Eighteenth Session.

June 28th.

The Session was opened by Comrade **Gebhardt** who called upon Comrade Thalheimer to make his supplementary Report on the Program Question.

Comrade Thalheimer:

Comrades: My task will not be to present another entirely separate report, but to supplement the report of comrade Bukharin mainly by dealing with the discussions which have already taken place. It has become evident that agreement will be possible on all essential points. I will briefly recall the controversial points which played a part at our last Congress, and the position they have now reached. The first question which was discussed was the question of accumulation, that is to say, Rosa Luxemburg's theory of accumulation. We have agreed not to formulate this for the programme, but to formulate a programme which will reach above and beyond these theoretical differences. We have not done this from any personal motives, but because a theoretical discussion must be fully worked out before one can make the whole question clear.

The second question, and perhaps the most important controversial question discussed by the last Congress during its debate on the programs, was the question of whether transitional and partial demands should be included in the general programme of the Communist International or not. This question was decided by the Fourth Congress, which resolved that the definition of the nature of and necessity for transitional and partial demands should be placed in the general programme, while the particular application of these demands in relation to concrete questions, should be left to the national programs. It is well known that comrade Lenin was in complete agreement with these decisions, and as their theoretical correctness has already been established, we do not see any reason to alter them.

The principle laid down was that transitional and partial demands cannot be excluded so long as the bourgeoisie has not been conquered, and the dictatorship of the proletariat has not been entered upon and firmly established.

I shall chiefly deal here with the debates which have so far taken place in the programme commission.

The first question which was discussed, and which Bukharin dealt with very fully, was the question of the different forms of the transition to socialism, especially the concrete questions of the NEP and of war communism. With regard to the question whether NEP could have any application to other countries beside Russia as a transition to socialism, there was no differences of opinion in the commission, everyone was in full agreement with the views developed by Bukharin. On the other hand, there was considerable discussion of the question of war communism and the part which it might have to play in other countries. The question we discussed was: Is war-communism a necessary preliminary stage to NEP or not?

The second question which was dealt with, was that regarding the formula with which the fact that NEP is of general application should be expressed in the programme. The conclusion reached was that one cannot of course insert "NEP" into the programme in a concrete form; the form "NEP" itself cannot be mentioned, but the important point is to get its essential meaning into the programme.

What are the essential characterisitics of NEP? They are calculation according to capitalistic methods: retention of the functions of money: retention of the form of trusts: continuance of banks and exchanges. In short, the combination of the organizational forms of capitalism with the fundamental transformation of their social significance. It may be of some interest to note here that these general forms of the transition to socialism, as we regard NEP, are already sketched out by Marx. I refer here to the third volume of "Capital," and to Marx's notes on the Gotha program, where he says that in the transition to socialism we would at first have to adapt ourselves to the economic forms left behind by capitalism, and that we shall only be able to proceed to full communism at a further stage of development, when we have eliminated those forms also.

Now as to the question of war communism, which must defend a little against comrade Bukharin. What is the true nature of war communism? It can be defined as a rationalised method of distribution, adapted to the necessities of war. The policy of military communism could never have been carried out in Russia without the resources which czarism had left behind it.

What is the distinguishing mark of war communism from the economic point of view? Abolition of money, highly centralised control, no private trading, the crippling of the small trader, and the requisitioning of agricultural produce. In order to decide whether war communism should form a feature of our programme, it is necessary to remember that war communism was not evolved from any theoretical programme drawn up beforehand by the Russian Communist Party, but simply developed out of the necessities of revolutionary strategy.

What were these necessities? They were mainly two: the first, to drive out the bourgeoisie from all those positions the economic strength of which could be utilised in the political struggle. All the strongholds of economic power which were destroyed, were not destroyed simply from the economic point of view, but from the point of view of revolutionary strategy, the end being the complete defeat of the bourgeoisie. And the necessity for this action endures so long as the power of the bourgeoisie is not really broken. It remains until the bourgeoisie has been subjugated, and placed under the control of the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is the first aspect.

The second essential function of war communism, is to supply the army and the urban industrial population with food. This function must of course be closely related to the fact that requisitions of agricultural produce are not made until the peasants have had the land handed over to them by the industrial workers, so that the requisitions taken from the peasants could be regarded as a receipt given by them to the working class in exchange for the land they have received.

