

**TWELFTH PLENUM OF THE E. C. C. I.**

# **PREPARE FOR POWER**



**The International Situation and The Tasks  
of The Sections of The Comintern**

**REPORT BY O. KUUSINEN**

## **"TWELFTH PLENUM" SERIES**

---

*Other pamphlets in this series containing indispensable material for the study of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.*

---

- Capitalist Stabilization Has Ended—*Thesis and Resolutions* . . . . . 10c
- Tasks of the Communist in the Struggle Against Imperialist War and Military Intervention in Connection with the Outbreak of War in the Far East—*Report by Okano, Japan* . . . . . 5c
- The Communist Parties of France and Germany and the Tasks of the Communists in the Trade Unions—*Report by O. Piatnitsky* . . . . . 5c
- The U. S. S. R. and the World Proletariat—*Report by D. Z. Manuilsky* . . . . . 10c
- The Next Step in Britain, America and Ireland—*Speeches by Gusev, Pollitt, Troy and Pringle* . . . . . 5c
- Guide to the Twelfth Plenum—*Handbook for Propagandists* . . . . . 15c
- 

*Order From*

**WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS**

P. O. Box 148, Sta., D.

New York City



# THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND THE TASKS OF THE SECTIONS OF THE COMINTERN

*(Report of Comrade Kuusinen at the XIIth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.)*

## I.

### TOWARDS AN ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION.

#### I. THE END OF CAPITALIST STABILISATION.

COMRADES, the VIth World Congress of the Comintern prophesied the accentuation of the general crisis of capitalism; the Xth Plenum of the E.C. of the C.I. was able to register this accentuation, and soon after, the extended presidium, and the last, the XIth, Plenum of the E.C. of the C.I. was able to demonstrate this accentuation of the general crisis of capitalism concretely. This, we can say in our theses, is already advancing with such giant strides as to lead to a new phase in the general crisis of capitalism. In what ways is this great accentuation of the general crisis of capitalism manifesting itself, at the present time? It is manifesting itself, above all, in five most important facts:

Firstly, in the rise of the Soviet Union.

Secondly, in the deepening of the economic crisis throughout the capitalist world.

Thirdly, in the growth of the revolutionary upsurge both in imperialist and in colonial countries.

Fourthly, in the accentuation of the contradictions between the various imperialist States, and in the fact that war has broken out in China.

Fifthly, in the intensification of the preparations for a counter-revolutionary war against the Soviet Union, a war which will inevitably lead to a world war and a series of revolutions.

These are not suppositions, they are facts. In the preliminary draft for our theses we cite a number of facts which "show a definite *change* in the development of the general crisis of capitalism." What does this change mean? Does it already mean a new phase in the general crisis? No, not yet. But it is leading to that. This change means that the accentuation of the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist world has, as is said in the draft for the theses, already reached such a height, at the present time, that "at certain points of extreme importance, the antagonistic powers have already come into collision." And, from this fact, the draft for the theses draws the following conclusion:

"The end of the relative stabilisation of capitalism has set in. But there is not yet an immediate revolutionary situation, in the most important and decisive capitalist countries. At the present moment, what is taking place is precisely the *transition* to a new phase of great collisions between classes and States, to a new cycle of revolutions and wars."

Such is the general estimation of the world situation, as given in the theses now laid before the Plenum. It would be no wonder if some of you were, at first sight, a little sceptical of this point of view. Anyone who hears for the first time the thesis that the stabilisation of capitalism is at an end, may have the same impression as if he were shown a large pearl and say: It is very beautiful, but is it genuine? There are two reasons for this scepticism. We are living in the midst of thousands of different events; the immediate past, above all, has been exceptionally rich in great events. In such circumstances, it is not so easy to see the wood for the trees. And, secondly, it may be that the conception of stabilisation has imperceptibly become the object of a certain fetishism, so that it is difficult to imagine a capitalism *without* stabilisation.

Can there be such a thing as a capitalism without stabilisation? Yes, certainly, there can be. By way of comparison, I will give an example which is not a mere figment of the imagination, but which is taken from that very sphere from which the conception of capitalist stabilisation originated, in our economic and political literature—from the sphere of the stabilisation of foreign currency. Has not the pound sterling lost its stabilisation? In England, the classic land of capitalism—and not only in England, but in 40 other countries as well—the gold standard has had to be abandoned. The uniformity of the world's currency has collapsed. There is not a single country where the question of the depreciation of money has not been raised. In America this has



become a question of the day, and at this very moment we read in the press that, in France, a campaign is being conducted for the depreciation of the currency, i.e., for inflation. This is happening in France, where the unit of currency has already been so depreciated since the war that to-day it only represents a fraction of the old pre-war franc. Who is prepared to wager to-day that in a year's time France or America will still have a stable currency, that these countries will not have abandoned the gold standard? (And if anyone is prepared to wager, he will be at once faced with the question, in what currency to make the bet. For no currency is now absolutely stable.)

Another example. The same country of classic capitalism, England, has abandoned the system of Free Trade and adopted that of Protection. Well, this may seem a small thing. England has only just done what other countries did half a century earlier; only England has been a bit late about it! No, the matter is not so simple. This change of system now denotes a transition to a great new accentuation in the commercial and political relations of the most important capitalist countries. France retorts with counter-measures. The United States follows suit. They are already beginning a system of protection and, to some extent, one of prohibition. A sliding scale has been adopted. Tariff wars and commercial wars have already virtually begun. But this only represents a prelude to an armed conflict. And thus we see that stabilisation has come to end, in the commercial relations of the capitalist countries, just

as it has done in the sphere of money value and world currency.

A third example, from another field, but relating again to Great Britain—the Navy. The Navy is the pride of British imperialism. But when this Navy *mutinies*, as happened at Invergordon, this is certainly a disturbing sign in an imperialist fleet! Of course, this Navy has by no means completely lost its value for the British bourgeoisie. That is true (but that is true also of the pound sterling). The strike in the British Fleet was only a *symptom* of the disintegration of the forces of British imperialism, but it was a very eloquent symptom. Russian Tsarism in its day experienced similar symptoms of a very painful nature, at Kronstadt, Sevastopol, etc. Are the happenings at Invergordon to be regarded as a mere accident? Can we say “The incident has been quickly cleared up” and leave it at that? No, a navy which has mutinied once may mutiny again, and such a navy is, so to speak, a navy “without stabilisation.”

The foundations upon which British imperialism's “Weltanschauung”\* were based—the pound sterling, free trade, and the Navy—have lost their former stabilisation. And that, as you know, is by no means the case in Great Britain only. Even if we confine ourselves to the last example of the state of feeling in the Army and Navy, we can find similar portents of the coming storm in many other countries. I have just read the article by Comrade Jacovo, where he tells of the state of ferment in Italy's most important naval station, Spezzia; on the

---

\* “World outlook,” view of life.—Ed.

flag ship "Trieste" the commander was compelled to make a speech before the crew to "refute" a Communist pamphlet. (It is another question, of course, as to whom the crew believed—the commander or the author of the pamphlet.) The Italian Army is also in a ferment; in Pergamo two regiments had to be disbanded. Among the Japanese troops there have been many cases where the soldiers resisted the army command. Even in the officers' academy at Tokio arrests of revolutionary elements had to be made recently, and on the next day a pamphlet appeared there, in the name of the Communist cell of the officers' academy, whereupon several other cadets were arrested. American imperialism has been shooting down its war veterans. What does this fact mean as regards the enlightenment of the soldiers who to-day are being forced to shoot down the other chap? The prospects for the future which open up before them are as follow: A war is coming in which they will have to risk their lives in the interests of the finance oligarchy; but whoever survives this war may expect, in fourteen or fifteen years' time, to be forced by starvation to demonstrate at Washington and be shot down by the troops! Such an agitation carried on by the Hoover Government is not indicative of stabilisation. In its results it resembles revolutionary propaganda far more closely.

