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THE ROAD
OF OUR
PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

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THE ROAD OF OUR PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

By Mátyás Rákosi

After the "year of the turning point" (1948: translator), we clarified the character of the People's Democratic State, with the help and guidance of Comrade Stalin. We then established that the People's Democracy is a State which, as a result of the Soviet victory and Soviet aid, assists the working people, led by the working class, to progress from capitalism to socialism.

We pointed out that the People's Democracy is the dictatorship of the proletariat without the soviet form. We enlarged on the subject of how far and in which way the People's Democracy fulfils the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. While doing this we supposed that our comrades were clear about the prerequisites of the origin of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We did not raise and clarify the question of whether these prerequisites were invariably valid, or have to undergo modifications under the circumstances of the People's Democracy. The time has now come to clarify the problems in this field.

The prerequisites of the origin of the dictatorship of the proletariat were worked out by our great teachers, Lenin and Stalin, in the years following the victory of the 1917 Soviet Revolution, on the basis of the experience of the Russian Revolution. They worked out at the same time the international validity of these experiences.

"The dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the exploited majority over the exploiting minority."
(Stalin: PROBLEMS OF LENINISM. p.43 Moscow 1947 edition.)

The enemy sharply denied this basic principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It maintained that the contrary was true, that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the terroristic regime of a dwarf minority over the majority. The Social Democrats and the Mensheviks went further. They maintained that the Soviet dictatorship is supported by a minority even among the workers. This slander has been repeated in various forms for 35 years. This slander is used with special emphasis against the People's Democracies, which are a new form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the variation that in the People's Democracies, allegedly the dwarf minority keeps the majority of the people under its dictatorship not by its own strength, but "supported by Russian bayonets".

In the autumn of 1917 all kinds and types of enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat supported their statements by referring to the election figures of the Russian Constituent Assembly. At these elections, which took place in the days preceding and following the November 7th Revolution, the Bolshevik Party received 25 per cent of all the votes cast. The outcry referring to "the terror of the dwarf minority" gathered special strength during 1919 when,

after the military defeat and collapse of the Central Powers - imperial Germany and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy - revolution broke out in a number of countries. Communist Parties were formed, or the mass of workers in the Social Democratic Parties began to move towards the Communist International.

The slandering and blackening of the dictatorship of the proletariat was aimed partly at restraining or frightening the mass of workers turning towards revolution, and was partly an "ideological" preparation and support for the imperialist armed attack which the capitalists of America, Britain, France and Japan launched against the Soviet Union in 1918, and wished to increase during 1919. The calumnies about "the terror of the dwarf minority" were meant to give a "liberating character" to the armed intervention of the imperialists and to their attempts to re-instate by force the bloody and oppressive dictatorship of the landlords and capitalists of Tzarism in the Soviet Union.

The present aims of the "free world", led by the American warmongers, are essentially the same. They first of all wish to bring back the old oppressors onto the backs of the liberated working people in the People's Democracies; in our country, the feudal landowners, the capitalists, the Horthyite gendarmes and generals who have been driven away.

Against the slander that the Russian dictatorship of the proletariat was based on a minority and directed against the majority, Lenin was the first to conduct a struggle and to raise openly the question: how can that "miracle" be explained that the Bolsheviks who at the 1917 elections received only one quarter of the votes, were able to defeat the coalition of the capitalist and petty-bourgeois parties which had three quarters of the votes?

Lenin wrote a special article on this problem under the title - "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", in December 1919. In this article Lenin first of all published the election figures, from which it becomes clear that the Bolsheviks received 25 per cent of the total, or nine million votes. On the other hand the Mensheviks - the different groups of the Russian Social Democrats - received hardly 4 per cent. The Socialist-Revolutionaries, or SR as they were called according to their initial letters, the party of the peasantry, received 58 per cent of the votes. The Cadets, party of the bourgeoisie and landowners, received 13 per cent of the votes.

The first prerequisite for the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat according to Lenin, is that the Bolsheviks organised, forged and steeled their Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, in the 15 years struggle between 1903 and 1917; and in a steadfast and consistent struggle they unmasked, defeated and pushed back the compromising and treacherous Social Democrat Mensheviks, who were their rivals within the proletariat. This was shown at the elections by the fact that the Bolshevik Party received nine million votes and the Mensheviks one million seven hundred thousand. The lesson of this struggle was pointed out by Lenin in the above article as follows:

"Unless such a struggle is fought, and unless a complete victory over opportunism within the working class movement is preliminarily gained, there can be no hope for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Bolshevism would never have triumphed over the bourgeois in 1917-19 had it not previously learned, during the years 1903-17, to defeat and ruthlessly expel the Mensheviks, i.e., the opportunists, reformists and social-chauvinists, from the party of the proletarian vanguard."

(Lenin: SELECTED WORKS, Vol.6, p.485)

"In November 1917 the Bolsheviks had the vast majority of the proletariat behind them. The party that competed with them for the support of the proletariat, the Menshevik Party, was utterly beaten..."

(Ibid: p. 467)

Lenin then adds:

"Furthermore, the Bolsheviks had behind them not only the majority of the proletariat, and not only the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, which had been tempered in a long and stubborn struggle against opportunism. They had, if one may use a military term, the advantage of powerful 'striking forces' in the capitals.

"To have an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive moment and at the decisive point is a 'law' not only of military success, but also of political success, especially in that bitter, seething war of the classes known as revolution.

"The capitals, and the large commercial and industrial centres generally..., to a considerable extent decide the political fate of a people....

"In both capitals, in both of the most important commercial and industrial centres of Russia, the Bolsheviks possessed an overwhelming and decisive superiority of forces. Here we had almost four times as many votes as the Socialist-Revolutionaries. We had more than the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Cadets put together. Furthermore, our opponents were disintegrated... (in Petrograd and Moscow the Mensheviks polled only 3 per cent of the votes)."

(Ibid: p.468)

The first prerequisite for the origin of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the decisive majority within the working class, was thus realised. After clarifying this problem, Lenin pointed out the division of forces within the army. He dealt with the figures of the votes cast within the army and on the basis of these figures he arrived at the conclusion that the army was already semi-Bolshevik in October-November 1917.

"And while we had half the votes in the army in general, we enjoyed an overwhelming superiority on the fronts which were nearest to the capitals, or not too far distant from the capitals. If the Caucasian front be excluded, the Bolsheviks enjoyed a general superiority over the Socialist-Revolutionaries, while on the Northern and Western fronts the Bolsheviks polled more than 1,000,000 votes, as against 420,000 votes polled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

"Hence, in the army too the Bolsheviks in November 1917 already possessed the political 'striking force' which guaranteed them an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive point at the decisive moment."

(Ibid: p. 471)

Later Lenin continued:

"On the basis of the data of the elections to the Constituent Assembly, we have analysed three of the conditions which made for the triumph of Bolshevism:

- 1) an overwhelming majority of the proletariat;
- 2) nearly half the votes in the army; 3) an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive moment at the decisive points, namely, in the capitals and in the armies at the fronts nearest to the capitals.

"But these conditions would have resulted only in the most shortlived and uncertain of victories had the Bolsheviks not succeeded in winning over the majority of the non-proletarian toiling masses, and wresting them away from the Socialist-Revolutionary and other petty-bourgeois parties.

"That is the essential point."

(Ibid: pp. 471-2)

Lenin also explained how the victorious proletariat can win over the non-proletarian working masses of the petty-bourgeois parties. He says:

"...the power of the state in the hands of one class, the proletariat, can become and should become an instrument for winning over the non-proletarian toiling masses to the side of the proletariat, an instrument for wresting these masses away from the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois parties."

(Ibid: p. 472)

How did the Bolshevik Party do this?

"...by satisfying their most urgent economic needs in a revolutionary way, i.e., by expropriating the landlords and the bourgeoisie."

(Ibid: p. 474)

If it has the state power the proletariat can immediately do this.

"That is exactly how the Russian proletariat won the peasantry away from the Socialist-Revolutionaries, doing so literally within a few hours after it had seized the state power. For within a few hours after it had gained the victory over the bourgeoisie in Petrograd, the triumphant proletariat promulgated the Decree on the Land, by which it immediately, with revolutionary dispatch, energy and thoroughness, satisfied all the most urgent economic needs of the majority of the peasants and completely expropriated the landlords without compensation."

(Ibid: p. 474)

Lenin points out in this article that the peasantry, although it has come over to the side of the Bolsheviks who gave them land, was still wavering later. He says on this subject; the peasantry marched together:

"At first they were for the Bolsheviks, when the latter gave them land and when the demobilised soldiers brought the news of peace."

(Ibid: p.477)

But when the Bolshevik Government asked strictly for the delivery of superfluous cereals from the peasantry:

"The peasants of the Urals, Siberia and the Ukraine thereupon turned towards Kolchak and Denikin.

"Next, the experience of the 'democracy' of Kolchak and Denikin... proved to the peasants that the talk about democracy and the Constituent Assembly was only a screen for the dictatorship of the landlords and capitalists.

"A new swing-over to the Bolsheviks began: the peasant uprisings in the rear of Kolchak and Denikin multiplied. The Red troops were greeted by the peasants as liberators.

"In the long run it was these vacillations of the peasants, who constitute the greater part of the petty-bourgeois toiling masses, that decided the fate of the Soviet power and of the power of Kolchak and Denikin."

(Ibid: p. 478)

Lenin added that it is just the experience which the wavering petty-bourgeoisie gains during long and hard struggles by comparing the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of capitalism which leads them to the final conclusion that the dictatorship of the proletariat must be given preference.

Lenin also points out that it is extremely important for the victory of the revolution to divide the strength of the enemy, to break it up so that the enemy should become bewildered and hesitant.

These problems of the dictatorship of the proletariat stood constantly in the foreground during the years 1919-1920-1921. They were made timely by the revolutionary situation which existed in a number of European countries as well as the circumstance that it was during these years that the Communist Parties were formed - as the Communist International itself - and while working out tactical as well as strategical questions, our great teachers Lenin and Stalin constantly referred to them and set them as an example.

This was the more needed because the bulk of the young Communist Parties were not sufficiently well acquainted with and had not studied sufficiently profoundly the history of the 1917 Great October Socialist Revolution, its moving forces, its inner springs. Even in 1921, at the III Congress of the Communist International, it happened that there were entire parties which did not consider it necessary to win the majority, the decisive part of the working class or even of the entire working people for the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Their explanation, not knowing the facts of the Russian Revolution, was that the Bolshevik Party was small when it conquered power. Lenin's answer was:

"We in Russia were a small party but the majority of the workers and peasants delegate councils was ours... Nearly half of the army was ours, which at that time consisted of 10 million men... We won over the peasantry which, after 1917, after our victory, voted against us and sent a majority of social reformers to the Constituent Assembly... We won them over, although not in a few days, as I myself erroneously expected and foretold, but nevertheless in a few weeks...

"We won in Russia, not only because we had an assured majority within the working class (at the 1917 elections the overwhelming majority of the workers were with us against the Mensheviks) but also because, immediately after having obtained power, half of the army and within a few weeks nine tenths of the peasantry came over to our side.