If we are attempting to reach a general formula for the relation of NEP to war communism, we must realise quite clearly that NEP would never have been possible in Russia unless it was preceded by a preliminary stage of war communism. It would not have been possible because the will of the bourgeoisie, and their resistance, had first to be broken, and very thoroughly broken, before they were ready to submit to the leadership of the working class. Therefore we may assert that a longer or shorter period of war communism must precede the NEP in future revolutions. If it be further asked how war communism and NEP will be modified to suit different conditions, I think we may consider the following aspects of this question:

The decision as to how far war communism can or must proceed, will depend upon the particular conditions in a given country, and also on the international conditions in which the proletariat of a particular country seizes power, that is to say, on how much fighting is necessary before the bourgeoisie is subjugated to the leadership of the working class.

It will depend upon the strength of the working class as against the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. It will also largely depend upon the international situation.

It is equally clear that the forms of the New Economic Policy will also vary in different countries, and that the general plan, the general scheme, the outline of the NEP in different countries will undergo changes according to circumstances. It is both possible and probable that in countries where the capitalist system is highly developed and is much greater in proportion to the pre-capitalistic, peasant stage of production than was in Russia, the NEP may be developed much further than has been here in Russia. It depends upon the degree to which industry has been centralised, its strength in proportion to that of peasant production, its technical organization, its relation to finance capital to petty bourgeois capital, etc.

Naturally we cannot lay down all the concrete adaptations of this kind in our programme. We must be content to lay down the essential principles of the New Economic Policy, as the general form of the transition to socialism, and the essential principles of war communism, as the adaptation of economic necessity to the requirements of revolutionary strategy; that is to say, war communism must be regarded from the aspect of the defeat of the bourgeoisie, the conduct of a civil war, and of possible wars of intervention.

The commission unanimously agreed that the transition to socialism must be laid down in the programme from these points of view.

A second question which was discussed was that of the various divisions of the working class. A full report was given to the programme commission of all the various groupings of the working class in relation to its political tendencies, groupings, and parties. The main point on which stress was laid here, was naturally that of the part played by the aristocracy of labour in a period of imperialism, its relation to the superior imperialistic power of certain countries, and the relation of the aristocracy of labour to the opportunistic tendencies in the working class. But, in considering these points, it was also realized that it was not only important to distinguish these various divisions, but equally important to make it clear that these divisions are of a transitory and merely temporary nature, since the main line of development is at present proceeding in a direction which will obliterate these differences, and level down the various subdivisions of the working class into a common economic position and a common ideological attitude, thus drawing them nearer together, It must not be forgotten, in considering all these groupings, that above and beyond them there exists the fundamental identity of interest of the working class as an economic class. It is this fundamental unity of the working class, founded upon its place in the machinery of production, which must be our starting point when we set out to pass over all the divisions and differentiations of the working class, and to unite them under the leadership of the Communist Party.

We also reported upon the various types of countries, It had been decided similarly by the Fourth Congress that this description of the different countries should be made as an introduction to the national programmes, and that it should be made from the point of view of revolutionary strategy, of the conquest of political power. Comrade Varga spoke on this subject, and has also submitted a draf of the descriptions. The aspects considered here were as follows:

First, the aspect of economic development, including the following questions: 1. Whether a country may be expected to develop further under the capitalistic system or not; 2. Whether a given country has already reached its highest stage of development, or passed it; 3. The problem of the Soviet States where the proletariat has already seized power, and broken down the capitalistic framework.

Secondly, the classification of countries according as to whether they are the exploiters or the exploited in imperialistic politics; whether they are partially or wholly independent of the great imperialistic powers.

Thirdly, the class structure of the various countries, and the relative strength of the various classes in each country, of course, with special reference to the working class.

During the discussion special stress was laid upon one point which is important for us in defining our own standpoint in distinction to that of the Second International, namely the fact that one must very carefully differentiate the development of a country from the point of view of revolutionary strategy, from its development from the point of view of Socialism. The aspects which determine the transition to socialism are not the same as those which determine the transition to revolution. The important features are the technical and economic stage of industrial development, the degree of centralization, and the proportionate strength of industrial in relation to that of other non-capitalistic forms of production in the same country.

A typical instance of the way in which these two points of view can be confused, is provided by Kautsky, and showed itself in a particulary blatant way in his treatment of the question of the Russian revolution. For in Russia we can see, with the greatest clearness, the difference between the two aspects.

Where revolutionary development was concerned, our experiences have shown that Russia was far in advance of all other countries. But as soon as political power had been conquered, it soon became evident that Russia was backward, where the evolution of socialism was concerned. These two circumstances are closely related to one another.

To turn now to the agrarian question. Lenin's theses on the agrarian question at the Second Congress, and the theses of the Fourth Congress, were taken as a foundation. The points discussed were the following:

The attitude which should be adopted towards the various bourgeois projects for agrarian reform, such as that of dividing

up large estates for the benefit of poor peasants. The question was asked, what should be the attitude of the Communist programme to bourgeois plans of this kind?

