churchill also startle Europe by their vehement denunciations of Fascism, whereby they are only expressing the alarm of British imperialism at the too rapid revival of the defeated Prussian imperialism. German Social Democracy, on the other hand, adapts itself and is conciliatory to Fascism ; for the German bourgeoisie has adopted Fascism. *The difference is only on the surface ; the content is identical.* In the one case the system of the bourgeoisie is Fascism ; and German Social Democracy adapts itself to Fascism. In the other case the system of the bourgeoisie is bourgeois democracy (plus monarchy, aristocracy, high financial qualifications for parliamentary candidates, domination by armed force of the subject empire, &c.) ; and the Labour Party declares itself for bourgeois democracy (plus monarchy, aristocracy, high financial qualifications for parliamentary candidates, domination by armed force of the subject empire, &c.).

**B**UT the identity is even closer. For German Social Democracy actually defends its support of Fascism in the name of "democracy." "The dictatorship has the mass of the population behind it," declares Kautsky. "The election has shown," declares Stampfer, "that the German people to-day are divided into two approximately equal parts, of which one now seeks to govern, while the other must allow itself to be governed." And the British Labour Party directly endorses this argument, thus showing that the highly elastic conception of "democracy" can also be used to support Fascism. The Foreign editor of the *Daily Herald*, W. N. Ewer, writes in the Labour journal, the *Plebs*, April, 1933 :

The triumph of Hitler, everyone is saying, is a heavy defeat for democracy.

Yet it is really nothing of the kind. It is a victory of democracy, or at any rate, of demagoguery.

He (Hitler) has come to power by the most strictly constitutional means. He is Chancellor of Germany under the Weimar Constitution, and by virtue of the Weimar Constitution.

Of course there was a certain amount of intimidation at the elections. There always is. But it was under the circumstances curiously small. . . . The figures indeed are proof that the election was practically free.

This is a depth of degradation, of bootlicking to Fascism, not easy to beat. The victory of Fascism was thus, according to the Labour view, "a victory of democracy." There was a "certain amount of intimidation at the elections," but "curiously small." The complete suppression of the Communist and Social Democratic press; the arrest of the entire body of Communist deputies; the raids on Communist and Social Democratic buildings; the armed occupation of the Communist headquarters; the suppression of all freedom of speech and meeting; the beating up and imprisonment of thousands of the most active Communist and Social Democratic workers; all this is a "curiously small" amount of "intimidation at the elections." "The election was practically free." Such is the Labour Party conception of "democracy." The meaning of the antithesis of "democracy" and

Communism is thus made clearer ; since the line of " democracy " is revealed as the line of subservience to Fascism, exactly as with German Social Democracy.

**F**ASCISM, argues the Labour Manifesto, is the consequence of Communism (" Reaction of the ' Left ' is displaced by triumphant reaction of the ' Right ' "). The exact contrary is the case. The examples are now sufficient to make certain a generalisation beyond the possibility of dispute. Where the majority of the working class has followed the line of Communism (the Soviet Union), Fascism has not been able to appear. Where the majority of the working class has followed the line of Reformism (Germany, Italy, &c.), there at a certain stage Fascism invariably grows and conquers. This stage arises when the working class movement has grown to a point of strength where it should advance to the seizure of power, when the bankruptcy of the old régime is revealed, but the working class is held in by reformist leadership. In that case, owing to the failure of decisive working-class leadership to rally all discontented strata, the discredited old régime is able to draw to its support under specious quasi-revolutionary slogans all the wavering elements, petit-bourgeoisie, backward workers, &c., and on the very basis of the crisis and discontent which should have given allies to the revolution, build up the forces of reaction in the form of Fascism ; the continued hesitation and retreat of the reformist working-class movement at each point encourages the growth of Fascism ; and on this basis Fascism finally steps in and seizes the reins, not through its own strength, but through the failure of working-class leadership. The collapse of bourgeois democracy is succeeded, not by the advance to proletarian democracy, but by the regression to Fascist dictatorship. In 1925 we wrote of Fascism (Notes, July, 1925) :

Fascism arises where a powerful working-class movement reaches a stage of growth which inevitably raises revolutionary issues, but is held in from decisive action by reformist leadership. . . . Fascism is the child of Reformism.