The general situation is as in these separate fields; capitalist stabilisation is finished, but that is not synonymous with the collapse of capitalism. In 1921 Comrade Lenin spoke of a relative insecure "equilibrium" in the relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist



world. At the present time, instead of the former relative state of equilibrium, a new process, a new unsteadiness has entered into these relations. But here, too, it cannot yet be said that every trace of equilibrium has yet disappeared. Soviet diplomacy, for example, has succeeded in carrying through a number of non-aggression pacts. Despite this fact, the immediate danger of war is now actually at our gates; the imperialist preparations for war against the Soviet Union have entered upon a new phase. The former state of equilibrium is at an end.

## II. WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Let us consider a little more closely the question: in what does capitalist stabilisation consist, and in what does the end of this stabilisation consist? The most important factors in this question are the following:

1. Firstly, in the domain of capitalist economics: in characterising the second period of post-war capitalism—the period during which the partial stabilisation of the capitalist system was progressing—the VIth World Congress emphasised especially the restoration of capitalist economy and the development of the offensive of capital. Foreign currency was stabilised, the unity of world currency, the international system of credit, the production and the markets of the capitalist countries were more or less restored. By the beginning of the third period production had already reached and exceeded its pre-war level in the capitalist countries (and almost simultaneously in the Soviet Union also) and there began a rapid development of the technique of production, which in some countries

(such as Germany and the United States) assumed the character of a "technical revolution" (resolution of the VIth World Congress). In connection with the ruthless carrying out of capitalist rationalisation, a great growth of productive forces was thus attained in the second post-war period and during the beginning of the third period. At the same time it was, even then, possible to observe the development of the contradictions of capitalist stabilisation, but at any rate one of the characteristics of capitalist stabilisation was the increase of production, and in particular that of the productive forces.

What is the situation to-day in this respect? We can observe a retrogression in capitalist production such as has never been seen before. In all the important capitalist countries production has sunk to far below the level reached in the pre-war period. I will mention only one or two relative figures (according to the calculations of the German Institute for Economic Research). If we consider that since 1913 the world's population has increased 12 per cent., the shrinkage of industrial production amounts to 20 per cent. per head of this population. Since 1929 the decrease in production amounts on the average to 40 per cent., while from January, 1932, till the middle of 1932—during one half-year—there has been a decrease of 20 per cent. The world's production of the means of production has undergone a decrease of 50 per cent. during the economic crisis, in shipbuilding there has even been a decrease of 90 per cent., while in the textile and food industry the reduction has been much smaller (15 per cent.).

*Foreign trade and the trade turnover between*

the various capitalist countries have decreased by half during the world economic crisis. The export of capital, which played a part of colossal importance in the development of imperialism, has to-day almost completely ceased. The agrarian crisis, which was somewhat alleviated during the period of stabilisation, has now again become greatly intensified.

Chronic unemployment, on a mass scale, had already begun during the second post-war period, as a consequence of capitalist rationalisation. But in those days it was almost impossible to conceive the gigantic proportions which unemployment has now taken on; it is now certain that more than one-half of the workers in all capitalist countries are either totally unemployed or are working only part time. It is difficult, however, to estimate the total figure of unemployed.

2. As regards the accentuation of the inner class contradictions, Comrade Thälmann, in his speech to-day, has already referred both to the unheard-of distress, and also to the social interchangings which are taking place in the ranks of the proletariat and other sections of the toilers. It is already theoretically impossible to presuppose that these phenomena are not producing an *increase of the revolutionary upsurge*. And this, in fact, is what has happened. After the severe defeats which the proletariat sustained in many European countries during the first period of storm and stress after the imperialist war, there followed a series of defensive struggles waged by the workers during the second post-war period; towards the end of this period several great class struggles were fought,



such as the General Strike in England and the great strike in Lodz, which, however, were isolated phenomena and did no more than signalise the rise of a revolutionary upsurge. At the Xth Plenum of the E.C. of the C.I. (1929) we were able to register this upsurge as an actual fact. And to-day the great number of strikes, the grandiose strike movements of genuine revolutionary character such as we are witnessing in a large number of countries, bear witness to a revolutionary upsurge in another sense than that which one could conceive at the time of the Xth Plenum. In addition to this the revolutionary upsurge at the present time is not merely confined to the proletariat, but, on the contrary, we can observe great revolutionary and semi-revolutionary peasant movements in a large number of countries. That is the second factor in the chain of circumstances which signalise the end of capitalist stabilisation. I will return to this point in another connection.

3. In regard to the question of *imperialist contradictions*: Let us take the facts which, in 1925 when capitalist stabilisation had just set in, were described by Comrade Stalin as the decisively important factors in the restoration of capitalist stabilisation. In the first place, America, England and France succeeded in coming to "a temporary understanding as to by what methods, and to what extent, Germany was to be plundered." What is the situation to-day? Not only the Dawes Plan, which was then devised for the plundering of Germany, but also the Young Plan, which was drawn up later, have collapsed. Germany has shown that even a country's capacity to pay may be used as a

weapon against more powerful imperialist countries. This does not mean that Germany is finally freed from the yoke of the Versailles Treaty. No, Germany must still pay tribute to the victors, even in the form of reparations. But in any case the fact remains that the more easy terms which Germany has now been granted in the reparations question have not in any way tended to alleviate the contradictions either between Germany and the victorious countries or between the victorious countries themselves. On the contrary, we can observe a harsh accentuation of these contradictions.

The second fact mentioned by Comrade Stalin was that English, American and Japanese capital had succeeded in coming to a temporary agreement as regards spheres of influence in *China*. This was due, above all, to the Washington Agreement of 1922. What is the situation to-day as regards this agreement? It is now only a scrap of paper. It must sound like a mockery in the ears of American capitalists when the Japanese foreign Minister can still assert to-day: "We absolutely do not want to break the Washington Agreement" — they "only" want to get Manchuria and the other important parts of China into their hands. But precisely one of the main points in the Washington Agreement between the Nine Powers was the agreement on Manchuria, and China in general. At the present time every single step taken by the imperialists in China shows that there is no unity among them there. Each of them wants to effect combinations and carry on machinations, but they cross each other's path. They are all intriguing against each other, and all of

them together against the Chinese people. Comrade Stalin was right when he prophesied, as early as 1925, that the agreement to which the imperialists came in regard to the Chinese question could not by any means be regarded as secure. To-day this agreement is at an end and soon the patience of the Chinese people will be also.

Thirdly, Comrade Stalin in 1925 referred to the fact that the imperialist Powers had temporarily succeeded in coming to an agreement of mutual non-interference in the plunder and oppression of their "own" colonies. At the present time the struggle for the re-partition of the colonies has become substantially a question of the day. This is not yet happening everywhere in an absolutely open way, not, for example, in such a bare-faced form as in regard to the spheres of influence of American and British imperialism in South America, where Bolivia and Paraguay have to-day commenced a war against each other in the interests of British and American imperialism. In India, for example, the rivalry of the imperialists cannot yet take on such open forms, but the American influence among the Indian national reformists is increasing, and Japan, too, has lately taken an active part by the policy of dumping, which it has carried to an extraordinary degree, in India. At the same time, the revolutionary anti-imperialist movement for emancipation is developing in the colonies.

