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Karl Radek: The Capitalist Offensive

(Radio to "Inprecorr".)

Moscow, November 15.

The session was opened at 12 o'clock.

Comrade Radek spoke on the *Capitalist Offensive*. He said that the capitalist offensive signified not alone a struggle for wage reductions, but a simultaneous struggle for longer working hours. The epoch of the proletarian offensive begins with the Russian February Revolution. Czernin and Ludendorff understood better than the proletariat how to lead an offensive, as may be seen from their memoirs. The world war of the capitalist states gave the Russian Revolution time to draw breath. After the collapse of the Central Powers the proletarian revolution passed into a new phase. While the Mensheviks were laughing at our prophesy of the coming world revolution, Lloyd George wrote in a secret memorandum, during the Versailles negotiations: "The danger of revolution is actual. The union of Germany with the Bolsheviks is no phantom, and in this case we shall have three hundred million people against us." World capital attempted to counteract the situation by the defensive in the west and the offensive in the East. In the West great wage concessions were made to the workers. Shorter working hours and social reforms were introduced. But at the same time we saw the commencement of the intervention against Russia. Russia has been able to maintain herself. While the workers of the western countries were fighting only for the improvement of their position, in Hungary the relief offensive for Soviet Russia was being fought, in which Hungary was unfortunately beaten. Soviet Russia passed from the defensive to political offensive. The proletarian offensive in the West began with the Italian workers taking possession of the factories. Unfortunately the offensive broke down and the capitalist offensive set in.

The Position of the workers has become very much worse. The great number of the unemployed renders it more difficult for those in work to better their position. Attempts at socialization collapsed. In the United States we see the trade unions gagged by the law courts. Instead of an equal distribution of the war burdens, we have the Treaty of Versailles, throwing tremendous burdens on the conquered. After the Napoleonic wars, Owen pointed out that England's only salvation was her monopoly as an industrial state. And now the sole possibility of salvation would be *electrification for the purpose of increasing production*. This is however impossible, as great sections of the world are impoverished and the markets destroyed. Therefore capitalism seeks to save itself at the expense of the workers only. Stinnes' plan is to relieve the bourgeoisie and to shift the burden on to the broad masses of the people. In this, English and French bourgeoisie alike are in full agreement, as well as the new Italian prime minister Mussolini. Their plan is: *reduction of wages, longer working hours, and the rendering of all socialization impossible*.

Parallel to this runs their political offensive, the placing of governmental power in the hands of the most reactionary elements. At the same time *illegal counter-revolutionary organizations*, under the leadership of Russian monarchists, Horthyists, Fascists, French militarists, and German *Orgesch* organizations, are striving to turn Central Europe into a Horthy-Hungary. One link of this chain is the Geneva Agreement against Austria.

The victory of the Fascists is the greatest defeat which the Italian working class has suffered. The followers of Fascism consist of intellectuals, disappointed petty bourgeois, and participants in the war. In the year 1919 Italy was in a state of dissolution. The bourgeoisie was inclined to free-thought and pacifism, and the statesmen began to reconcile themselves with the victory of the revolution. The Italian Socialists did not know how to utilize this victory. Mussolini declares, rightly enough: The defeat of the Socialists was the result of their words not being

followed by deeds. The bourgeois parties had exhausted their economics. But Fascism became the new faith of the petty bourgeoisie. Where Fascism has the advantage is that it ventures to act. After the victory differences are sure to arise in the Fascist camp. The existence of immense national debts does not permit the Fascists to place sinecures at the disposal of their intellectual disciples. A disarmament of the free troops will not be successful. Opposition is inevitable between the agrarian capitalists and the democracy. With the victory of the petty bourgeoisie, Mussolini is forced to pursue a policy for the larger bourgeoisie,—in which he will not succeed. Our victory in Italy will depend upon our winning over the peasantry, and upon our success in uniting the masses crying for freedom. The Communists must defeat the Fascists not only with courage, but politically.

The present world situation is similar to that of the year 1849. At that time the counter-revolutionary period set in, based on the increasing might of capital. The counter-revolution was able to give the people bread. The present basis of the counter-revolution is the decay of capitalism. As the economic crisis is general, the bourgeoisie attempt in vain to retard the collapse by force.

With our slogan of the united front we have placed ourselves at the head of the proletarian defence. The negotiations with the leaders of the Second and of the Vienna Internationals, are necessary because the workers still believe that these leaders are willing to fight for the demands of the workers. *The united front of the proletariat is our defense against the capitalist offensive*.

The masses have lost faith in the speedy seizure of power. Large masses of workers are still in favor of the coalition policy to-day, and fear expulsion from the coalition. It was this frame of mind which led to the union of the German Social Democrats with the Independents. We must be the bearers of the united front idea for wages, bread, and housing of the workers. The Berlin negotiations with the Second and the Vienna Internationals demonstrated that these Internationals decline to fight even for the partial demands of the working class.

The import of our united front campaign is this. *We want to force a break with the coalition policy*. Up to now the united front agitation in the Communist Parties has not been energetic enough. The pressure from below must be increased, but without abandoning negotiations with the heads. Where demands for increased wages do not suffice, questions of politics and organization should be raised.

The main watch-word should be the control of production.

We must fight for the *seizure of real values*, and not only in Germany, but everywhere, and this is impossible without control of production. We must also demand that *the armed forces consist of workers organized in the trade unions*. If the Social Democrats will break with the bourgeoisie, and fight for a real workers' government and a real class policy, we are ready to support them. I am not afraid that a Scheidemann or any trade union leader will really fight.

The slogan of the workers' government is a positive one for the mobilization of the working masses. The bourgeoisie will combat the workers' government, will have recourse to civil war,—by which the workers' government will in a sense be rendered a preliminary step to the dictatorship.

A new offensive of the broad masses of the workers will begin with the slogan: *fight for the control of production and for the workers' government*.

The Communist parties are not only parties for capturing power, but also for carrying on the daily struggle. They do not wait for a fresh wave of revolution, but prove by their fight for a larger piece of bread that they are ready to lead the practical struggles of the proletariat. And to do this requires not only the passing of resolutions, but an iron fighting will...