"...In order to win we need the sympathy of the masses. An absolute majority is not always needed; but in order to win and to maintain the power not only the majority of the working class is necessary... but also the majority of the working and exploited village population."
(Lenin: Vol 32, Russian Edition. Translated from the Hungarian.)

When in 1924-25, after the defeat of the Hungarian Commune, we started the re-organisation of the Communist Party in Hungary, we experienced immediately that the bulk of our comrades at home did not see clearly that the dictatorship of the proletariat can only be realised if it is supported by the majority of the working people. That this situation could have arisen is partly our fault. We did not analyse, we did not disclose the factors and circumstances of the origin of the Hungarian dictatorship of the proletariat. And because we were certain that these problems would immediately arise in a new revolutionary situation, we endeavoured to clarify the problems of the Hungarian dictatorship of the proletariat in this field.

When in 1935 I came before the Horthy Court as a former People's Commissar of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, I too endeavoured to use the little publicity that such a fascist trial could offer for calling the attention of the Hungarian Communists to these problems.

In my "defence speech" I pointed out that in our country too, the dictatorship of the proletariat could only have arisen because: 1) in the winter of 1918-19 the Communist Party in Hungary won the decisive majority of the Hungarian working class for the objectives of the proletarian revolution, and first of all the industrial workers of Greater Budapest, thus defeating its rival, the Social Democratic Party; 2) the bulk of the millions of land hungry peasants demanding a division of the land came over to its side; 3) the decisive part of the army supported the Communists and first of all the majority of the garrison stationed in Budapest; 4) the hostile parties and organisations were already, in the days immediately preceding the declaration of the dictatorship of the proletariat, completely confused and helpless and had started to disintegrate.

I proved that in March 1919 the prerequisites existed in our country, which Lenin and Stalin, on the basis of the experience of the Great October Socialist Revolution, held as decisive for the origin of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

I pointed out that among the causes for the failure, apart from our own faults and the treachery of the Hungarian Social Democrats, the decisive factor was armed intervention by the imperialists, with which they finally suppressed the young Hungarian Soviet Republic.

At the beginning of 1945, when our country was liberated, and after 25 years of underground work, the Hungarian Communist Party was able to appear in the political arena legally and openly, we soon experienced that the tactics and strategy of our Party were not understood by a large section of our Communists.

What were the strategic aims of our Party then?

The Hungarian Communist Party, as well as the other Communist Parties of the countries enslaved by Hitler, regarded during the Second World War as the main strategic objective the annihilation of the German fascist conquerors. On the advice and at the guidance of Comrade Stalin, the Communist Parties formed broad anti-fascist coalitions in these countries for this aim; and they included in these coalitions the anti-Hitler peasants, the petty-bourgeoisie, and even the elements of the middle-bourgeoisie which were hostile to fascism; all who were willing to participate in this national-liberation struggle.

In the fight against fascist barbarism, the closely-welded, militant and self-sacrificing Communist Parties, tempered in the long struggle and possessing political experience acquired during many long years, became the chosen leaders of the coalitions. The Communist Party foresaw that victory in this difficult struggle would not only mean the defeat of Nazi barbarism, but would also involve the feudal landowners and capitalists in alliance with fascism and would therefore not only bring about the disruption of fascist imperialism, but also the liquidation of feudal remnants including the distribution of the latifundia.

It could be foreseen that this struggle, although in content realising the objectives of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, would at the same time open the road towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, because the working class stood in the forefront of the struggle and, under the leadership of the Communist Party, would put power in the hands of the people. This conception conforms to the Stalinist teaching whereby, if the leading role of the working class is implemented, this already carries the seeds of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

According to this plan, we started our work by organising the Hungarian National Independence Front, the coalition of parties and elements antagonistic to Nazi imperialism and feudalism.

A considerable part of those comrades who did not know or did not understand this strategic plan which was worked out by us during the War, received this broad coalition consisting of mixed elements with surprise and more than once with antipathy. How often did we hear in those weeks the reproach from many a good comrade, "That wasn't what we expected from you". And they told us also what they had expected:

"In 1919," they said, "the imperialists overthrew the Hungarian Soviet Republic by force and re-instated the dictatorship of landowners and capitalists. Now when the Red Army has liberated us, let us use the opportunity to re-instate the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Incidentally a similar "re-instatement" was expected by the majority of the petty-bourgeoisie, as we could see everywhere in those days.)

These comrades did not understand that the imperialists were able to overthrow - temporarily, as Lenin repeatedly emphasised - the Hungarian dictatorship of the proletariat, and could re-instate the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and feudal landowners because their regime, both before and after the Hungarian Commune, was the terroristic dictatorship of an exploiting minority towards the working people, who constituted the majority.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, as Lenin and Stalin teach us, is, on the other hand, the dictatorship of the exploited majority over the exploiting minority. And as long as the Communist Party does not win the majority of the working class and the bulk of the working people for the objectives of this dictatorship - and in the spring of 1945 it had not yet won them - it cannot be established. This prerequisite for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the acquiescence and support of the overwhelming majority of the working people, cannot even be replaced by the liberation through the Soviet Army.

That this question could be raised by so many of our comrades and cause, especially at the beginning, so much difficulty, showed that we had not learnt enough and taught enough about the history of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the Hungarian Soviet Republic; one reason for this being 25 years of illegality. At the moment of the Liberation we did not clarify these problems in good time for the broad masses of the Party.

In 1945 we raised these problems only in narrow Party circles, within the Party. We did not bring them before the Party publicly because even the theoretical discussion of the dictatorship of the proletariat as an objective would have caused alarm among our companions in the Coalition and would have made our endeavours to win over, not only the petty-bourgeoisie, but the majority of the mass of the workers more difficult.

Neither did we deal with the problem which was nevertheless included in the problem of the "re-instatement" of the dictatorship of the proletariat: whether the Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat is constantly valid under the conditions of the countries liberated by the Soviet Union, or has been modified in one way or another.

We have not raised this problem since. Without having examined it specially in 1944-45 we looked upon the theory as constantly valid. The seven years development of the People's Democracies - including the Hungarian People's Democracy - proves that our standpoint was correct. This development supports and strengthens in all its essential details the brave statement of Comrade Stalin which he made more than a quarter of a century ago.

"Lenin's theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a purely 'Russian' theory, but a theory which applies to all countries. Bolshevism is not only a Russian phenomenon. 'Bolshevism,' says Lenin, is 'a model of tactics for all.'"

(Stalin: PROBLEMS OF LENINISM. p. 99
Moscow 1947 edition.)

The moment has come to raise this problem in its entirety and to clarify it in its details, and to make our Party and our entire working people understand that the time for the realization of the People's Democracy, as a variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, could only come after we had won for our objectives the working class and the decisive majority of the working people.

We have to point out the eternal merit, and the decisive support of the liberating Soviet Union, which facilitated, promoted and made possible the establishment of the People's Democracies. But we have also to point out how the Communist Party won over the majority of the working class, how it convinced the masses of the peasantry and how it created the other prerequisites for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We have also to point out when and how we passed over from the first phase of the People's Democracy, which was the solution of the objectives of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, to the second phase, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the building of socialism. The analysis and elucidation of these questions and the understanding of the lessons which can be drawn from them will facilitate our future struggles, strengthen our perspicacity and our sense of security.

Let us first of all examine the role of the Soviet Union in the origin of the Hungarian People's Democracy, and the allegation of the imperialists whereby the "forceful interference" of the liberating Soviet Union created the leading role of the Communist Parties and made the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat possible. Already at the beginning of 1946 Mr. Churchill began to reiterate this accusation.

Comrade Stalin in a striking reply explained fundamentally that the growth of the Communist Parties was a natural result of the heroic battle which these parties had fought against the fascist barbarians in the occupied countries and as a result of which their influence had considerably grown even in countries such as France, Italy and others, where it was not the Soviet Union who expelled the fascists. This calumny stopped for some time, but it came to new life and today we might say it is the foundation and fulcrum of hostile slander-mongering.

What is the role of the Soviet Union in the origin of the People's Democracy? The heroic army of the Soviet Union liberated us from the terrible slavery of German fascism and its Arrow Cross satellites. With this action it opened to us the road towards democratic development. It is clear that the decisive prerequisite and starting point for the origin of our People's Democracy was the heroic struggle and victory of the Soviet Union. Without this it could not have been realised. This knowledge is today the common property of the Hungarian working people and a source of eternal gratitude.

The army of the Soviet Union made hopeless beforehand armed attacks of Hungarian reaction similar to the Denikin, Kolchak and White Guardist generals' attacks during the Russian Revolution. First of all, the armed forces of the Soviet Union made possible that in our country counter-revolution did not dare to resort to such bloody methods in order to re-instate its regime. The Soviet Army protected us also from imperialist intervention. The Soviet Union protected us against the diplomatic interferences of the Western Great Powers, helped us during the Peace Treaties and in building up and expanding our foreign trade relations.

All this, of course, helped the strengthening of Communist influence, because the sympathy which grew among our working people for the Soviet Union as a result of these deeds facilitated our work, too. During reconstruction and ever since we felt the support and aid of the Soviet Union in a hundred different ways, and it is natural that the gratitude with which our working people reciprocated this support meant also a great help to us.

The greatest help was the guidance and advice which we received in difficult and complicated situations from our wise teacher and leader, the great Stalin, and which was proved to be always good, correct and in the interests of the much-suffered Hungarian working people.

Without all these factors, our People's Democracy could not have been born and its development would not have been as rapid and strong and void of grave shocks.

Soviet "interference" into the affairs of our country were fairly frequent and were of great advantage in strengthening our Party, but not in a way the imperialists would like to portray it. The Soviet Union interfered in the sense that it cancelled half the reparations, sent back our prisoners-of-war before the date fixed in the Peace Treaty, gave a start to our industry and supplied it with raw materials at a time when we were unable to acquire them anywhere else; they sent foodstuff at a time when we were in need of it. And because these magnanimous and farseeing steps were taken mostly at the open initiative of our Party, it is natural that they increased our popularity, too.

The imperialists, of course, do not think of that type of intervention but of bloody, armed actions such as put into operation by the British "Labour" Government or the Truman Government against the Greek freedom fighters in order to put back the expelled monarcho-fascist king on the necks of the Greek people. Such "interference" on the part of the imperialists is an everyday occurrence. It is an inseparable accessory of the arsenal of the "Free World" and the application of "true democracy". For this reason, of course, such "interference" on the part of the Soviet Union never occurred in Hungary and naturally neither in the other People's Democracies, and the enemy cannot mention a single example of this, which, of course, does not hinder him from continuing to trumpet the slanders of "Soviet interference".

We repeat: without the heroic liberation struggle and unceasing friendly support of the Soviet Union, the Hungarian People's Democracy - and, we add, nor the others - could not

have been born. But it could not have been born either, if the Hungarian Communist Party, with self-sacrificing work, by setting an example, by the tenacious and successful defence of the interests of the working people, and with its effective struggle against reaction, had not won over the great majority of the working class, the bulk of the peasantry and the decisive part of the entire working people. Those who do not understand this, do not understand the role of our Party - and in general that of the Communist Parties - deny in essence this decisive role, and with this willy-nilly join forces with those who regard the origin of the People's Democracies solely as a result of "Soviet interference".