4. *The Soviet Union.* I have already mentioned the accentuation of the relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries. In face of the tremendous rise of the Soviet Union,



and the simultaneous retrogression of capitalism throughout the entire world, it is impossible to suppose that the antagonism of the imperialist world to the Soviet Union will not become accentuated. The Soviet Union has already caused great disillusionment in the capitalist world. But such a complete disillusionment as the lords of capitalism have experienced, through the carrying out of the Five-Year Plan, is something of which they had never dreamed. Formerly it was said, with justice—Comrade Lenin said so too—that Russia was a backward country. To-day it is otherwise. Even in respect of industrial production the Soviet Union now occupies second place in the world. The Soviet Union is in every respect an *advanced* country. And this advance has been achieved on the firm basis of socialist development. The laying of the foundations of Socialism is already complete. The Soviet Union has, once and for all, consolidated itself in the positions of socialism, and during the course of the *second* Five-Year Plan is going to tackle the task of transforming the entire working population of the country into conscious, active members of a classless socialist society.

Everything which is being done at the present time in the whole world with a view to progressive and constructive work not only in the economic, but also in the social and cultural field, is being done in the Soviet Union. The problem of relative over-production—a problem which capitalism cannot solve—is here incapable of arising at all. The tempo of socialist construction has assured the victory of socialism.

You will all remember, comrades, that

the point at issue in the differences of opinion between the Central Committee and the Rights lay precisely in the question of tempo, as Comrade Stalin emphasised at the last Party Conference, when he said: "You don't like our tempo." Recently it has become apparent throughout the whole world that the Social-Democrats, down to the Russian Mensheviks themselves, are criticising precisely and in particular the tempo of construction in the Soviet Union. That is a very characteristic point. Here, for example, is what Dan writes about the Soviet Union :

"Precisely because we do not want economic catastrophe (K. : How the rogue continues his hypocrisy !), we have to fight against the furious tempo which is capable of causing an economic collapse."

These words contain the very gist of the matter. Fritz Adler, again, the Secretary of the Second International, has recently found nothing better to do than to cast calumny at the Soviet Union for employing what he calls "methods of primitive accumulation." These people take every difficulty of socialist construction as a "proof" of the hopeless state of affairs in the Soviet Union, but when these difficulties are overcome one after the other by the enthusiasm and heroism of the proletariat of the Soviet Union, the leaders of social democracy are too mendacious to recognise the truth, and begin to cast aspersions on the "Russian methods." These slanders of theirs, however, are being refuted daily by thousands of examples of heroism displayed by the workers in their work

of construction in the Soviet Union. I will give here only one single example. At the Stalingrad Tractor Works the roof had to be glazed at a temperature of 40 degrees below. This work was undertaken voluntarily by a glaziers' brigade consisting of members of the Young Communist League. Many of them had to be taken to hospitals with frostbitten hands and faces. But the roof was finished within the allotted time. (*Applause.*) We have thousands and thousands of such heroic examples of voluntary enthusiasm in the work of socialist construction in the Soviet Union.

In this connection I would like to refer to a defect in the propaganda which we carry on in popularising the Soviet Union—namely, that our press in the capitalist countries almost always represents things as though everything were already “going all right” here. This springs from a genuine love and admiration for the Soviet Union, but politically it is not a good thing that only our enemies, and not ourselves, write and speak of the real difficulties which are to be met with in the Soviet Union. This means that the workers who read our press are not in a position to take up a correct stand to the slanders of our enemies. At this Plenum we will have the opportunity of hearing the report of Comrade Manuilsky.\* I know that the whole Plenum is awaiting this report with tense expectation. We can tell Comrade Manuilsky that we, too, want to hear about the difficulties of construction in

---

\*The Soviet Union and the World's Workers.  
2d., 5 cents.



the Soviet Union. That is in the interests of our work of revolutionary enlightenment.

In celebrating the achievements, above all the economic achievements, of the Soviet Union, we must especially beware of such mistakes, since they would amount substantially to a concession to Social-Democracy, which is recommending a "constructive" policy with a similar content within the bounds of the capitalist order of society. Such a reformist exploitation of the sympathies of the workers for the Soviet Union can be observed almost everywhere among the Social-Democrats. The Austro-Marxists, in particular, base their manoeuvres upon the idea that the planned economy which is being carried out in the Soviet Union is fundamentally a "correct idea" which, they allege, could even be much better applied in capitalist Austria. And they proceed to draw up plans and recipes for a planned economy which can be realised in a capitalist State without a revolution. This swindle must be unmasked before the workers, which, indeed, should not be a difficult task. In Turkey the adherents of Kemal want to introduce a planned economy after the model of the Soviet Union; Soviet experts have even been invited to go to Turkey for this purpose. Well, I have great faith in the efficiency of Soviet experts, but it is very doubtful whether the attempt to adjust planned economy to the conditions of bourgeois Turkey will succeed. For if the Turks set about this task in earnest they would have to begin with the abolition of capitalism, and first and foremost by getting rid of the bourgeois Government. But they are probably not yet ready to do this.

### III. TOWARDS AN ANALYSIS OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS.

The facts quoted above may suffice in themselves to give a basis for the conclusion that capitalist stabilisation is really at an end at the present time; nevertheless, a loophole may be left for a certain feeling of doubt: perhaps, after all, capitalism will soon "rise from the dead;" perhaps it is only playing possum. . . . This feeling of doubt is all the more likely to arise since in our analysis of the world economic crisis we have hitherto not paid enough attention to the tendencies of development of the world economic crisis. We have rather emphasised what the present crisis has in common with previous crises of capitalism, and given less attention to the peculiarities of the present world economic crisis. Thus, for example, much has been said about the cyclical character of economic crises. But if we keep this point in view to the exclusion of everything else, the peculiar character and the tendencies of development of the present world economic crisis and the connection of this crisis with the accentuation of the general crisis of capitalism will not be understood. If this side of the question is not grasped with sufficient concreteness we will get no clear perspectives, and then any given fluctuation in the economic conditions, any accidental rise in prices (be it only in share prices) may produce, even in our ranks, a doubt as to whether it is not possible after all that capitalist stabilisation is coming again. Such ideas were immediately evoked, for example, among the ranks of the Social-Democrats by the latest manœuvres of the American

Government on the exchange. "Vorwaerts" hailed the measures taken by the American Government as ushering in a decided "change" and assured us that "the whole world will be thankful for this change." Well, the "change" came to an end very quickly, for no real prerequisites were present for a genuine improvement in the situation.

In analysing the world economic crisis we must be careful, on our side, never to fall into the false objectivism of Social-Democracy, which represents the crisis as a general "misfortune" or "destiny" for which nobody is guilty and nobody to blame. Our analysis of the economic crisis must give a *criticism* of capitalism, unmask the real countenance of capitalism before the masses, and represent the capitalist class as it really is—as the agent in the accentuation of the crisis.

The estimation of such phenomena of the crisis as, for example, the bankruptcy of capitalist enterprises is not always given in our press from a consistent critical angle. It is an error to think that every bankruptcy is in itself capable of producing a sharpening and deepening of the crisis. That need not by any means be always the case. In the former economic crises of capitalism, which were overcome relatively quickly, the characteristic point consisted precisely in the large number of bankruptcies which occurred within a short space of time, as also in the sudden and pronounced fall in prices.