The Communist Parties cannot afford to take up an attitude of neutrality or of opposition to plans of this kind, least of all when they have already gained a hold an the masses; but neither must they be dragged along at the heel of a movement of this kind, they must take up the only possible attitude, which is to drive such movements further forward, and to put forward demands which will force them on towards revolution. For instance, in relation to the bourgeois schemes for agrarian reform, the demand should be made for the distribution of land to the poor peasants **without any compensation being paid for it to the owners of the large estates.**

It was further discussed whether this attitude was equally suitable to a slow and a fast revolutionary tempo, whether it was required because a slowing down in the tempo of revolution had been accepted. The commission decided here that this was not the case. The fact that we are obliged to join in these movements is dictated by the revolutionary situation itself. Then the question of **small and large scale farms** was discussed. Superficially it might appear that by supporting the division of land at the present moment, we were approaching, in some respects, the points of view of the revisionists. But that is not the case. We look at things from the point of view of revolutionary strategy. David looks at them from the point of view of reformist politics. We define our own attitude by declaring that we take our whole stand on the necessity for largescale farming. In agriculture as in other forms of production, we aim at the development of large-scale production. This means of course that we do everything that is possible, politically and economically for this end, but we must lay stress upon it as our fundamental standpoint, because it is the standpoint necessary for the development of socialism.

Then another point which is of a certain amount of importance among Social Democrats. You are aware that among the Social Democrats the antagonism which exists between the urban worker as purchaser, and the peasant as seller of food, has been made much of in the last years. And the stress laid upon this antagonism was a means towards uniting the urban worker with the bourgeoisie against the smaller peasantry. What have we to say about this? Of course we have to admit that antagonism between the worker and the peasant does exist, where the price of food is concerned. But the difference between the worker as purchaser and the peasant as seller of food is nothing in comparision to that antagonism between the workers and the peasants together on one side and the great capitalists and big landlords together on the other. Thus far we can submit false views of the Social Democrats, to a thorough revision.

The question of land nationalization, and the part it should play in our programme was also discussed. With regard to the nationalization of large estates there is nothing to be discussed. The only question that arises is as to how far the principle of nationalization should be extended. Should it be extended to small and medium sized properties? On this question the commission decided to leave the matter open, and not to mention the nationalization of small and medium-sized properties, but to indicate in the programme that profiteering and speculation in land should be prohibited by law.

Then, comrades, there is still the national question. Firstly, how far shall the Communist Parties of oppresed nationalities make use of the right which our programme gives them for national self-determination even to the point of secession; that is, how far or under what circumstances shall they apply this programme slogan practically and politically? Well, comrades, the point of view which must serve as our criterion can only be a general point of view—that the national points of view must be entirely subjected, under all circumstances, to the point of view of the international class struggle. All these various questions must be concretely solved from this point of view.

The second question was whether the slogan of the right of self-determination was sufficient for the solution of all national questions. It was pointed out that a number of national questions existed in countries, like the United States, where there is an extraordinarily mixed population; which shows that the slogan of the right of self-determination cannot solve all national questions. Then there is the race question. The Programme Commission was of the opinion that the slogan of the right of self-determination must be supplemented by another slogan: "Equal rights for all nationalities and races." The Programme Commission also discussed whether or not the programme should contain a definition of the conception of a nation. The Commission came to the conclusion that it was practically impossible to find a definition for the conception "nation" which would satisfy all requirements, and that for the requirements of our fight it is only necessary to have a political definition, so that we may know where we can intervene and where we can not. Of course, everything depends upon whether or not the working class of the country raises the national question. If the national question is a vital one for the working class, if it is vital for the workers and peasant-proletariat, then it is naturally vital for the Communist Party and must not be neglected.

A further question which was discussed in the Programme Commission was the question of the new form of the bourgeois governments. Fascism was discussed as a form of government on the one hand, and the Labour Government on the other. The various types of fascist government were discussed, and we came to the conclusion that fascism had already developed various national types

The next matter that was discussed was what the next stage after Fascism would be. Various speculations were made. Must Fascism be eliminated directly by the proletarian dictatorship, or could intermediate stages arise? Comrades, the Commission was of the opinion that we cannot prophesy about this question but must leave it open, because various possibilities exist.

Then the question of the intellectuals was discussed I will not report on this question, since it is a special point on the agenda.

Then on the role of the party, on which subject Comrade Kuusinen spoke. I will mention the following points which arose from this discussion: We all agreed that the conception of the role of the Party as represented in the Communist Manifesto is obsolete and the matter must be changed accordingly.