Let us consider how our Party carried out this task, the winning over of the majority of the working people, which is an indispensable prerequisite for the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Hungarian Communist Party, as we said before, had already broadly outlined during the War the things which had to be done, which although belonging essentially to the tasks of the bourgeois revolution, gave an opportunity to win gradually the support of the majority of the working people in the fight against fascist, imperialist and feudal elements. Of course, what Lenin proclaimed can be applied to our plans and our conceptions, too:

"History in general, but the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more manifold, more alive and more 'subtle' than even the best parties of the most progressive classes and their most class conscious vanguards imagine."

(Lenin: Vol. 31, Russian edition.)

Translated from the Hungarian.)

We did not suspect, either, in 1942-43 that we should begin our legal activities in a country which had been destroyed, where every bridge had been blown up, from where the bulk of the livestock, the best factory machinery had been carried away to Germany, where the capital had neither water, gas nor electricity, and no food supplies, etc. Our Party, which had been mercilessly persecuted for 25 years, forced underground, its best fighters decimated by Horthy's blood-stained judges, had suffered further extremely grave losses in the weeks and days immediately preceding the liberation. In spite of this, it can be said that from the first moment of the liberation, it jumped to its feet and began the fulfilment of its difficult historic role.

Our difficulties were increased because what Comrade Stalin wrote about the Bolshevik Party was also true about our Party:

"Actually, the Bolsheviks had no political army ready in March 1917, nor could they have had one. The Bolsheviks built up such an army (and had it finally built up by October 1917)... the Party has to create its army in the course of the struggle itself..."

(Stalin: PROBLEMS OF LENINISM. p. 110.
Moscow 1947 edition.)

The worries of leading our country were thrust upon our Party at a moment when we had hardly any organisation.

We immediately participated in the Government and that meant a considerable part of the forces of our Party which otherwise might have been used mostly for building and organising the Party itself had to be entrusted with carrying out responsible State duties. This "loss" had, of course, its gains but, especially in the first few months, when the building of the Party and the building of the country coincided, it demanded increased work and effort on our part. Our Party - to the good fortune of the Hungarian people - went through so many storms and was tempered in so many battles that it could undertake bravely, with confidence and without delay, to remove seemingly insurmountable obstacles. With this self-sacrificing work we started to win over the working masses. Comrade Stalin's statement can be applied to us to:

"The confidence of the working class in the Party is not acquired at one stroke... but by the Party's prolonged work among the masses, by a correct Party policy, by the ability of the Party to convince the masses by their own experience of the correctness of its policy, by the ability of the Party to secure the support of the working class and to induce the masses of the working class to follow its lead."

(Stalin: PROBLEMS OF LENINISM. p.146.
Moscow 1947 edition.)

From the moment our Party could appear freely in the political arena it not only proclaimed the coalition of national democratic forces, and not only showed itself as the most consistent persecutor of fascist Hitlerite elements, but at the same time was in the forefront of healing the wounds inflicted by war, in removing the ruins and in starting reconstruction. It was able to select the most important tasks suitable to satisfy the most urgent economic demands of the working masses of both town and village. It was able to focus public attention on them and to solve them.

From the first moment of the liberation it not only uninterruptedly took the initiative, but undertook the implementation of the most difficult part of the work which followed. Let us remember only such tasks as the starting the supply of foodstuffs to Budapest, the struggle for the repair of transport, especially the railways, "the battle for coal", the rebuilding of bridges, and the starting of production in the factories.

Confronted with those who doubted and lost faith, our Party enthusiastically proclaimed that, supported by the liberating Soviet Union, we should be able to rise from our knees through our own efforts. Right from the beginning the entire working people experienced and acknowledged the guiding and leading role of the Party. It was in consequence of this leading role that they began to make our Party responsible for everything.

In the long run, and in the case of good work, this role undoubtedly ensured success for the Party. But temporarily it had the disadvantage that the enemy made it responsible for every difficulty, and all troubles which were a consequence of the destruction brought about by war were ascribed to it.

The work of our Party was made somewhat easier in this situation by the fact that it participated in the State power. This was ensured as a result of the self-sacrificing battle against Hitler, in which most of the sacrifices were borne by our Communist Party, and by the fact that our country was liberated by the Soviet Union.

Following the example of the Bolshevik Party, our Party of course used with all its strength its direct influence on the State power to satisfy the economic needs of the working masses, and to win in this way the support of the working masses. Participation in power brought to a certain degree into the foreground those possibilities which were at the disposal of the Bolshevik Party only after it had seized power on November 7th, 1917. Thus we were able to carry out the land reform, which meant the liquidation of the feudal latifundia, and thus already in March 1945 to win for our Party a considerable part of the new landowners.

The mines and the most important iron and metal industry works, the owners of which absconded abroad, or were compromised for having supported the fascist occupiers, came in greater part immediately under State control and leadership. It is one of the characteristics of the People's Democracies that already in the course of the first phase, the phase of the bourgeois revolution, the Communist Parties participate in State power and were thus capable of solving tasks which otherwise belonged to the phase of the development of the proletarian revolution.

In the land reform we already applied the tactics of trying to divide the enemy or, if possible, of neutralising him. We therefore set as a lower limit for the land reform, holdings of 200 "holds" (280 acres), which therefore did not affect the bulk of the kulaks and facilitated a smooth and rapid implementation.

At the beginning of the reconstruction we supported that part of the bourgeoisie which, even though temporarily, joined us in our work. This helped considerably to set to work the technical intelligentsia which at that time was still following the line of the bourgeoisie. When we made demands we carefully measured the resistance to be expected, and wherever possible we carefully began little by little, in order to make it more difficult for the enemy to mobilise and concentrate all forces against us. Later we increased the demands and wherever possible we used transitory forms. For instance, in the case of the banks, we first demanded only State control, later the nationalisation of the three larger banks. Similarly in industry, we first demanded the State management of the mines, then we gradually increased our demands to include large engineering factories and the metallurgical industry, and later to the nationalisation of these enterprises. We thus achieved the nationalisation of industry gradually over the years, divided into four to five stages.

As far as the division of feudal latifundia is concerned, this can only further the socialist revolution if it takes place under the leadership of the proletariat and the Communist Party. After the First World War in most of the new states formed from the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, such as Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Poland, there was a land reform, and the land of the Hungarian, Austrian, German and partly of the Russian big landowners was divided up.

This land reform, however, was carried out by the bourgeoisie, and it is natural that it used its political consequences for the strengthening of its own regime. The land reforms in the People's Democracies, which were initiated and carried out by the Communist Parties, led immediately to furthering of hegemony of the working class, to the establishment or strengthening of the worker-peasant alliance, and thus carried within them the seeds of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Even in the days of the wildest persecution and oppression, we were certain that the Hungarian Communist Party had deep roots both amongst the workers and the working peasants. This was indicated by the fact that immediately after the liberation the large trade unions, first of all the miners, building and metal workers, tailors and leather workers unions, the trade unions in which the Communist Party even in the long years of illegality possessed an uninterrupted, serious influence, elected Communist leaders.

The trade union of the agricultural workers and smallholders also came immediately under Communist leadership. (Even during the years of illegality the Communist Party had extensive peasant organisations. Thus, for instance, when in 1933 Horthy's gendarmes rounded up a considerable part of such an underground organisation, more than 300 peasants were imprisoned.)

Right from its reorganisation, the National Council of Trade Unions was also in its majority under Communist leadership.

Thus, in the spring of 1945, the Communist Party was deeply rooted in the worker and peasant masses and the auspices were good for starting the struggle for the winning over of the majority of the working people.

What was the position of its rivals?

Our rival amongst the industrial workers was the Social Democratic Party. A considerable part of its leaders were Horthy's police agents or British spies, and after the liberation they gradually went into the service of the American imperialists, like the leaders of the Smallholders Party. Of course, these leaders would have been far more pleased if Hungary had been occupied by United States or British troops.

The great majority hated the Soviet Union and at the beginning maintained close relations with the Labour Party, which serves British imperialism, endeavoured to carry out its instructions and advice, and later came more and more under the influence of the American imperialists. At the same time the great majority of the Social Democrat workers and peasants - there were such peasants in the Great Plain - sympathised with the liberating Soviet Union, approved of working class unity and a united front with the Communists, and demanded a fight against the imperialists, the remnants of fascism and capitalist reaction.

In this situation a great part of the Social Democratic Party leaders, as well as those of the Smallholders Party, played a double game. Outwardly, towards the masses, they showed themselves as members of the Independence Front and the democratic coalition. In secret, in an underhand manner, however, they aimed from the very first day at squeezing the Communists out of power and minimizing to the extreme their influence amongst the masses of the workers.

This policy of the Social Democratic Party has a long tradition. In 1919, when the masses of the workers came under the influence of the Communist Party, the bulk of the then Social Democratic leaders, in order to save a part of their influence, and to be able to make a more successful appearance at the given moment, accepted outwardly the demands of the Communists and behaved as if they intended to support the Soviet Republic. When, however, the situation became critical, the same leaders attacked the dictatorship of the proletariat from the rear and contributed to its defeat.

It was also an old tradition of this policy that in order to deceive and mislead the masses of the working people more successfully, the Social Democratic Party pushed into the forefront alternately its right and "left" wing. This "left" wing started to function when there was a danger that, as a consequence of a too open and plain betrayal, the masses of the workers might leave the Social Democrats. At such times the pseudo left wing received the task of confusing the dissatisfied masses and of keeping them further under Social Democratic influence by artificial opposition and radicalism in words.

After the liberation the importance of this pseudo-left wing increased, and the way it was manoeuvred misled even us more than once. This was the more possible because one part of the Social Democratic leaders - just as in 1919 - was truly left-wing, that is to say, honestly desired and maintained the united front with the Communists, fought for it and is with us even today.

Until the fight reached its decisive stage, the Social Democratic leaders were able to play this double role, in which they showed themselves before public opinion as the allies of the Communists and the followers of working class unity; secretly, however, they pushed the cart of the imperialists and intrigued in every way against the realisation of working class unity.

Then, however, the crisis sharpened and they were forced to declare their true colours, when the Social Democratic Party, to use a military expression, was thrust into open battle and into a battle against the working people, this was the end of the misleading manoeuvres: the masses of the workers recognised their true faces and left them and joined the Communist Party. This only happened, however, two or two and a half years after the liberation. Up to then the Social Democratic Party stood to a certain degree in the second line: reaction at that time thrust into the front line as its main force the Smallholders Party, which it regarded as its main army.

The bulk of the peasantry, first of all the well-to-do peasantry and the kulaks, and a considerable part of the petty-bourgeoisie, streamed into the Smallholders Party after the liberation. This Party received an absolute majority in Parliament in 1920 after the defeat of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Nagyatádi Szabó, the then kulak leader of this Party, encouraged large numbers of counts, large landowners and capitalists to enter the Smallholders Party, so that they should undermine it from within, capture its leadership and re-instate their regime. From this time onwards the Smallholders Party was a lukewarm opposition to Horthy and, in 1944, when the defeat of fascism was certain, they established loose contacts with the Communists in the Hungarian Front.