In the present economic crisis, on the other hand, even though there may be ever so many cases of the collapse of individual enterprises, these do not constitute the most characteristic



phenomenon; the most characteristic phenomenon is the mass dismissal of workers, the shutting down of enterprises, part-time, wage-cutting, etc. One could even say, in a certain sense, that there are *too few bankruptcies* for the crisis to be overcome. How were previous economic crises overcome? Precisely by the fact that so many capitalist enterprises suddenly collapsed, while the available markets appeared more than enough for the rest—even considering the reduction in selling prices—to open up prospects of realising surplus value with a new extension of production. To-day the situation is such that the very largest concerns of finance capital are mostly so closely connected with the whole machinery of State that they cannot go bankrupt and do not need to do so, since they control the State and can also mobilise its resources for their own support. In our draft for the theses we emphasise the fact that at the present time the domination of monopoly—the oligarchy of finance—has become so overwhelming that it is in a position, if not arbitrarily, then at any rate within certain limits, to offer effective resistance on its part to the ravages of the crisis. This, however, is by no means synonymous with waging an effective struggle for overcoming the economic crisis. There is, of course, no representative of the finance oligarchy who would not *desire* the capitalist way out of the crisis, both on a national and also on a world scale. But how far their economic practice corresponds to this general desire is another question. Can we say that a Morgan, for example, really exerts himself, in his daily practice, to find an avenue of escape from the crisis for American capitalism?

We cannot always say this. These people are concerned, first and foremost, with a much more intimate worry; they have to fight, above all, for their own profits. The every-day way out of the crisis *for their own enterprises*—that is their first care. The struggle for a way out of the crisis for the *entire capitalism* of a given country is not the same thing at all as the struggle to rescue the profits of an individual capitalist enterprise. Especially during a time of crisis there is a clash of interests between these two things, and in each individual case where this contradiction makes itself felt the magnates of capital are always ready to sacrifice the interests of capitalism as a whole.

These giants of finance capital—or, at any rate, the greater part of them—have really not done too badly during the crisis. To be sure, a certain number of these giants have collapsed in various countries, especially those which had far-reaching international connections, such as Kreuger, the German “D” banks, the Banque du Credit Nationale in France, Lee Higginson Co. in the United States, etc. But only a part, not all. We can even say that the most powerful banks and concerns have, on the whole, not sustained any very substantial losses. To take a few examples, the great chemical trusts, such as the “I.G.” Dye Industry in Germany and Imperial Chemicals in England, have pulled well through the crisis. Schneider-Creuzot in France has been able to maintain its pre-war profits. The latest balance-sheets of the great English banks (three of the “big five”) show that they have slightly diminished their dividends for 1931, but are, at any rate, in a position to pay from

14 to 18 per cent., which is to be regarded as an extremely high rate of dividend as English conditions go. But the question is not only in how far the giants of finance capital are in a position to maintain the former absolute level of their profits; we have also to consider that they are sustaining smaller losses in their profits, generally speaking, than the other capitalists, in particular, than those who are not organised in trusts and cartels—i.e., they are in a better position to shift a large part of the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of other sections of the population. One should not lose sight of this fact.

#### IV. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE PRESENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND OF THE POLICY PURSUED BY THE FINANCE OLIGARCHY DURING THE CRISIS.

The most important of these peculiarities may be comprised under the following nine heads:

1. With a view to maintaining their monopoly prices and profits, the monopolist trusts restrict production to an unheard-of degree. Enterprises, mines, and means of transport are left lying idle, not for months, but for years on end. In the United States no less than 78 per cent. of the iron works have been closed down, and 85 per cent. of the automobile industry; in England 94 per cent. of the shipbuilding industry has been closed down (only 6 per cent. working!). In Germany 66 per cent. of the machine industry and iron works are lying idle, etc. The productive forces are not only paralysed by monopoly capitalism, but are deliberately destroyed on a



mass scale. I will not dwell upon the destruction of articles of consumption, such as coffee in Brazil, and wheat in the United States, nor upon the phenomena of technical retrogression, for which a vast number of examples might be quoted from all capitalist countries. I will only mention such facts as the following: American engineers have come forward with the proposal to replace tractors and threshing machines by ploughs and hoes. In England the shipbuilders themselves have founded a joint stock company for the purpose of destroying the older shipbuilding yards. In Germany the "programme for providing work," put forward by the Von Papen Government, includes a plan by which 400,000 tons of shipping is to be destroyed and the Government is allotting 12,000,000 marks as a State grant for this purpose. The French radical, Caillaux, gave a lecture not long ago in which he declared technical progress to be the "scourge of mankind." That is to say, technical progress has become a scourge for the profits of monopoly capitalism. Hence the hostility of the representatives of finance capital to technical progress and their attempts to sabotage it.

2. Monopoly capital employs every means in its power to reduce the cost of production. The most urgent task which the technical management of every enterprise is now occupied in solving is so to adjust production that a shrinkage of production may leave the production costs as low as possible. The chief means employed is to reduce the real wages as low as possible, and to ruthlessly increase the degree to which human labour power is used up.

3. The monopolist cartels are in a position,

within certain limits, to offer resistance to the movement of prices during the crisis, at the expense of the other buyers and sellers. To be sure, they are not in a position to prevent the lowering of prices in general. Nor do they always try to do this. A monopoly company is only interested in high prices in so far as it sells goods; in cases where it is the buyer it is, of course, interested in lowering the prices. It is above all a question of increasing the scope of the "price scissors."\* As between the monopoly prices and the prices of non-amalgamated branches of production, between predatory prices at home and "dumping prices" abroad. In Germany, for example, it has been found that since 1929 the index of monopoly prices has gone down from 105 per cent. to about 84 per cent., whereas the index of non-monopoly prices sank 50 per cent., i.e., one-half. In Poland the index of monopoly prices has gone down only 1.2 per cent., while that of non-monopoly prices has gone down 41 per cent. From the standpoint of the standard of living of the working class, the "price scissors" between wholesale prices and retail prices is of great significance. While the wholesale prices in the United States have gone down 32.8 per cent., the retail prices have gone down only about 21.9 per cent.; in England the wholesale prices have gone down 43.6 per cent. and the retail prices — 32.9 per cent.; in Germany the former have gone down 30 per cent. and the latter only 22.3 per cent.; while in France the figures are 32.6 per cent. for the former, and only 6.1 per cent. for the latter. All this means, of

---

\* Scissors—discrepancy.—Ed.

course, unheard-of exploitation of the working masses and the appropriation of the takings of other capitalists and manufacturers who are buyers of monopoly commodities, or who have to sell their goods to the monopoly trusts. This, however, puts the mechanism of the crisis out of order, and thus the overcoming of the crisis is postponed.

4. The yawning gulf which separates the prices of industrial goods and those of agricultural produce, which are encumbered by high rent, usurers' debts and increasing taxation, makes itself felt in particular in the more speedy ruination and pauperisation of the peasantry. The sharp decline in prices of agricultural produce does not, however, benefit the proletariat, since the commercial trusts keep the retail prices at a much higher level.

5. Numerous "weak" and medium-sized enterprises have their credits withdrawn and are thus swept into the whirlwind of bankruptcy, while the largest banks and trusts have their credits extended. It is, therefore, incorrect to speak of the crisis of credit in general and to forget that this does not by any means mean the same thing for all capitalists. The export of capital comes to a standstill, with the exception of political and war loans, while huge sums of capital in the form of money accumulate uselessly in the hands of the most powerful groups of the finance oligarchy. France and the United States have drawn in huge resources of gold from all countries.

6. In order to preserve their "frozen" investments, the monopoly cartels and large banks lend their support to a great number of



enterprises which are dependent upon them, and which, in many cases, are virtually bankrupt. This dead weight makes it the more easy for individual giant concerns to be drawn *themselves* into the whirlpool of bankruptcy, as has happened in the case of the German "D" Banks, the Banque du Credit National in France, etc.