The example of Germany has demonstrated this whole process on a more complete scale than ever before. It is urgently to be hoped that this culminating and costly example will be sufficient for the workers of the whole world, and that the workers in Britain will be able in time to free themselves from the line of the Labour Manifesto, which can only lead to the same outcome.

**T**HE direct responsibility of Social Democracy in Germany for the growth and victory of Fascism is manifest to all. It was Social Democracy that consciously and deliberately destroyed the German workers' revolution, disarmed the workers, broke up the workers' and soldiers' councils, handed over the power to the bourgeoisie and armed the reaction. It was Social Democracy that led the workers away from socialism along the fatal line of co-operation with capitalism in the economic and political fields, of faith in rationalisation and organised capitalism, that rejected the united working-class front, and broke up the power of the trade unions by wholesale expulsions of all militant elements and sections. It was Social Democracy that placed Hindenburg in power, that supported the suppression of democracy, that taught the "toleration" of the emergency presidential régime under which Fascism was built up. It was Social Democracy that, when the direct attack and coup finally began in July, 1932, with Von Papen and the dictatorial removal of the Social Democratic Government in Prussia, refused once again the united front, warned the workers against any attempt at resistance, and bade them place their entire confidence in Social Democracy in the Republican banner and in the Iron Front to protect the Constitution. Even up to the last, after the nomination of Hitler, Social Democracy rejected the ever more urgent proposals of the Communist Party for a united front to defeat Fascism, and instead in its Manifesto of January 31st warned the workers against "undisciplined action"; "Rally, therefore, to the Iron Front! Obey its orders and its alone!" Within a few weeks the Iron Front was voluntarily dissolved by the Social Democratic leadership without having attempted

a gesture of resistance. With the Fascist dictatorship finally established, Social Democracy now preaches the necessity of submission (the people "must allow itself to be governed"), warns against "senseless adventures" of attempting resistance (Kautsky), and hastens along the path of conciliation with Fascism (Leipart, Wels).

**T**HE refusal of the united working-class front by the Second International at the present moment is a historic crime. In the past the Second International has often expressed its suspicions of the united front as a "manœuvre." What, then, are we to say of the Manifesto of the Second International of February 19th, which spoke of "working-class unity," of "common action"; "we call upon the German workers, the workers of all countries, to cease their attacks upon each other and to join together in the fight against Fascism." Yet so soon as the Communist International and the Communist Parties come forward with concrete proposals for common action against Fascism, together with complete abstention from attacks during such common action, the immediate reply is a direct refusal, not a refusal of one or another particular proposal as unsuitable or needing modification, but a direct and blunt refusal of any common action at all. We think the workers will judge where lies the sincerity and the seriousness in the workers' struggle, and will go forward with the united front none the less, in the face of all those who seek to sabotage it.

**T**HE issues which are confronting us at the present moment are heavy issues. Fascism in Germany lays bare to all where capitalist civilisation is inevitably developing, if the workers' revolution is delayed. Germany is not a backward country (as the leaders of the Second International, Vandervelde and Bauer, until recently tried to argue that "dictatorship" could only arise in "backward countries," and that "democracy" was the inevitable form in "advanced industrial countries"). Germany is the most advanced, highly organised capitalist country in the world, the last word,

which shows to other countries the picture of their future development. What is that picture of the future of capitalism thus revealed? Barbarism and the return of the Dark Ages; the systematic destruction of all science and culture; the enthronement of Catholic Christian obscurantism, racial persecution and torture systems; the return to a system of isolated, self-sufficient warring communities. This is the final working out of the most advanced capitalism, with the Pope conferring his blessing upon it and decorating the murderer Goering with his Gold Medal of the Holy Year. Marx and Engels long ago pointed out the inevitable working out of capitalism in barbarism and decay, if the working-class revolution should fail to conquer in time. Stage by stage, through imperialism and its world orgies of brutality and destruction, through the slaughter of the world war, and to-day through Fascism, we are tasting the first beginnings of this alternative. It is time to end this chapter, before we have to tread this path still further, and to open the new one. Only the working-class revolution can save humanity, can carry humanity forward, can organise the enormous powers of production that lie ready to hand. We must build the united working-class front to defeat the offensive of Fascism; only the united working-class front can defeat the offensive of Fascism. The victory of the united working-class front leads the way forward to the victory of the workers' revolution.

R. P. D.