In 1944 we took into consideration the fact that when our country was liberated by the Soviet Union, the former ruling classes would again choose "the road of Nagyatádi"; that is to say, that under the signboard of the Smallholders Party they would endeavour to reorganise their forces and to win back their former power. Therefore, already in 1944, our policy followed the line of supporting the new party, the National Peasant Party, which set as its first aim to win over the poor peasantry. This party, which right from its birth kept close links with the Communist Party, became the Smallholders Party's rival amongst the poor peasants, to whom at the beginning our influence could not extend, for different reasons, and thus the new party hindered the Smallholders Party from functioning as the sole party of the peasantry.

At the same time our Party established contacts which it kept to the end with the working peasant members of the Smallholders Party. Through these contacts it supported and drew under its influence all those who did not look favourably on the fact that the most varied types of capitalist, landowner and petty-bourgeois reactionaries were streaming into the Smallholders Party.

In the coalition the disruptive forces, as compared to the cohesive factors, increased in the same degree as the main objective - the destruction of fascism - was approached. When the war was over, a new situation arose. The immediate problem then was how to go forward from there.

We endeavoured to develop the situation in the direction of the socialist revolution, and relied on the Soviet Union. The Smallholders Party and the leaders of the Social Democrats fought for the maintenance and strengthening of the capitalist order. (As such they participated in the land reform only with bad grace and under constraint.)

Accordingly they relied on the imperialists. But because they were not able to reveal this openly and plainly before their supporters, they did not dare to break with the Independence Front and the Communist Party. This, however, did not change the fact that the struggle - so far while maintaining the coalition form - became sharper: the roads started to diverge.

In the summer of 1945 it became clear that every element of the old order - landowners, bankers, landlords, Horthyite politicians and officers - congregated in the Smallholders Party. This party was also supported by the churches, and the priests occupied a leading position in its policy-making. The imperialists established contact with this party immediately, mainly through their diplomatic representatives in Hungary.

While the Communist Party proclaimed that, relying on the Soviet Union, we were able to carry out reconstruction by our own efforts, the official but mainly unofficial line of the Smallholders Party was that it was hopeless to begin reconstruction through our own efforts. According to them, reconstruction could only be started after receiving a large American loan - and of course fulfilling the political conditions attached to such a loan.

While the Communist Party infused confidence into the working people, most leaders of the Smallholders made a wry face, spread dejection by criticising and grumbling, and stirred up dissatisfaction. As they could look back upon twenty years of oppositional past and oppositional experience, they slowly worked out a policy whereby they enjoyed every advantage of partaking in power and at the same time played the role of the opposition.

The Hungarian working people were excluded from the possession of actual power for decades, even for centuries, when they were in opposition against the ruling class, and therefore opposition to and mistrust of every existing government was so deeply rooted in them that when power started to pass into their own hands, they could not adapt themselves quickly to the changed circumstances.

Thus they offered a breeding-ground for the Smallholder opposition, which also received an extensive opportunity in the difficulties created by the destructions of war. The opposition policy of this Party, which also shared power, created grave, though temporary difficulties and weakened the coalition of democratic forces. But this policy recoiled on the Smallholders Party to the same degree as reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country proceeded under the leadership of the Communist Party; and to the same degree, as a consequence, the self-confidence and the gratitude of the nation grew.

In the summer of 1945 it was already clear that the Smallholders Party, which was our most serious rival amongst the peasants, had turned towards the "Nagyatádi road". Our task was to unmask before the masses of working peasants and petty-bourgeoisie belonging to this party the true intentions of their reactionary leaders, to isolate these anti-popular leaders and to win over their supporters for our point of view.

We were aware both of the double game played by the majority of Social Democrat and Smallholder leaders, and of their hostile feelings. We therefore carefully fostered all organic links, such as the committees of the working class united front, inter-party committees, local committees of the Independence Front and others which gave us an

opportunity to exercise direct influence on the mass of worker and peasant supporters of our partners in coalition. This influence of ours made the various open manoeuvres of the Social Democrat and Smallholder leaders more difficult and often forced them to assume, at least for the outside world, the semblance of co-operation with the Communists.

The division of forces amongst the parties was first numerically shown by elections for the National Assembly held in November 1945, seven months after the liberation. At these elections, the Smallholders Party received an absolute majority, 56 per cent of the votes. The Communist Party finished neck to neck with the Social Democrats, receiving 17 per cent of the votes, but won more seats, and thus became the second largest party in the country. The Peasant Party received not quite 8 per cent.

The Smallholders Party, as could be clearly seen in the weeks preceding the election, received the majority of the votes of the peasantry; the bulk of the town-dwelling petty-bourgeoisie stood behind it and practically without exception the fascist, capitalist and big landowner reactionaries were lined up behind it. It is characteristic that in Budapest where before the liberation it had hardly any serious organisation, the Smallholders Party received half of the votes.

The Communist Party received votes above its average first of all in Budapest, where more than half the workers employed in large-scale industry voted for it, and secondly in the mining districts where the overwhelming majority of the miners supported our Party. (For instance in Salgótarján the Communist Party received 66 per cent of the total votes.) Our Party received 28 per cent in Komárom County, where the Tata miners voted for us.

It is characteristic that our Party received 28 per cent of the votes in the purely peasant county of Csongrád, just as in the other peasant counties east of the Tisza, the so-called "Stormy Corner", it received well above the average for the country; about 24 to 25 per cent of the votes. We received the least votes in the western agricultural counties of the country where the fascist parties exercised considerable influence before the liberation, and where the religious, Catholic peasantry voted far above the average for the Smallholders Party, which had on its election posters the Bible, the rosary and the Cross.

The election results were influenced by the fact that our rivals also understood how to use against us that part of the State power at their disposal. For instance, food-stuffs, and particularly bread, started to disappear in Budapest and in the industrial towns just before the elections. This could only have occurred a few weeks after the harvest as a result of being deliberately withheld.

When we analysed the results of the election we came to the conclusion that we were deeply rooted in the masses of the workers and that the most conscious elements of the peasantry, beginning with a considerable part of those peasants who had received land east of the Tisza, and who could look back on old revolutionary traditions, were following us.

We also found that the bulk of those who had received land west of the Danube did not vote for us but in the majority voted for other parties. We had believed that the mere fact that they had received land with the help of the Communist Party would line up the bulk of the new landowners on our side. One of the lessons of the 1945 election for us was that we were not able to make the Transdanubian new farmers understand that they had first of all to thank our Party for the land and they would only be able to keep it if they supported us.

The results of the election were greeted with great pleasure by Hungarian - and we may add - by international reaction. This pleasure was somewhat damped by the fact that the Communist Party proved to be strong not only among the industrial workers but also among the peasantry.

Our Party used the election results to strengthen its position. Therefore it demanded the post of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, which it received after some procrastination.

This put courage back into those who were disheartened by the success of the Smallholders. In order to strengthen our influence in the State machinery, we established the Supreme Economic Council, through which we gradually drew under our influence the key positions of economic life. Thus, as a result of the election, our Party extended its influence in the most important spheres of State power.

As a result of the election, the Smallholders Party received the post of Prime Minister and half the ministerial posts. Under the influence of the election results reaction grew by leaps and bounds. The officers and Horthyite officials who had absconded to the West began to stream back into the country. The removal of the enemies of the people from the State apparatus was more and more slowed down. The Horthyite parish clerks in the villages and similar officials in the towns felt that now they could again breathe freely, and behave more provocatively towards the achievements of democracy.

The general onslaught against one of the greatest achievements of the liberation, the land reform, increased in strength. The old landowners and their lawyers started to demand back the land from the new owners under the most varied pretexts. This became a countrywide phenomenon in the two or three months following the election. There were districts where, by January 1946, 18 per cent of the land divided up was adjudged back to the old owners, and in more than one district 75 per cent of the distributed land was claimed back.

The Horthyite parish clerks and officials who still existed in the majority of the villages prolonged the registration of the land by every means and thus increased the feeling of insecurity amongst the new owners. They started to persecute the settlers who received land, and the new farmers on the land formerly belonging to Swabians (Germans). This persecution soon became increasingly strong and more provocative, not only towards the new farmers but towards the Communists and the other sincere followers of democracy.

The peasantry which had received land, and numbered more than half a million in the country, only now began to notice what the election victory of the Smallholders Party meant. From the onslaught for the return of the distributed land it understood more clearly what was at stake, what was meant by Smallholders democracy, than from Communist articles in the newspapers and explanations at mass meetings.

Under the influence of the general attack, the peasantry which had received land found its way to us, and turned to our Party for help. Frightened peasant delegations reported in increasing numbers to our organisations and demanded protection from us. There were delegations which consisted of three hundred persons. Our Party, of course, hastened to the help of its hard-pressed ally, the working peasantry which had received land, and issued the slogans: "We defend the land!", "We will not return the land!".

Simultaneously we went into a counter-offensive against every manifestation of reaction. We mobilised the masses in the villages and towns and removed reactionary elements one by one from the village and town administrations by means of people's judgments and people's movements. In hundreds of villages and towns the masses, after having passed a resolution at an open meeting, removed or expelled the clerk or other anti-popular elements. As a consequence of the people's judgments led by our Party, the self-confidence of the masses increased, and reaction, which had gathered courage, started to be pushed into the background in the provinces.

Parallel to this, our Party started a campaign to unmask and squeeze out the reactionary elements which had infiltrated into the Smallholders Party, and to isolate them from the honest and democratic masses of working peasants and petty-bourgeoisie in this party, and to draw these masses into the service of the democratic construction of the country.

Our Party demanded that the Smallholders Party should take a stand against its own reactionary elements, should help to safeguard the results of land reform and should exclude from the ranks of its members the most notorious reactionaries. The left wing of the Smallholders Party took an open stand on the side of these demands, which proved that our influence had started to gain ground among the democratic elements of this party.

As a consequence of the attack of reaction, the demand for working class unity and for closer worker-peasant alliance, strengthened. In the first days of March 1946, on the initiative of the Party, the Left Wing Bloc was formed within the Independence Front, which included the Communist, Social Democratic and Peasant Parties, and the Trade Union Council. This new organisation, of which the member parties had received nearly 42 per cent of the votes at the election, represented a strengthening of the influence of the Communist Party on the entire working class and the poor peasantry, and strongly limited the possibility for the leaders of the Social Democratic Party to manoeuvre against us.

At the beginning of March 1946, to emphasise its demands, the Left Wing Bloc mobilised the Budapest workers. Under the threatening influence of an imposing and disciplined mass

meeting of more than 400,000 people, the Smallholders Party was obliged to fulfil our demands. It excluded the 24 most heavily compromised of its deputies to the National Assembly, agreed to the demand that new farmers could not be removed under any pretext from the land they had received; and agreed that, following the nationalisation of the coal mines, the oil and bauxite mines should also be nationalised, banks put under State control, the Csepel Weiss Manfred factory, the Ganz factories and the Ózd metallurgical works taken into State administration and that representatives of the trade unions should be appointed to the committees set up in order to clear reactionary elements from the State apparatus. The united action of hundreds of thousands of Budapest workers made a deep impression on reaction. This "shock brigade" of more than half the Hungarian working class, was a "proletarian fist" concentrated in the capital, which multiplied the influence of our Party.