7. The numerous operations undertaken to finance bankrupt enterprises (writing-off and fusion of sums of capital, acquiring of control shares, etc.) result in the plundering of the small and middle shareholders and depositors, and in the acceleration of the growth of monopoly trusts. Over and above this, the great and universal depreciation of shares and stocks, which varies from 45 to 80 per cent. in the different countries, creates especially favourable conditions for a further strengthening of the supremacy of the finance oligarchy. During a period of many years prior to the economic crisis the "watering" of the capital of monopolist enterprises was everywhere carried to extreme degrees. Let me give one example: in the United States it was found by commissions of the Senate that the real value of all enterprises of the United Steel Trust Co. amounted to 450,000,000 or at the most 600,000,000 dollars, whereas the share capital of this trust amounted to 1,500,000,000 dollars. Thus, by "watering" the share capital, about a billion dollars had been pocketed as the profits of speculation. Since the nominal capital has now diminished, the enterprise can now still make extraordinarily high profits despite the diminution in its former profits, since the value of the share capital has

sunk still lower. The mass of small shareholders are compelled to sell the depreciated shares, and anyone who is able to buy these shares to-day can make splendid business out of it. But who has the money to buy them? Those who are getting credit, and it is only the heads of the finance oligarchy who are getting credit.

8. By the depreciation of the currency in most countries the big capitalists and landlords are being relieved of a large part of their debts, while a large slice is being taken out of the workers' wages, and out of the savings and revenues of the urban petty bourgeoisie, the leisured class, etc.

9. In the interests of the most influential groups of the finance oligarchy, the bourgeois Governments are rescuing individual trusts, concerns, banks and enterprises of the munitions industry from bankruptcy by granting them State aid in various forms—loans, credits, guarantees of credit, special orders, preferential treatment in respect of tariffs, taxation, and foreign currency, grants in aid, participation in the share capital, etc. This is done at the expense of the State Budget and the State banks; it endangers the stability of the currency and also involves gigantic burdens for the economy of the country as a whole and, first and foremost, for the working population.

#### V. TO WHAT IS THE GROWTH OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS LEADING?

As a result of the peculiarities of the present economic crisis, as a result of the whole policy pursued by dominating monopoly capital, and

the fact that the great land of proletarian dictatorship is excluded from the world system of capitalism, the ordinary course of development taken by crises in the time of free competition has been disturbed. It has become infinitely more difficult to overcome the crisis by the usual methods—i.e., by squandering or gradually absorbing the stocks of commodities, by depreciating basic capital, by a thorough cleansing of capitalist economy from all antiquated, weak, rotten and non-paying enterprises, by technical improvements and increase of productivity, by opening up new markets, etc. But from this it does not by any means follow—as certain theoreticians of a semi-Trotskyist tendency have asserted—that capitalism will automatically collapse of its own accord. The results, for the time being, are only the acute distress of the working class and the ruination of the urban petty bourgeoisie, or the great masses of the peasantry, and of the agrarian and colonial countries. But the more success monopoly capital meets with in this policy, the more do the internal and external markets become attenuated, and the more does capitalism strangle itself in the clutches of the crisis. The ruling bourgeois class sees before it as an ever more urgent necessity, a definite avenue of escape—as the only capitalist avenue of escape from the economic crisis: the struggle against the toiling masses and against other countries, Fascist dictatorship, commercial war and armed imperialist war.

These tendencies of development in the present world economic crisis must be thoroughly examined and kept steadily in view in order to preclude every hope that the crisis may perhaps,



after all, be overcome by some unexpected and unexplainable economic natural phenomenon, coming perhaps "next spring" or "next autumn" or the like. How is this new boom to come? Well, it is said, the crisis *must* pass over some time or other; after all, it is a "cyclical crisis;" let us wait till the crisis has reached its deepest point, and then we shall have a renewal of the fixed capital and a new period of prosperity will begin. Now, however, we have been waiting four years long for the "deepest point" of this cycle, and the longer we wait, the further removed are we from this point, and the more difficult does it become for capital to extricate itself from the clutches of the economic crisis. The fixed capital has already been renewed, prior to the crisis, during the period of rationalisation. "Just there lay the mistake," said Otto Bauer, of whom Lenin once said that he was "the best of the social traitors." (Comrade Lenin also declared immediately afterwards that he meant by this "a learned idiot, utterly incorrigible.") This learned idiot is now talking about the "mistake of rationalisation," though it is perfectly clear that monopoly capitalism could not do otherwise than rationalise, in so far as it wanted, in accordance with its capitalist nature, to chase after high profits.

Formerly, the economic crisis *was able* to create by its own mechanism the pre-requisites for overcoming itself. Why is this not the case to-day? Because monopoly capital has come to occupy a position of overwhelming supremacy, and has consolidated this position, to a very high extent, at the expense of the interests of the entire economy of the country by basing itself

upon the entire State apparatus. This does not signify a development in the direction of State capitalism, as Comrade Bucharin once thought, nor does it mean development towards the State control over private monopoly; *on the contrary*, it denotes a development towards control of private monopoly over the State. The whole State is enlisted in the business of rescuing the profits of private monopoly. In this way it is possible to save them from bankruptcy, not in all cases, but in the case of the most powerful concerns.

Is there, then, no capitalist way out of the crisis? After all, Lenin said—and we repeat his words very frequently—that there are no absolutely hopeless situations for the capitalists.\* Yes, there can be a capitalist way out of the present economic crisis. For example, if the United States defeated Japan there could perhaps be a way out of this crisis, for the United States, for the time being. For Japan, again, there could be a capitalist way out of the crisis if Japan were to defeat the United States. Such possibilities cannot be disputed. *However, there is no purely economic way out of this crisis.* The possibility of a capitalist way out of the crisis—for one individual country or another—can only be found in the successful use of the capitalist class's means of economic struggle *in conjunction* with the mailed fist of the bourgeois State, in making war upon and defeating the others, the competitors and

---

\*Report on World Situation to Second Congress Comintern, 1920.—Ed.

rivals, the internal and external enemies of finance capital.

## VI. PARASITISM AND DISINTEGRATION.

Throughout the whole capitalist world at the present time we may observe numerous symptoms of the beginning of the end. Above all, we have a tremendous increase in the phenomenon of parasitism. Before the war Lenin had already spoken of "usury imperialism." But such an efflorescence of usury and parasitism as is to be seen to-day could hardly have been imagined in former times. I will refer to one phenomenon only—namely, to what a colossal extent the relative importance of loan capital has increased, in the great capitalist countries, at the expense of production capital. Even in Germany this relative importance amounts at the present time to 30 per cent.; that is a tremendously high proportion when we consider that scarcely ten years ago the greater part of those who had small savings or received unearned income were so completely "relieved" of their private property by the inflation in Germany. German industry's burden of debt amounts to 58 billion marks, and that of agriculture to 12 billion. In England at the present time the annual income derived from loan capital amounts to 26 per cent.—that is, to more than one-quarter of the entire national income! There is a broad stratum representing the rentiers—parasites who live only by coupon-clipping; these, again, have recently been plundered with ever-increasing boldness by the great banks. In England the National Debt alone amounts to 74,000,000,000 gold roubles and the



bank credits extended to industry amount to 10,000,000,000. Similar phenomena may be observed in France and the United States. Despite the increasing deficit and the often complete ruin of the national budget, the bourgeois States are increasing their expenditure for the army, the police, the bureaucratic apparatus, and the payment of interest to such a degree that in England, France, Belgium, Poland, etc., this expenditure amounts to 60 to 70 per cent. of the budget.

Under present-day circumstances it is inevitable that there should also be an increase in the friction and the dissension between the various sections of the bourgeoisie. Even the finance oligarchy must not be regarded as a completely united group. There is often cleavage and rivalry between the leaders of the finance oligarchy in a given country, and still more so between the various sections of the bourgeoisie, who are handicapped by the finance oligarchy. At the same time there is an orgy of sensational "Panama scandals" in all capitalist countries. It would, however, be incorrect to imagine that such shining examples of giant capitalist robbers as Kreuger are in any way the exceptions. On the contrary, both in their methods and in their character, these persons are to be regarded exactly as the typical financial magnates of the present day; only they were unlucky enough not to be able to avoid being *exposed* in consequence of their great failures.