We had quite a thorough discussion on the question of democratic centralism, especially on the question whether or not we should retain this expression. After a long discussion on this subject, the Commission decided that we must unconditionally retain this expression because it had been clearly and precisely defined, particularly by Comrade **Lenin.**

The commission also made an analysis of the organizational conceptions which had been put forth by Comrade Rosa Luxemburg. The historical background of these conceptions were discussed, and the Commission came to the conclusion that these conceptions are now absolete and are no longer advocated by anyone.

In connection with the question of the communist party another question was discussed—People's Party and Class Party. Comrades, this question played a certain role also among the social democrats, who represent themselves as the People's Party, that is, as the party which unites within itself the working class and all the other toilers. We claimed to be a People's Party but in an entirely different way. We claim to be the People's Party in that we, as the revolutionary class party of the proletariat, assumed the leadership of the toiling classes.

Comrades, another point that was discussed was that of the communist philosophy. Comrade Bukharin has already spoken in detail on this subject. The only question which was discussed in the Programme Commission was how far must we go into detail in this question. Shall we give a more or less detailed declaration or shall we restrict ourselves to giving a brief and precise statement of the standpoint of the Communist Party in this question. We decided to do the latter and to say at the proper place: "The Communist Party bases itself on the standpoint of dialectic materialism."

The last point, the strategy and tactical principles, has not yet been discussed in the Commission. One part of the debate has been anticipated here, and the other part will be discussed in the Commission.

In conclusion I will state: I believe that it is of significance for us that in the Programme Commission it was shown that no fundamental differences were expressed in the Programme Commission. Hence Comrade Bukharin and I are of opinion that this Congress should accept the draft of the Programme as outlined here in essentials, and as it will emerge from the Commission, so that it can be sent out as the official draft of the Communist International to all its sections for further consideration, amendment and discussion. When this is done, then either an Enlarged Plenum or the next Congress should definitely adopt the programme in its final form.

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Comrade **Gebhardt** proposed to the Congress on behalf of the Presidium to adjourn the discussion on this point of the agenda until the delegates receive the plan from the Program Commission.

The following motion was also received by the Presidium:

The undersigned delegations speak on behalf of parties which from the beginning followed the Russian Party discussion with the greatest attention and with considerable concern, and which give whole-hearted support to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. They are actuated by the conviction that the proposals of the opposition will imperil the dictatorship of the proletariat and the unity ot the Russian Communist Party. Therefore they maintain that the action of the Russian Communist Party opposition was directed not only against the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, but objectively (irrespective of its subjective intentions) against the interests of the entire Communist International. For, by imperilling the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Union of Soviet Republics, and by weakening the Russian Communist Party, which alone is capable of maintaining this dictatorship, it attacked the legacy of Lenin which is dear to every communist throughout the world. Therefore, the Communist International must insist on the unequivocal rejection by all members of the International and by all its Sections, of such un-Leninist conceptions, which are contrary to the interests of the world revolution, and which bring into contempt the authority of the old Bolshevik guard, which is not only the leader of the Soviet State, but also of the Comintern.

The Fifth Congress of the Communist International must endorse the decision of the Thirteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, and must state very emphatically that the views of the Russian Party opposition are petty-bourgeois, opportunistic aggressions. We want to emphasise the fact that the Russian question is of great international importance.

If there are delegates who are still of a different view after comrade Rykov's report, we move that a discussion on comrade Rykov's report be opened, to enable memebers of the Congress who hold different views, to make their standpoint clear. We therefore, propose that a prominent representative of the opposition of the Russian Communist Party, be given two hours to open the discussion.

Signed by the German, French, British and American delegations.

This proposal was adopted by the Congress with general approval.

Comrade **Dunne** made the following statement on behalf of the Polish Delegation:

The majority of the Polish Delegation declares:

1. That the action of the minority of the Polish Delegation (comrade Pruchniak, Varsky, Valetzky and Kostzeva) was fractional, and did not have the consent of the Delegation.

2. In its declaration the minority omitted to explain its attitude to the Russian and German questions, wihch are the basis of the present crisis within the Polish leading Party organ.

3. Comrade Krayevsky, and N. Grzegorzevsky have repudiated in their speeches the attacks on the Communist deputies, and do very active revolutionary work in the Polish Sejm. Therefore the declaration of the delegation in connection with this question, was uncalled for.

Nineteenth Session.

June 28 (Evening).

Comrade **Kolarov** declared the session opened and announced that a deputation from the workers of Leningrad had arrived in order to convey the greetings of the proletariat of Leningrad to the Fifth World Congress. Comrade Bulygina, who was greeted with enthusiastic applause by the congress, spoke on behalf of the working women of Leningrad. Comrade Smolin spoke for the men. The Leningrad workers presented a group in bronze as a present to the congress.