Four months after the election victory of the Smallholders Party, the working people under the leadership of our Party dealt a considerable blow to reaction. This blow, of course, strengthened our influence both among the proletariat and the working peasantry which had received land. Just as the Russian peasantry learned from the pillaging of the "democratic" landowners and generals who appeared on the heels of Denikin and Kolchak, that it was better to keep in with the Bolsheviks, in our country too, the general onslaught which was started in order to take back the distributed land made the peasantry understand the true face of the Smallholders Party. Tens and hundreds of thousands of new farmers understood that the Communist Party was the firm defender and helper of their interests, and that the land which, in the autumn of 1945, they so confidently regarded as their own, they would be able to keep and defend only with the help of the Communist Party. Thus the attack of reaction on the land reform finally strengthened the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the Communist Party.

Gaining courage from the election results of 1945, reaction started an attack, which was much beyond its strength, against the achievements of the People's Democracy, and first of all against the land reform. Our Party recognised that the enemy had stuck his neck out, and so it made a counter-attack which thrust reaction back much beyond its starting line.

The result of these struggles was that the leading role of our Party increased, working class unity and the worker-peasant alliance were strengthened, the land reform was stabilised and - this was a new phenomenon - the success of the counter-attack made it possible to start the fight against capital and for nationalisation.

The expansion of nationalisation, the taking of the banks and the decisive heavy industry enterprises into State control or State administration, showed the direction we succeeded in giving to our further development. Up till March 1946, we directed our main attack at liquidating feudal latifundia, and at annihilating the remnants of fascism; we had not yet proclaimed a general fight against the capitalist system. A change began: not a general attack against capitalism, but the occupation of the important and advanced positions of the capitalists which facilitated and furthered our progress in the direction of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

As a continuation of the successful counter-attack in March 1946, the unmasking, removal and isolation of the reactionary elements of the Smallholders Party progressed unceasingly. The Smallholders Party was continuously obliged to exclude or remove such compromised members, either individually or in smaller groups. In those days this was called "salami tactics" whereby we sliced off bit by bit reaction hidden in the Smallholders Party. In these unceasing struggles we whittled away the strength of the enemy, decreased his influence on the masses of the working peasants and let our own roots penetrate more and more deeply, increasing our influence.

While these struggles went on, a no less threatening danger appeared on the economic front. In 1917 the capitalists in Russia hoped that "the bony hand of hunger, and the people's misery would throttle" the revolution and hoped to force the working masses to their knees by starving the towns and industrial centres. In our country in 1946, the devaluation of currency and the inflation threatened us with the danger that the economic disturbances, food supply difficulties, sufferings and hardships connected with it, would turn the working people of the towns and villages against us. Inflation afflicted mostly and more and more rapidly the working masses.

We had no experience in this field, and especially at the beginning, were nearly helpless when confronted with this phenomenon. The followers of the old order watched with pleasure the increase of inflation and at the same time the growing dissatisfaction of the working people. They proclaimed that we could not get out of this evil by our own efforts, that here only a foreign - by which they meant American - loan could help. Working on this hypothesis these elements did everything possible so that we should be unable to put a brake on the devaluation of the currency, and used for this purpose, as far as they were able, that part of the State machinery at their disposal. It was characteristic of their attitude that when, under the pressure of our Party, a conference was convened at the beginning of June under the leadership of the Smallholder Prime Minister, aiming to work out measures to put a brake on inflation, at the beginning of the meeting the Smallholder Prime Minister and Minister of Finance left under the pretext that they had to go to a more important conference. The financial expert of the Smallholders Party, the former director of the National Bank, began his contribution by saying: "In my opinion it would be best if inflation were to continue."

Under these circumstances the task of creating a sound currency fell upon the Communist Party. Our Party set August 1st as the date for the currency reform. A big debate went on with regard to the date because the financial expert of the Social Democratic Party (who, by the way, later absconded to London), insisted that we should postpone this date to October 1st; this would have meant that the suffering of the working people caused by the devaluation would have lasted two months longer. The fulfilment of this demand might have had unforeseen repercussions, because hardship had reached such a degree that in the last days of July Fascist movements had appeared in Miskolc, Ózd and Kunmadaras.

Apart from the Communists, no one believed in the success of the sound currency, and they did not ask to take part in its preparation. In the eyes of the whole country this work rested on the shoulders of the Communist Party. Friend and foe watched with expectation the fate of this undertaking.

When, in the first days of August, it became clear that the Party had succeeded in solving this difficult and unusual task, its influence grew in leaps and bounds amongst the workers and poor peasants, and even among those intellectuals and masses of the petty-bourgeoisie who were the victims of devaluation.

The sound forint made hundreds of thousands and millions understand that our Party saw the needs of the working masses and was able to satisfy these needs. Sharply and clearly it was shown again that our policy coincides with the fulfilment of the economic interests of the working masses; our enemies and rivals, on the other hand, hoped to achieve their objectives by increasing the misery of the working masses.

Our Party has proved in a number of other questions, too, that it is capable of defending the interests of the working people. For instance, the peasantry was gravely concerned during these months by the usury of the millers. Our Party then raised the question of State control of the mills, at which the Smallholder capitalists immediately protested because they had interests in the usury of the millers. In this way they alienated and directed towards us the sympathy of a part of the working peasantry. In order to help the new landowners and the peasant holdings affected by the war, we suggested that farmers owning less than 15 holds (21 acres) should be exempt from the burden of crop delivery, and that instead the well-to-do peasants and kulaks and gentlemen farmers should be more heavily taxed. The Smallholders Party refused this, and after long procrastination only those with less than 8 holds (11.2 acres) were exempt.

In order to cover the expenses of reconstruction, the Communist Party, with the approval of the working class, demanded a capital levy by saying: "Let the rich pay". The Smallholders Party was against this. The Social Democratic Party, with rather bad grace, reluctantly supported it. All this and the raising of a number of similar smaller problems slowly but surely further deepened our Party's influence among the worker and peasant masses.

These successes made it possible for the Third Congress of our Party, which met at the end of September 1946, to continue and outline more definitely the road embarked upon in March. The main slogans of the Congress were: "Out with the enemies of the people from the Coalition!", "We build the country not for the capitalists but for the people!"

The necessity for and conscious realisation of a general struggle against the capitalist order was already envisaged in this last slogan. The most important of the Congress objectives was to make a reality of the People's Democracy because: "Only the People's Democracy makes it possible for our country to proceed towards socialism without a civil war."

According to this objective, the Third Congress set up a number of detailed demands, the total of which, although not signifying a general attack against the capitalists, yet set as a target their further gradual repression and limitation. The realisation of these demands resulted in a further gradual extension of the socialist sector.

In the meantime, reaction received new hope from the approaching peace negotiations. It reckoned that, within a few months of the conclusion of the Peace Treaty, the Soviet troops would leave the country. But it had learned from the great mass movement in March, and knew that should it start an open struggle against the achievements of democracy, the Communist Party, with the help of the working masses, would be able to defy this intention. It had recourse, therefore, to underground conspiracy. By collecting together the followers of the old Horthy regime, the Arrow Cross members, the hostile elements hidden in the army and the police force, and with the help of foreign imperialist forces, it hoped at a given moment to be able to annihilate all the achievements of People's Democracy, by armed force. The conspirators, as became clear later, were first and foremost relying on the leaders of the Smallholders Party.

The conspiracy reached such an advanced stage that, a few days before it was uncovered, one of its leaders could say with self-satisfaction: "The piano is tuned; it has only to be played on." At this time they were so confident that the British Labour Government sent a note demanding that the Hungarian government should allow the 3,500 gendarmes "collected" in the British zone of Germany to return home.

Our Party started to point out with all its strength to the working people, and above all to the peasantry, - using the conspiracy as an example - the danger which threatened. We recognised that the uncovering of the conspiracy meant such a defeat for the enemy that we could consequently accelerate our previous slow and careful tactics, progressing step by step, and that, after gradual transitional solutions, we could now proceed more audaciously towards our aim. For this reason the struggle around the conspirators became extremely sharp in the winter of 1946-47.

The majority of the Smallholders Party leaders, being well-acquainted with the extent of the conspiracy, defended themselves desperately. The bulk of the Social Democratic leaders came to their help. On the one hand they offered to "mediate" between our Party and the conspirators. On the other hand, in order to distract the attention of the working class from the conspiracy, and to tie the forces of our Party, in December 1946 they suddenly started to demand the re-election of the factory committees. Our Party sharply refused the Social Democratic "mediation", and as far as the problem of factory committee elections was concerned, after having made special efforts that the elections in the first dozen factories should end in a serious Social Democratic defeat, forced the Social Democratic Party to retreat, so that in this situation the latter was obliged to renounce the factory committee elections.

During the tracking down of the conspiracy, the threads led to one of the ministers and the general secretary of the Smallholders Party, Béla Kovács. In the course of the liquidation of the conspiracy, the Smallholders Party was again obliged to expel a number of its members, a number of whom were imprisoned as conspirators. It became clear from their evidence that the aim of the conspiracy was the re-instatement of the old capitalist-landowner order, that they wanted to give back the land to its old owners and would have deprived

the working class and the peasantry of their acquired rights, and that they wanted to carry out these plans by a bloody, armed terror, with foreign imperialist help. All this, of course, made deep impression on the working masses and increased the sympathy for our Party.

In May 1947, American imperialists started a general attack all over Europe in order to push back Communist influence. They forced the exclusion of the Communist Parties from the Governments of France, Italy and Finland. In order to prepare a similar action in Hungary, they called the Smallholder Prime Minister, Ferenc Nagy, to Switzerland in order to discuss with him the necessary steps to be taken. While Ferenc Nagy was in Switzerland, proofs came to light at home which made it clear that the real leader of the conspiracy was Ferenc Nagy himself.

The Government, after having learned this, unanimously called upon Ferenc Nagy, with the consent of the Smallholder ministers, to return home immediately and clarify his position. Ferenc Nagy, however, knowing well that the accusations against him were substantial, considered it better to resign from his post as Prime Minister and to stay in Switzerland from whence he soon emigrated to the United States.

The fact that the leader of the Smallholders Party did not dare to return home made it clear to everybody that the accusations against him were true. Ferenc Nagy resigned on May 31st. Three days later, Béla Varga, a Catholic priest, and the Smallholder President of the National Assembly, who was also in the conspiracy, absconded from the country. This case, too, caused a tremendous sensation and shock everywhere, and last but not least among the peasant masses.

Under the influence of the nation-wide indignation, the leadership of the Smallholders Party unanimously expelled both of them from the Party on June 3rd. With tenacious and resolute work our Party unmasked the enemy in this manner, frustrated its plan of re-instating the old capitalist-landowner order by relying on the misled peasantry and the mass of the petty-bourgeoisie. By uncovering the conspiracy we weaned from the influence of reaction a considerable part of the mass of Smallholder's peasant and petty-bourgeois supporters. We isolated the capitalist elements, forced to appear without a democratic cloak, no longer under cover, but openly recognisable in their true colours.