If, in addition to this, we consider the phenomena of disintegration and corruption in other spheres, the increase in crime, Fascist banditry,

etc., we obtain a true picture of capitalism hastening to its fall.

## VII. CHANGES IN THE POSITION OF THE WORKING CLASS.

The picture would, of course, be quite incomplete and the figure of the grave-digger of capitalism would be left out if we were not to consider the social consequences of the economic crisis, above all the changes in the position of the working class—changes which are ever more paving the way for the revolutionary struggle of the toilers.

It must be said that our available material on the position of the working class, as it is taking shape in the individual countries and districts during the crisis, is most inadequate. It is necessary to bestow more attention on this subject, for a genuine mass policy is impossible without a concrete knowledge of the position of the working class and other working elements, especially in view of the fact that at the present time this position is changing very rapidly. If, for example, we do not take into account how low the real value of the Polish miners' wage has sunk during the crisis (and the miners can still be numbered among the relatively better-paid sections of Polish workers), we shall find ourselves unable to explain the fact that in Poland the wave of strikes is much higher than in Germany. It goes without saying that this is not the whole explanation, but it may well be part of the explanation. The consequences of the economic crisis, in particular the huge mass unemployment, create certain additional diffi-

culties for the development of the strike movement. We have already noted this fact on previous occasions. We have only to add that the obstacles presented to economic struggles by these difficulties only make themselves felt up to a certain point. When this point is reached the obstacles which arise from mass unemployment and the economic crisis cease to operate.

If we keep in view the manifold social interchangings which are created within the working class merely on the basis of unemployment, we can observe in Germany, for example, a large number of different categories: those who are fully employed with "full" wages and those with only part payment, the part-time workers, those doing forced labour, those who are wholly unemployed and receive "full" unemployment benefit, others with reduced benefits, others again who only receive relief from charitable institutions, and, finally, those who get no relief at all. Every worker, in whatever category he may be to-day, is in constant danger of being moved down to-morrow into the next category or still lower, and the fall from category to category actually brings the worker lower and lower. This extremely difficult situation for the employed workers naturally creates an additional obstacle for the development of strike struggles. But this is only true up to a certain point—the point at which, despite the fact that they are employed, they feel their situation to be so intolerable that they are ready to shoulder all the risks of a strike struggle.

The economic crisis has everywhere made it much more difficult for the bourgeoisie to bribe the upper strata of the working class. The aris-



tocracy of labour grows ever smaller and smaller, which means that the social basis for reformism and social democracy grows weaker and weaker. Thus, we have such new phenomena as that of certain sections of the workers, not indeed receiving higher wages, but yet being given a privileged position, in the sense that they are given the certainty of keeping their jobs. First and foremost, among these are the professional groups of Fascist strike-breakers and the like. But this, of course, cannot become a widespread social phenomenon.

Important consequences flow from the fact that in all capitalist countries finance capital has set about reducing the standard of living of the great *peasant masses*. This fact has, as you know, recently produced almost everywhere a number of militant peasant movements which in several countries, such as Poland, Jugo-Slavia, etc., have already turned into peasant revolts.

#### VIII. INCREASE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE.

What is the political consequence of this development? It is a mighty increase in the revolutionary upsurge. Viewed from this standpoint, how are we to estimate the moment through which we are now passing—a moment when capitalist stabilisation is at an end? In our draft for the theses we say that a transition to a new series of wars and revolutions is now being made. We have not reached the period of the new series of wars and revolutions; but we are now in the process of a rapid transition to this period. This character of a rapid transition

is also peculiar to the revolutionary upsurge which is now going on. Comrade Lensky asked whether this should not be described as a new phase of the revolutionary upsurge. Now it is clear that the development of the revolutionary upsurge is already much higher to-day than was the case at the time of the last Plenum of the E.C.C.I. But I would not be inclined to describe the present moment as a "new phase" of the revolutionary upsurge, for I do not want to obscure its transitional character. The use of the term "new phase" gives the impression that the upsurge remains at a definite level, as though its character were static. The whole character of the revolutionary upsurge, however, reflects the rapid transition going on at the present time; it proceeds further and further, mounts higher and higher.

Since the first period of storm and stress which followed the imperialist war there have never been so many revolutionary mass struggles as we have to-day in the majority of countries. True, in a number of countries which are relatively backward in a political sense, great mass struggles must still be regarded as isolated phenomena. Take a country like Sweden, where the soldiers fired on the strikers from the paper mills at Aadalen last year. Such an event, in this country, was the first of its kind during the lifetime of the present generation. It was the occasion for an outburst of elementary force which, with the active participation of the Communist Party—this fact must be recognised—formed a movement of large sympathetic strikes with stormy demonstrations, etc. In such conditions as those obtaining in Sweden this passed over

very quickly; then came an interval during which the movement remains weak, with only small strikes or no strikes at all. It is no remote possibility that even in Belgium we may have an interval of calm lasting for some months. Thus in many countries at the present time we may observe the alternating ebb and flow of the revolutionary upsurge. But there are also countries, such as Spain and Poland, where the revolutionary strike movement has been at a high level for a long time past, and where we can observe a stormy wave of economic and political strikes.

We must also keep in view the fact that the great strikes everywhere have a different character from that which they had formerly. It is not sufficiently lucid to say that these strikes have a political character. The greatest strikes of the past also had a political character. The present great strike struggles, however, have a revolutionary or, at any rate, a semi-revolutionary character. Even in France there have been many strikes actually accompanied by barricade fighting. Still more have the great strikes in Poland and Czecho-Slovakia taken on, in a certain sense, the character of a civil war (of course, only as yet in the limited sense of this word). I refer only to such great strikes as that at Br  x and at the "Hortensia" works. The strike of the subway workers in Tokio was highly characteristic: a relatively small number (about 200) of the workers barricaded themselves with some of the cars in a tunnel of the subway, shut themselves off from the outer world with barbed wire, turned on the electric current, and defended themselves successfully for several days on end against superior police forces until they attained



their strike demands. Our Japanese comrades can show us more than a single example of a similar sort.

It is a highly characteristic feature of the strike movement in most countries at the present time that new forms of strike struggle are arising, that the methods of struggle are becoming sharper and the forms more revolutionary, that economic strikes are being converted into genuine revolutionary struggles. These are no longer isolated and accidental phenomena; they represent the typical development of the revolutionary movement. In Spain, in particular, we have been able to observe such revolutionary strike struggles going on uninterruptedly over a period of many months as the Spanish proletariat has never experienced before. What is happening in these struggles is above all the further development of the Spanish revolution.