The strata of the population under the influence of capitalist, landowner, fascist or clerical reaction, turned their backs on the Smallholders Party, which no longer offered them refuge, and which thus started to disintegrate. From its factions three to four parties in opposition to the Independence Front started to be formed.

In this situation we did not leave the enemy time to re-form his ranks, to carry out reorganisation and re-grouping, but suggested new elections in the weeks when the confusion, indecision, helplessness and rivalry among the new opposition reactionary parties was at its height.

The Western imperialists who, for two and a half years, tried to reach their objectives through the Smallholders Party, now, when this Party had suffered defeat, made a new attempt, pushing the Social Democratic Party into the foreground in opposition to the Communist Party. Accordingly, the Social Democratic Party attempted to unite the disintegrating masses of the Smallholders Party and to take a lead and to continue the work of undermining democracy and the Communist Party, in which the Smallholders Party had failed.

Accordingly, before the elections the Social Democratic Party began to emphasise that it had to emerge from the elections as the biggest party. "Sympathetic" articles with transparent aims started to appear in Népszava (Social Democratic daily paper - translator) which, in their essence, called upon the "former" fascists to vote for the Social Democratic Party. They started to organise those who had been put on the "B list" (the anti-democratic elements who had been removed from office). When compiling the list of electors they defended with the greatest ardour the electoral rights of the fascist elements, with the hope of receiving their votes. They started to emphasise, hinting at the Communist Party, that they were defending the independence of our country against attempts to make it part of the Soviet Union. They took a stand against "all kinds of dictatorships". They started to mention "the Communist terror", promised "a life without fear", and to assure the peasants that they too "are against the kolkhoz and regimentation". In one word they played the role of the party which collected the anti-communist elements.

Our Party, on the other hand, hit back forcefully. It unmasked these manoeuvres and pointed out at the same time that the conditions were ripe for the realisation of an organic working class unity, for the merging of the two parties. The raising of this problem, as it became clear later, also echoed strongly among the Social Democratic workers, who understood the lessons of the conspiracy. At the same time it also disturbed those elements which had left the Smallholders Party and which might have voted for the Social Democratic Party as an opposition to the Communist Party. The Social Democrats were obliged to sign a common election appeal with us in the name of working class unity, which also made it more difficult for them to become the party which collected anti-communist elements.

In the days before the election, it was already clear that the Social Democratic Party would not achieve its aim of pushing the Communist Party into the background. As a result of the successful fight against reaction represented by the Smallholders Party, some of the Social Democratic workers turned towards the Communist Party; a similar current could be observed on the part of the peasantry in the weeks before the election. On the day of the election, 31st August 1947, a number of provocative attempts on the part of the Social Democrats occurred, which were facilitated by the collaboration of the Minister of the Interior, the traitor László Rajk. These provocations, although they caused a certain amount of disturbance during the elections, and somewhat diminished the number of votes cast for the Communists, were not able to hinder the course of development. When the votes were counted, it was clear that the Communist Party had become the first party in the country, and had received 50 per cent more votes than both the Social Democratic and Smallholders Parties.

Since the elections in 1945, in the 22 months that had passed, the Communist Party increased its vote by nearly 40 per cent. The Peasant Party, the faithful ally of the Communist Party, scored a considerable success. The two parties together polled 400,000 new votes. At the same time the number of votes for the Social Democratic Party decreased by nearly 10 per cent. The Smallholders Party lost 71 per cent of its 1945 votes.

It is characteristic of the fact that this party was only a fig-leaf for reaction, that in the peasant counties such as Vas, Zala, Győr and Sopron, it lost 85 to 90 per cent of its votes.

What did the figures of the 1947 election indicate? First of all that our Party had already won over the great majority of the entire industrial working class. As compared with the 40 per cent increase of votes in the country, in Budapest where more than half of the industrial workers live, our Party increased its vote by 53.4 per cent, and left the Social Democratic Party far behind. Our Party also increased its influence among the provincial workers. In Salgótarján, for instance, we received 75 per cent of the votes, in the mining district of Szécsény we received 48.7 per cent, in the district of Esztergom, in the Dorog-Tokod industrial area, 43.4 per cent, in the mining district of Tata 40.7 per cent. In individual mining villages we received 80 to 90 per cent and often even 100 per cent of the votes.

However, it was no less important for us that the figures of the election showed that the peasantry had also begun to turn to our Party. The greatest increase in the percentage of votes was among the Transdanubian peasants, especially in the typically peasant counties. In Somogy County we received 136, in Szatmár 107.1, in Zemplén County 102.8, in the Zala, Vas and Sopron counties 100, and in Szabolcs County 75.2 per cent more votes than in 1945. There were a number of peasant districts where our votes were trebled. In such purely agricultural districts as that of Sátoraljaújhely we received 45.6 per cent more, in Gyula 41.5 per cent more, in Orosháza 40.5 per cent more, in Villány 35.7 per cent more, and so on.

The election had shown that we had won the great majority of the proletariat and that the working peasantry had started to line up on the side of our Party: they had begun to understand the prerequisites for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

After the elections our enemies made a new attempt to exclude the Communist Party from the Government, with the help of the Smallholders and Social Democratic Parties. To this end they used the dissatisfaction which had become apparent within the Smallholders Party as a result of the election defeat, and wanted to elect a reactionary leadership at a hurriedly called party congress. This attempt was frustrated within a few days, and the new leadership of the Smallholders Party, headed by István Dobi, came from those elements which, ever since 1945, had stood firmly for co-operation with the Communist Party.

The struggle with the Social Democratic Party was longer and more difficult. The leaders, also relying on the dissatisfaction caused by the election defeat, headed the movement which, in essence, set as an objective the dissolution of the old coalition and the establishment of a new government without

the Communists. They therefore made demands which could not be met, such as, for instance, for the Ministry of the Interior. Our Party sharply rejected these demands, and appealed to the mass of the Social Democratic workers, to whom of course, the Social Democratic leaders did not dare disclose their true aims. They were, therefore, forced to retreat. At the end of September a new government was formed in which the leading role of the Communist Party, in accordance with the changed situation, was even more noticeable. In the National Assembly the Left Wing Bloc already had an absolute majority at its disposal.

After the formation of the Government, our Party accelerated the speed of development. First of all, it moved towards making impossible the sabotaging of the further construction of our democracy by the fascist organisation calling itself the Hungarian Independence Party, or Pfeiffer Party, which consisted of elements removed from the Smallholders Party. In spite of the fact that it could be proved that this party carried out fascist activities, the Social Democratic leaders nevertheless hastened to its defence.

They openly declared that they were doing this because cutting out the Pfeiffer Party would mean that Communist influence would grow even more. Finally a situation arose whereby even the Smallholders Party demanded the dissolution of the Pfeiffer Party, while the leaders of the Social Democratic Party only agreed to this step at the last minute after long-drawn-out debates and meetings, lasting till the early hours of the morning, and under the threatening pressure of our Party and their own mass support.

In the meantime Pfeiffer absconded to Vienna where he openly declared himself, in the name of his party, as an enemy of democracy; this caused general indignation and hastened the dissolution of his party. The working masses, and above all the industrial workers, greeted with enthusiastic approval the dissolution of this fascist organisation, and discussed with indignation the attempts of the Social Democratic Party to save the fascists. Now that the first line in the fight against the Communists was occupied by the Social Democrats instead of the Smallholders Party, they rapidly began to be shown up for what they were; their own supporters followed their activities with increasing suspicion and dissatisfaction. The two-faced policy which they had pursued while the Smallholders Party reaction stood in the forefront, became more and more difficult for these leaders.

The dissolution of the Pfeiffer Party was followed within a few days by another important step, the nationalisation of the large banks, as a result of which a considerable part of Hungarian industry became nationalised. The workers in the nationalised industries and the entire working class received this measure, which was put on the agenda by our Party and carried out in spite of the hindrance of the Social Democrats, with great enthusiasm and pleasure.

Nationalisation deepened the influence of our Party among the working masses even more, and made it possible for us to strike the decisive blow at the hostile forces hidden within the Social Democratic Party. We formed a special committee to this end. We disclosed more and more openly and sharply the

tricks and manoeuvres by which the Social Democratic leaders hindered the development of our People's Democracy, and impeded further depredation by the enemies of the people. Through the local liaison committees of the two parties, we mobilised the social democratic workers in Budapest, who gradually came into opposition to their party leadership. Under the influence of this, an open crisis broke out in Budapest in December 1947, in the organisations of the stronghold of the Social Democratic Party. This was helped by the fact that we disclosed concrete examples of the co-operation between the Social Democratic leaders and the fascists or imperialist spies.

The workers learned all this with great indignation, and because the Social Democratic Party leadership hesitated, and moreover excused the traitors, the members started all over the country to join the Communist Party. As well as this, the stream towards the Communist Party, not only among the industrial workers but also among the peasants, started at the end of 1947 and the beginning of 1948. Day by day our press brought the news that the majority of the male inhabitants of large peasant villages demanded admission to our Party. The masses streaming to our Party caused a veritable landslide within the Social Democratic Party by the middle of February 1948. In the week before February 15th, 40,000 new members applied for admission into our Party. The bulk of these came from the Social Democratic workers of the factories of Greater Budapest. In some places entire Social Democratic factory organisations demanded collective admission to our Party.

This influx to the Party indicated that we had finally won over the Social Democratic workers. The workers who remained in the Social Democratic Party more and more impatiently demanded the removal of their treacherous leaders and a merger with the Communists. The Social Democratic press tried to frighten those joining our Party by calling them opportunists - rats leaving the sinking ship. But this was only fuel to the fire. Seeing this development the "left" wing Social Democratic leaders embarked on a bold manoeuvre. In order to save what still could be saved, they expelled their most compromised leaders at an open meeting on February 18th, 1948, and announced that they wished to call an extraordinary Party Congress in order to proclaim the merger with the Communist Party. In order to facilitate this, they asked the Communist Party that, because of the imminent merger, they should stop the admission of Social Democratic members until March 15th. Although our Party fulfilled this demand, this could no longer change the fate of the Social Democratic Party. We found that in the first three months of 1948 more than 200,000 people applied for membership of our Party, including about 100,000 Social Democratic workers; the others were mostly peasants of the Smallholders Party.

The struggle for winning the great majority of the industrial workers ended with the victory of the Communists and the complete defeat of the Social Democratic Party. In June 1948 the two parties merged on the basis of Leninist-Stalinist principles, and thus working class unity under the leadership of the Hungarian Communists was organisationally realised.

In this way we realised the two basic principles for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat - the

winning over of the overwhelming majority of the working class and of the decisive part of the working peasantry. From now on development accelerated: at the end of March 1948, we nationalised enterprises employing more than 100 workers. The great majority of industrial workers were already working in nationalised enterprises and we were able to issue the slogan: "The country belongs to you, you are building it for yourself!"