Of course, we must not lose sight of the *irregularity* of development of the revolutionary upsurge. It would be incorrect to select only the most revolutionary examples from the workers' movement in the various countries, to collect these examples together and use them as a basis for the assertion that the situation is already ripe for revolution. No, the law of irregularity holds good also for the development of the revolutionary upsurge. If we do not take this into account in our estimation of the international movement, our estimation will inevitably be an exaggerated one. The process of the radicalisation of the working class is developing everywhere, but the development is not uniform. This process of radicalisation does not everywhere find such powerful expression as

at the last Reichstag elections in Germany. At the last Parliamentary elections in England, for example, there was almost no expression of the radicalisation of the working class. To be sure, the Labour Party lost 2,000,000 votes, and some comrades wanted to interpret this as a symptom of the radicalisation of the working class. But almost all these votes were cast for the Conservatives, and such a change of front on the part of the voters cannot in any way be described as a process of the radicalisation of the working class. Despite this, the radicalisation of the working class is an actual fact in England too. This found its expression in the stormy workers' demonstrations in the autumn of last year. For the first time for many years the working masses were seized by an elementary urge to fight for the conquest of the streets; they armed themselves with sticks and tore up paving stones to throw at the heads of the police. This happened not in one town only, but in many different towns. This was something new in old England. The movement in the English Navy took its rise at the same time. Besides this, it cannot be said that there were no strike movements in England. There were even some great strike movements there. But it goes without saying that the process of the radicalisation of the workers in England is not yet at an advanced stage, as is, for example, the case in Germany, Poland or Spain. However, even in Germany we may observe phenomena which bear witness to the irregularity of this process of radicalisation. The All-German Federation of Trade Unions has lost many members; there is a profound crisis in the Amsterdam International. But our revolutionary

trade union opposition has won very little. I do not know if we possess any exact statistics on the development of the revolutionary trade union organisations, but at any rate the results in this sphere are such that they only reflect the radicalisation of the working class to a slight extent.

There is an incorrect opinion to be met with, according to which the "Left" manœuvres of social democracy are accelerating the process of the radicalisation of the workers. Comrade Lensky informed us in the political secretariat that in Poland this opinion had led certain comrades to adopt the position that the "Left" manœuvres of the Social-Democrats were "cutting both ways." And Comrade Lensky rightly criticised this conception as a Right-opportunist one. In Czecho-Slovakia such a conception has even led certain comrades to a position of complete "tailism," in relation to the Social-Fascists, in certain instances. I am not more intimately acquainted with this case, but the representatives of the Czecho-Slovakian Communist Party will be able to tell us about it. In Germany such opinions were to be met with for a long time, as, for instance, that those workers who did not previously participate in any political movement, but who then joined the National Socialists, were on the way to radicalisation. Such a conception can under no circumstances be described as correct. In this case the most that we can say is that there has been a certain activation of the workers concerned, but we absolutely cannot speak of their radicalisation in the sense of their approaching more closely to revolution. For their approaching



more closely to Fascism means that they are getting further away from revolution.

#### IX. THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL CONCLUSION.

Thus a process of *transition* is going on not only in economics, and not only in the sharpening of international contradictions and the war danger, but also in the development of the revolutionary upsurge. We are approaching a new period, but we have not yet reached it. We are still in the stage of transition to this period. What is the political conclusion which we must draw from this estimation of the objective situation? I can give this conclusion at once: If to-day we are in the stage of transition to a new period of wars and revolutions, we have now to make every effort to *prepare the proletariat and the rest of the working population for the struggle for power in the new period.*

This is also the conclusion which is drawn in the draft of the theses. It may perhaps cause some comrades to think that, in view of the great accentuation of the situation, this strategic task is too small. But is it really too little if we set ourselves the task of preparing the proletariat, with all that this implies? No, rightly understood, this means a *revolutionary* preparation of the proletariat in all respects, and this is no small task. If we speak, in the draft of the theses, about the strengthening and acceleration of Bolshevik mass work with a view to raising the revolutionary consciousness and the revolutionary preparedness of the workers, we are in no way to understand by this mere enlightenment only by way of propaganda. That would,

indeed, be too little. What we speak of in the draft of the theses is a "*systematic carrying out* of the line of the united front from below," the "reaction to every event which stimulates the workers and to every attack by the class enemy," the drawing up in every case of "concrete slogans which are capable of really mobilising them for struggle." We speak, too, of the necessity of "restoring, extending and consolidating the permanent living link between each Communist Party and the majority of the workers." This is what Lenin demanded, not only after the defeats sustained by the revolutionary movement, but in all situations, even in the fire of the revolutionary situation of 1917. Likewise, in 1920, he said the same thing when he wrote his pamphlet, "*Left-Wing Communism an Infantile Sickness*;" that was shortly before the March struggles in Germany, at a time when the revolutionary upsurge was running very high both in Germany and in a number of other countries. At that time Lenin especially emphasised that, in order to win, we must establish a permanent living link between the Communist vanguard and the broad masses of the working class.

Our draft of the thesis also brings out what different and important factors are contained in the preparation of the proletariat for the coming revolutionary struggles for power. But as regards this formulation itself we do not want simply to repeat what we often have said before in the theses of the Comintern, and I think it especially important that all comrades should understand why we do not want to do this. We have now a new situation; we are undergoing a

rapid transition to a revolutionary situation, and precisely for this reason we have to formulate our current basic task to-day somewhat differently than in former times. To-day we still say that the task of *winning over the majority of the working class* "retains its full force." This task has been described by us, at least from the Third Congress of the Comintern onwards, or, if I am not mistaken, even from the First Congress onwards, as the main strategic task. In our programme\* it is likewise formulated as such for the entire pre-revolutionary period. Our other formulation, which is especially adapted to the present moment, is not in any way in contradiction with this; on the contrary, the gist of both formulations to a large extent coincides.

When we say that the Communist Parties have to prepare both themselves and the masses of the working class at the present time for the great revolutionary struggles which are approaching, especially and above all for the coming decisive struggles for power, for the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, this formulation calls for more tense attention both for the present and the future. As important as it is, not to forget the tasks of the present day, it is equally necessary to also keep in view what to-morrow will bring. To separate these two aspects of the question from one another leads directly to a deviation. Our Leninist task is to carry on revolutionary work to-day and to take part in the mass struggles of the present day, to prepare the masses of the proletariat for the still greater and still more revolutionary struggles of to-

---

\* Programme of the Communist International.  
Modern Books. W. L. P. 6d.



tomorrow. The formulation which we have proposed refers precisely to the fact that it is a question of preparing the revolutionary *class*, the broad masses of the proletariat, and not simply the vanguard. For what must the revolutionary class be prepared? Not for *any* sort of struggles, but for "the great revolutionary struggles which are imminent." It is clear that the preparation for such struggles must be of another kind than the preparation for any sort of smaller struggles.

The presidium therefore acted correctly in adopting this formulation in order to describe the urgent main task of the present moment. This formulation was employed both by Lenin and by Stalin. It seems to us that it is more appropriate to-day than ever before. Or does anyone wish to assert that the proletariat in the capitalist countries, whose revolutionary workers' movements we are here representing, is already sufficiently prepared for the great struggles for power which are approaching? Even in Germany, where we have our best section in the capitalist world—if we only consider the tasks in the revolutionary situation, or in a war situation, which may come as a surprise—it cannot be asserted, either of our Party or of the broad masses of the proletariat, that they are sufficiently prepared for such a situation. Or have we already got in the factories those firmly anchored groups and cells which the enemy is unable to uproot, and which guarantee by their activity that the Communist Party in such a situation not only *wants* to fulfil its duty, but will also *be able* to do this? Take a small example: each one of us knows that in a revolutionary or a war situation, for example, the par-

ticipation of women workers in mass struggles and of class-conscious Communist women in the work of the Party organisation is most important and necessary. But to what a small extent we have drawn these women into our work! Can we not observe a neglect of Communist work in the factories and in the trade unions? Have there not been instances of an under-estimation of the mass influence of the All-German Confederation of Trade Unions, and of social-democracy? Has there not been a certain neglect of, and a failure to understand the task of organising struggles around the daily partial demands of the workers? I am sure that the German comrades, above all Comrade Thälmann, are ready to say openly: yes, these defects do exist among us. The Communist Party of Germany is strong enough to register its own defects and to tackle the task of overcoming them with determination.