The fact that we had beaten the reactionary forces behind the Smallholders Party in 1947, while the turn of the Social Democratic traitors came only in 1948, does not mean that we won over the majority of the working class only in 1948. The decisive majority of the working class already stood behind us in the winter of 1946-47. This majority did not only mean that there were numerically more industrial workers in our Party than in the Social Democratic Party, but also that the Social Democratic workers were following more and more the slogans and directives of our Party; just as much as did those outside the Party. Without this majority, which appeared already numerically at the 1947 election, we would not have been able to fight the decisive battle in 1946-47. The organisational collapse of the Social Democratic Party was an after-effect of the fact that we had previously won over to our side the bulk of their worker members. In our country, just as elsewhere, the first basic condition for the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat was winning over the majority of the working class.

In connection with our successes we have to deal with the problem of the vacillation of the masses. Both from the history of the Russian Revolution and from our own experience we are well acquainted with the vacillation of the peasant masses. We understand this and are patiently helping and waiting until, after a long time the vacillating peasantry will have dismissed its own doubts and suspicions, perhaps after years of bitter experience. We know that a peasant who has made up his mind after a long period of vacillation, may become the most reliable ally of the worker.

We may add that such vacillation is not only a peculiarity of the peasants but also of those workers who were under the influence of the Social Democratic Party, who were poisoned for a shorter or longer period by fascist Arrow Cross influence, or came recently from the peasantry or the petty-bourgeoisie, and, even after becoming part of the proletariat, kept for many years their chauvinistic prejudices, superstitions and mistrust of the Communists. Experience shows that these workers, just because in the beginning their attitude was doubtful or even hostile towards the Communists, once their own experience has convinced them of the incorrectness of their doubts and prejudices, become faithful soldiers of our Party. Within our Party, in our own ranks we do not tolerate vacillation and doubt, but we do behave patiently towards such elements in the working class, helping them to free themselves from their doubts and prejudices, because we are sure of our cause, and know that sooner or later, but undoubtedly from their own experience, they will become convinced that it is correct for them to follow us.

In the Hungarian People's Republic it took a good three years until these masses of workers arrived at a decision and joined our side. It is an accompaniment of socialist construction that the industrial working class increases every year by

more than a hundred thousand new members from the ranks of the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie. Neither do these hundreds of thousands suddenly discard all the spiritual burden which ties them to the past and which they bring with them. The patient work of convincing them by example has to be continued for a long time.

The tipping of the balance from the bourgeois democratic stage of the revolution to the socialist revolution, to the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as shown by our development was not so clear, dramatic and sudden, and connected with a definite date, as it was in November 1917 in the Russian proletarian revolution, or on March 24th, 1919 at the establishment of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. In our country the total quantity of the smaller and greater successes of the Communist Party brought about the qualitative change, and resulted in the decisive part of the workers and peasants joining our side. We made people aware of this from December 1947 onwards. At the end of 1947 we already started to emphasise that we had crossed the Rubicon. In January 1948, at the III Congress of our Party functionaries, we could already report: "The followers of democracy - and first of all the workers themselves - only now begin to recognise those decisive political and economic changes which have taken place. They are now becoming aware that the Hungarian people have crossed and left behind the border which divides the People's Democracy from bourgeois democracy. They are beginning to recognise now that the building of the People's Democracy is the road to the implementation of socialism."

The simile of the crossed border shows that we were aware, and made people aware that the People's Democracy had two phases: the first in which the carrying out of the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution is predominant; the second in which the dictatorship of the proletariat, the building of socialism, is decisive. But the simile might evoke the impression that these two phases can be sharply divided from each other, while in our country and in the other People's Democracies the two merge into one another.

Accordingly we made people aware of the fact that from the liberation onwards many factors of the dictatorship of the proletariat were already present in the first phase: the leading role of the Communists, their participation in State leadership, the nationalisation of banks, the taking over of the armed forces, the breaking up of the old State machine and beginning the establishment of a new one from the ranks of the proletariat and so on. The fact that we had to draw special attention to "the crossing of the Rubicon" indicates also that this development went on carefully, gradually and without great upheavals and was not accompanied with destruction and bloodshed. This comparatively peaceful development of the People's Democracies has a great attraction for the people and classes fighting for their liberation.

The realisation of working class unity and the exclusion of the treacherous Social Democratic leaders from the working class movement was followed by similar steps in the other parties. The Smallholders Party and the Peasant Party removed from their ranks the majority of those elements whose democratic nature, political fidelity and sincerity could be doubted, and established even closer co-operation with our Party. This was facilitated by the fact that a considerable part of their members and local leaders demanded admission to our Party.

The Independent Hungarian Democratic Party and the Radical Party which, during the 1947 election, stood as opposition parties against the Independence Front and received about 7 per cent of the votes, asked, under the influence of the developments, to be admitted to the Independence Front, after a suitable purge of their ranks. The Democratic People's Party which, during the 1947 election, received votes mainly from the Catholic peasants, started to disintegrate in this situation. Its leader, Barankovics, absconded abroad and his party, without being submitted to any kind of pressure or persecution, spontaneously declared its dissolution because it felt that its supporters had left it and turned towards the Independence Front led by our Party. The outlines of the unity of the working people began to take shape, and the prerequisite for the establishment of the People's Front and the People's Republic had been created.

Let us cast a glance at the problem of winning over the armed forces. Under our conditions, when the troops of the liberating Soviet Union were in our country, it is obvious that an open armed uprising, such as we had seen in the years of civil war in the Soviet Union, was hopeless right from the beginning. This, however, did not mean that there was not a bitter battle for the leadership of the armed forces - the defence forces, the police and the State Security authorities - the more so because our Party also had a strong foothold in these organisations. While both our hands were busy with winning over the working and peasant masses, and until the parties of the government coalition demanded the positions of authority in proportion to their parliamentary seats, we had, so to speak, postponed the struggle for winning over the defence forces. We achieved this by hindering the defence force from reaching the figures allowed by the Armistice and Peace Treaty. Therefore the strength of the defence force was 12,000 men up to 1948, instead of the permitted 65-70,000, and even the majority of this number was divided into small units on the frontiers. In Budapest, where the political fate of the country was decided, there was no kind of military garrison, so that sometimes at the reception of some foreign envoy we had difficulty in finding a guard of honour.

But even in this small army a desperate struggle was waged for every commanding post from the NCOs to the generals. When, however, the battle was decided in the political arena, the situation, of course, changed within the army too. By now we could ensure that the army should indeed be a People's Army, that the bulk of its officer corps should come from workers and peasants true to the people. When, in the autumn of 1948, our Party took over the Ministry of Defence, the vigorous development of the defence forces could start. When the officers who came from the people, who were trained from workers or peasants, and became the commanders of the army, visited their former factories or villages, they demonstrated by their appearance alone that the proportional strength of the classes had changed, and they gave a more instructive object lesson to the workers and peasants than could any propaganda about the new era. This also strengthened the worker-peasant alliance and made firmer the basis of the People's Democracy.

During the whole period a bitter battle was fought within the police, of which our Party took control. The old police officers and NCOs educated by Horthy wanted by all methods to

exclude representatives of the people, policemen and officers who were former workers and peasants, from the force. The battle, of course, was also decided here at the time when the bulk of the workers and peasants came over to the side of our Party.

There was a single position, the control of which was claimed by our Party from the first minute and where it was not inclined to consider any distribution of posts according to the strength of the parties in the coalition; and this was the State Security Authority. Although the enemy also succeeded in infiltrating here to a certain degree, we firmly kept this organisation in our hands from the first day of its establishment, and took care that it should remain a secure and sharp weapon in the battle fought for the People's Democracy.

To sum up: the battle fought under the conditions of the Hungarian People's Democracy to win the majority of the army was of less importance, and occurred under less sharp conditions than in Hungary in the weeks preceding the 1919 Dictatorship of the Proletariat, or in the Soviet Union in October 1917, owing to the presence of the Soviet Army in our country.

In our battle fought for winning over the working masses the success of the Three Year Plan played a considerable part. We started to raise the question of the Three Year Plan after the establishment of the sound currency. This was the first undertaking of its kind in our country, and the working people's attention was gradually directed towards it. This plan did not only indicate how we should be able finally to clear up the ruins caused by the war within three short years, but also how we could begin to put our economic life on a new and broader basis.

The details of the plan, which enumerated how much every county, town, district and village would receive, where we were planning new factories, and more agricultural machinery, electricity, by-roads, cultural centres and other investments aroused the interest and caught the attention of the entire people. It met with general approval and furthered and increased the sympathy for our Party. This approval and sympathy grew in proportion as the things promised in the plan became reality, in most cases ahead of schedule.

Our position was similar with regard to the Three Year Plan as it was with our endeavours to establish a sound currency. Every detail of our plan set as its objective the welfare of the working people and the increase of their living standards. Our enemies were those who did not only doubt and increase distrust but who often tried by active sabotage to hinder and hold back the fulfilment of the plan, and with this the economic and cultural advance of our people. This was soon recognised by the working people, and every economic success of the plan became at the same time a political success for our Party.

In winning over the bulk of the workers and peasants and the entire working people, the consistent, sincere and tenacious peace policy of our Party was of great importance. In this field, too, we could draw up clearly and in a way which could easily be understood by everybody the objectives and frontiers of both camps. On the one side, under the leadership of our Party, stood those who, after much suffering caused by the war, safe-guarded and defended creative peace, and who had peace as the basis of their objectives. On the other side stood the

followers of the old regime, all those whose hopes could only be realised by a new bloody war and through the terrible sufferings of the working masses.

The political maturity of the working people increased together with their living standard and they repudiated the propaganda of the sabre-rattling imperialist warmongers not only because of the horrors of a new war. They were now politically mature enough to recognise the political objectives of the imperialists who wanted to take back the land from the peasants who had received it, and to turn the hundreds of thousands of new land holders into penniless beggars, and to thrust them into the hopeless mass of proletarian wage-slaves. The industrial working class also understood well that the final objective of the warmongers is the re-instatement of the hated wage slavery, and that if their plan was successful the proletariat would again lose all its achievements, and all its rights, and the doors of development and a better future would be closed, the doors which were opened so widely by the People's Democracy and socialist construction.

It is, of course, difficult to show numerically the achievements of our consistent fight for peace. But it cannot be doubted that it was a great help to us in the struggle to gain the confidence and support of the working people. Never before were our people so united on any question as on the question of defending peace, and they gratefully supported our Party, which led this fight in our country, and the Soviet Union which, in world affairs, stood at the head of this struggle.

In our circumstances the fight against reaction which was hidden under the cloak of the Church constituted a serious difficulty, especially for winning the peasant and petty-bourgeois masses, and even in some places the industrial workers. The bulk of the Church leaders took a stand hostile to the democracy from the first moment. This was especially sharp in the Catholic Church, whose lands had been taken away by the land reform.

From 1945 to 1948 the Churches fought unitedly against us. The broader our basis became amongst the village population, however, the more able we were to take up the struggle against this hostility. First of all we broke the reactionary united front of the Churches. Using the democratic possibilities in the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, we were able to mobilise their believers who sympathised with us, and on whose demand an agreement was concluded in 1948 in the spirit of mutual tolerance and understanding, which made possible the peaceful co-existence of the People's Democracy and these Churches.

With the Catholic Church the situation was different. On the orders of the Vatican, the leaders of this Church kept up a close link with the American imperialists. After we had unmasked the reactionary leaders of the Smallholders Party as agents of the American imperialists, they ordered the Social Democratic Party into the front line. When the treacherous Social Democratic leaders, and later the Pfeiffer Party, came to share the fate of the Smallholders, the turn came of the leaders of the Catholic church, who were hostile to the people: they became the most open representatives of American imperialism. Their activities became especially sharp by the end of 1948 when, as it became clear from the Rajk trial, their

uprising would have constituted a part of that armed intervention which Tito and his gang were then planning with the help of spies and agents provocateurs smuggled into the Hungarian working class movement.

The Hungarian People's Democracy was, however, on its guard, and Cardinal Mindszenty was brought to trial. The trial threw light on the activities of Mindszenty and his accomplices, and how, under the cloak of the Church, he wished to re-instate not only the old landowner-capitalist system, but also the hated Habsburg regime. The Mindszenty trial threw light on the base plans of the American imperialists, and showed how they used Mindszenty against our working people. In this connection the American envoy in Budapest had to be expelled. The Mindszenty trial was a grave blow at reaction hiding behind the Catholic Church, because it convinced a considerable part of believers who were true to the democracy, that our People's Democracy was right and acted correctly when it took up the struggle against these reactionary adventurers. The expulsion of the American envoy was at the same time a grave loss of prestige for the war-mongers all over Europe. Our working people understood by this trial that our Party and the People's Democracy were able to defend their interests, lawfully, correctly and with a firm hand, because they were convinced of the justice of their cause.

With the economic and political strengthening of our People's Democracy grew its international prestige. Those mutual friendly agreements which we concluded, first of all with our liberator, the great Soviet Union, and then with the People's Democracies, found unanimous approval. They made our working people understand that we could return into the great family of progressive peoples, where the traditions of the most glorious chapters of our history, the century-long Hungarian struggle and revolutions for freedom point.

The intelligentsia, a considerable part of whom watched our activities suspiciously or expectantly for a long time, changed their attitude under the influence of the successful work of years. They became convinced that the Communists were not only faithful soldiers of proletarian internationalism, but also the active defenders of the interests of the working people, and the life force of progressive national traditions which they were carrying forward. They saw how the terrible scourge of capitalism, unemployment, disappeared as a result of our work of construction. The implementation of our huge construction plans gave an opportunity for the intelligentsia to compare the humiliating position into which they were forced by capitalist conditions, with the respected role which they occupy during socialist construction. This pacified the bulk of the intelligentsia and aligned them on the side of the People's Democracy. How often did we hear even as early as 1948 from the lips of the intelligentsia the words: "If this is the road of Socialism, we have no objections to it!"

During the struggle for the People's Democracy, the political consciousness and general culture of our working people grew rapidly. "The multitude of educated people" increased rapidly. A true cultural revolution started: at long last the children of the people entered the universities, and those citadels of science and culture which were formerly closed to them. An important branch of this cultural revolution was a new evaluation of the liberating role, science and art of the Soviet Union. The experience of construction and the successes of the People's Democracy broadened the horizon of our working

people. The Hungarian delegations visiting the Soviet Union, and the Soviet scientists, engineers, artists, Stakhanovites and kolkhoz peasants coming to Hungary made it possible that at long last our broad masses should become acquainted through direct experience with all that was new and grand, which more than three decades of socialist construction has created there.

We started to delve more and more deeply into the horn of plenty represented by the endless storehouse of Soviet experience, and which was put at our disposal by the Soviet people so kindly and unselfishly. The help of the Soviet Union and of the great Stalin appeared in a new perspective in the light of this new development, received new significance, increased our feeling of gratitude and the knowledge of belonging together and of our common future. The influence of the enemy was here too, reversed by the developments. Those who formerly believed the slanders spread about the Soviet Union now, under the influence of direct experience, appreciate even more all that our country can thank the Soviet Union for.

This knowledge was only increased by the tragic fate of the neighbouring Yugoslav people, who were pulled out from the family of the People's Democracies by their base and treacherous leaders and thrust on the side of the imperialists. Since then we can see day by day how the misery of the Yugoslav working people has continually increased, how the independence of the country has been gradually lost and how it has become more and more the satellite and servant of the war-mongers. We learn from the Yugoslav example that those who divorce themselves from the great family of people who defend peace and build socialism are irrevocably debased to the level of a servant of the imperialists, and is treated with the disdain due to traitors and renegades, both by their imperialist masters and the liberated peoples.

The favourable development of the international situation facilitated in many respects the establishment of the People's Democracy. The consistent fight of the Soviet Union for peace, its tremendous economic successes, its measures aiming to raise the living standards of the working people and its gigantic plan for transforming nature did not pass without effect in our country, as neither did the economic and political achievements of the other People's Democracies.

The tenacious and successful struggle of the Italian and French Communist Parties created a great impression. In the autumn of 1947, in the months when the ferment which was to be decisive was already at work within the Social Democratic masses in our country, Atlee's "Labour" government in Britain and the treacherous "Socialists" Leon Blum and Ramadier in France sent the army against strikers and tried to break their struggles with tanks. The Hungarian Social Democrats openly defended the "Socialist" strike-breakers and thus hastened their own downfall. During 1948-49 the outlines of the historic victory of the Chinese Revolution started to appear. The liberation struggles of the colonial peoples broke into new flames. In the light of this more and more people understood that the road along which our Party leads our working people is not only the correct road, but also the road to a victorious future.

In the course of its development the People's Democracy put an end to the century-old inequality of rights and oppression of women, and removed all obstacles which, in the capitalist world, hindered the free development of youth. This helped to deepen its roots and strengthen its basis. And after it had securely won over every strata of the working people, our Party could raise in the autumn of 1948 the problem of the Socialist reconstruction of the villages, and of collective, large-scale farming. Those successes which we have since achieved in this field indicate that it was correct and timely to start this work, and if we are not impatient and await the convincing influence of good examples, our targets in this field will also be crowned with full success.

Our working people, following the development of the People's Democracy and its successes, unitedly accepted the leadership of our Party. This unity was expressed in an impressive and unmistakable manner in 1949, at the election of the reorganised People's Independence Front. On the united list of the People's Front, the best sons and daughters of the working people were represented, workers, peasants, intellectuals, women, youth, candidates of the five parties making up the People's Front.

The election took place amidst enthusiasm never experienced before. The procession to the polls of more than five million voters became a tremendous people's festival, a demonstration of unity of the liberated working people, the influence of which the enemy was not able to ignore. This is how the parliamentary election appeared in our country, this is how the will of the people expressed itself. This is what our enemies slanderously call: "the oppressive dictatorship of the minority."

As comparison, let us glance at the countries of imperialism, at the countries of the "Free World" and of "pure democracy". There, too, there are elections. Last year we saw how the French and Italian election laws had been adjusted in such a way as to ensure, under all circumstances, a majority for the oppressors against the workers. As a result of these electoral laws, twice as many votes are needed for the election of a Communist Deputy in Paris as for the election of a fascist. Democracy looks the same in Italy.

And what is the situation in the United States, in this most noisy and most sabre-rattling country of the "Free World"? This year there will be an election there, too. An article appeared in this connection in one of the most influential American periodicals, under the title "How is the American President Selected?" "The voters," states the introductory sub-heading of the article, "have little to say with regard to the nomination" and it then explains in detail that in "the selection of the Presidential candidate, the role of the voter is the least important". In two-thirds of the States, the members of the nominating conferences are delegated by the local "political boss", who trades with the votes and positions as if they were old cars or coal.

The final decision is taken at a meeting called the "National Convention", that is to say, in a back room where 12 to 15 of the most influential "bosses", in choking cigar smoke and after having consumed a great deal of whisky, make a bargain as to the most suitable candidate. The most

suitable candidate of both parties is the one whom the masters of a handful of "political bosses", the Morgan, Rockefeller and DuPont families, the few millionaire owners of the large banks, the armament, steel and aircraft industries and oil wells, consider the most suitable. The American voters can vote "freely" for these two candidates, and as these millionaires have in their hands the press, the radio, the cinema, the schools, the church and most leaders of the trade unions, they are able to deceive a considerable part of the American people.

But another considerable part sees through the deceit, but feeling its impotence is not able to answer in any other way than to boycott the elections. The American "free" elections are carried out in such a way that half of the electors do not vote at all. Accordingly the President is elected by about 25 to 30 per cent of the adult population. The proportion of the voters is even smaller at the Congress and Senate elections: it is about 5 to 10 per cent in the Southern States and somewhat more in the North. It is no wonder that under such "free" conditions the 30 million American workers are not able to elect one single representative to the Senate.

That is how the reign "of the democratically elected majority" looks in the stronghold of the "Free World", where uninterruptedly we hear everyday from the radio and the press that our People's Democracy is "the terrorist regime of a dwarf minority." Every American or British history book draws attention to the fact that the Greek democracy in Athens was not a true democracy because it was based on slavery. At the same time they praise their own democracy, which they call the "Free World" in a hundred ways, the leaders of which without exception are colonisers and slaveowners. And because the colonial slaves are now in revolt, the Crusaders of the "Free World" are organising terrible blood baths in order to defeat them, as the American imperialists are now doing in Korea, the British in Malaya and Egypt, the French in Vietnam and North Africa, the Dutch in Indonesia, the Belgians in the Congo and so on.

And in their own countries "in the stronghold of freedom", how often do they use tanks, tear gas, arms and rubber truncheons, how often do they march up the police, the gendarmes, and hundreds and thousands of soldiers against their own working people, against the unemployed and those demanding more bread. We cannot open a single illustrated capitalist journal without being met by "sensational" photographs taken at such incidents. What would "The Voice of America" give to produce a single instance where in a country building socialism tanks are used against the masses, or some other armed action needed, as happens continuously and daily in the countries of the imperialist gangsters of the "Free World"!

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We have to make people more aware than before that the People's Democracy, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule of the majority, of the working people; that the "Free World", the system of our enemies, the capitalist imperialists, is the bloody dictatorship of an exploiting minority, which they try to mask with democratic phrases and misty slogans. Our great teachers, Lenin and Stalin, often quoted Engels as saying that:

"In any case our sole adversary on the day of the crisis and on the day after the crisis will be the whole collective reaction which will group itself around pure democracy..."

(Engels: Letter to Bebel of December 11th, 1884. Quoted in THE ESSENTIALS OF LENIN, Vol. II, p. 737, London 1947 edition.)

Today, again, the bloody-handed imperialists, the colonial slaveowners, the resurrectionists of German and Japanese fascism, and all reaction are gathering together under the slogan of "pure democracy" and the "Free World". Although today the picture of the world is decisively different from 70 years ago, when Engels wrote these lines, we have to remember them. The enemy has recognised the dangerously attractive force of the People's Democracies, and therefore furiously slanders them, and tries to prevent by intimidation the peoples and classes fighting for their freedom from copying the example of the People's Democracy. Therefore it is especially timely to make people aware that the People's Democracy is the regime of the bulk of the nation, and to outline the manner in which we have won over the majority of our working people, and how we were able to pass on to the victorious road of socialist construction without any major upheavals.

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