But if the fact is that even the Communist Party of Germany has not yet prepared itself and the German proletariat sufficiently for the coming struggles for power, how then can it be said that this preparation represents a small task? Where has this task been already carried out so that we can already begin to tackle another and greater task? This is not the case in any capitalist country. No one can seriously suppose that we are here writing theses merely in order to direct our sections to the sole task of preparing the proletariat for the coming struggles for power by means of propaganda. There have, indeed, been mistakes of this sort committed in some Communist Parties. This cannot be denied. Even in the ranks of the German Party there

existed certain tendencies partially to replace the much more difficult revolutionary work of developing partial struggles in a genuine sense, by a propaganda for radical slogans such as a people's revolution. No, we emphasise, on the contrary, that it is one of the *basic conditions* which must be perpetually kept in view in our work, that the proletariat is not revolutionised by propaganda and agitation pure and simple, but first and foremost *by its own experience, which it wins in the partial struggles of the present day.*

The task of preparing the proletariat for the great revolutionary struggles that are coming—and in a number of countries for the coming decisive struggles for power—is in full accord with the new estimation of the objective situation as given in our theses. This preparation constitutes the *strategic transition*, which we have to effect, to the new coming series of wars and revolutions. He who does not envisage a mere empty phrase in our statement that we have reached “the end of capitalist stabilisation,” but sees in it an important fact which obliges us to draw political conclusions, draws from it, if he is a Communist and a revolutionary, if he is a Marxist and a Leninist, precisely this conclusion: Most rapid preparations of the million-strong revolutionary army, above all in the great capitalist countries, for the coming struggles of power ! ”

If we know that precisely at the present time there is going on a transition to a new period of struggles for power, to a new series of wars and revolutions, then the present situation is, in a certain sense, comparable to the eve of war in



former times, when, even after the declaration of war, several weeks intervened before actual hostilities were begun; it was already known that war was coming. What did the responsible military leader do in such a situation? He made every effort to collect his fighting forces as quickly as possible, to weld together a strong army, to strengthen the spirit of militant resolution; he distributed various strategic tasks, he instructed his commanders and armed all his forces. Such are the demands of the hour, allowing for differences involved in the comparison; such is the strategic task of the preparation for the struggle for power. Or, expressed without metaphor: Every strike and every other mass action must be made use of in order to stimulate the revolutionary feeling among the masses, in order to encourage the masses, in order to organise them better, in order to weld them together to united fronts and to create a million-strong revolutionary army.

It is not a question of a new organisation, it is rather a question of organising a continuous militant movement, in the sense of the class struggle, but in every case to appeal to the broad masses. Where we know that we have a hundred fighters, we must enlist thousands more. Where we have ten thousand, we must have hundreds of thousands, and where we already have hundreds of thousands, we must enlist millions. Such is the task drawn up for the present situation. If we do not do this we will suffer losses in tempo, however much we may talk about the "development of political and economic struggles." That is what we said yesterday, and that is still correct to-day. That is not being repudiated,

only to-day we set ourselves as our main task the Bolshevik preparation of the working masses for the coming struggles for power.

Comrades, in connection with the formulation of the current main task of the day, we speak in our draft theses of the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Now at our Second World Congress Comrade Lenin wrote a special chapter in his thesis on the question: "Of what should the immediate preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat everywhere consist?" This chapter begins as follows:

"The present moment in the development of the International Communist movement is characterised by the fact that in the overwhelming majority of capitalist countries the preparation of the proletariat for the realisation of its dictatorship has not yet been completed, has indeed in many cases not yet been begun systematically. From this it does not follow that the proletarian revolution in the immediate future is impossible. It is quite possible, for the entire economic and political situation is extraordinarily rich in explosive matter and in causes for its sudden explosion. A further pre-requisite for revolution in addition to the preparation of the proletariat, namely, a general crisis in all ruling and in all bourgeois parties, is likewise present. But from what has been said it follows that the actual task to-day of the Communist Parties does not consist in accelerating the revolution, but in better preparing the proletariat."

It seems to me, comrades, that the situation

to-day far more resembles the situation obtaining during the Second World Congress than, for example, the situation during the Third World Congress. So much of what Comrade Lenin wrote and said at the First and Second World Congresses fits excellently into the present situation.

Allow me to quote yet another masterful utterance of Comrade Lenin's from a former period, since it is impossible to express these ideas better than Lenin did. At the end of the year 1906 and the beginning of 1907, Comrade Lenin, in his estimate of the situation in Russia, concluded that a new series of revolutionary struggles was imminent. I explicitly emphasised that one cannot compare the present objective world situation with the situation at that time. But the quotation does not thereby lose its value if we consider how the then situation was estimated by Comrade Lenin. He wrote as follows :

“ Struggle in its sharpest forms is undoubtedly inevitable. But precisely because it is inevitable it is senseless to want to force it on, to accelerate it, to whip it forward. Let the Krushevans and Stolypins look after that; our care must be with all clarity, directly and ruthlessly, openly *to reveal* the truth to the proletariat and peasantry, to open their eyes to the significance of the storm wind that is now arising, to aid them in an organised way, with the *sang-froid* of people who are going to their death, to await the enemy as the soldier awaits the enemy when he lies in the trenches and is ready after the first exchange



of shots to go over to the assault. . . . It is necessary to get the weapons ready—both in the immediate and in the metaphorical sense of the word. Above all, and in the first instance, it is necessary to weld together the army of the proletariat, which is strong through its consciousness and its resolution. It is necessary to increase tenfold our organisational and educational work among the peasantry, both among all those who are starving in the countryside and also among those who last year sent their sons to military service—their sons who lived through the great year of revolution. All the ideological veils and trappings which have been spread over the revolution must be torn down, all doubts and vacillations must be set aside. Simply, calmly and openly—in the way the people best understand—we must say as loudly and clearly as possible: struggle is inevitable. The proletariat will take up the struggle. The proletariat will give up everything, will throw all its powers into this struggle for freedom.”

Thus did the greatest revolutionary of all time show us the way.

## ON THE WAR DANGER AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IT.

### 1.—IN THE CAMP OF THE IMPERIALISTS.

I will not attempt to characterize all the manifold complications in the mutual relations of the various imperialist powers. In these relations there are, however, one or two definite points which we can register without more ado. Firstly, *the co-operation between Japan and France*. This constitutes a certain fact. We do not know whether there exists so much as a formal alliance between them, but this is, after all, not the decisive question. At any rate the strategical co-operation between them is a notorious fact which no one should allow to escape his attention. And this co-operation between them bears a character of the most pronounced aggressiveness, as we have seen in recent times. Secondly, *the sharpening of the relations between the United States and Japan*. There can be no doubt that a great accentuation has set in between these two powers. Thirdly, the relations *between Germany and France*: nobody can assert that there has been a relaxation in the tenseness of the relations between these two countries. It is clear to all that, in this case, a fresh accentuation is present, as also between *Germany and Poland*. Between *Italy and Germany* there has been a certain *rapprochement*, but it seems, to say the least of it, doubtful whether the antagonism between *Italy and France* has, in any way, become mitigated. Lastly, the relations between *England and the United States*: we can beyond doubt observe a further accentuation in this, the greatest of all imperialist contradictions.

In general, we are thus able to record an increased accentuation of the principal contradictions between the various imperialist powers, and, at the same time, the beginning of a tendency to form large antagonistic groups of powers, which is one of the surest symptoms

that an imperialist world war is approaching. The points of agreement which have been found between England and France at Lausanne, do not mean any real overcoming of the very considerable contradictions which, for years past, have existed between them. In these complicated international relations one rule almost always holds good, namely that where a certain *rapprochement* shows itself on occasion, the former contradictions essentially remain and undermine this *rapprochement*; this, however, does not mean that the temporary *rapprochement* is devoid of all political significance. This can be best shown by the example of England and Japan, who in general are working hand in hand without, however, being able to overcome the great contradictions between their interests. On the contrary, the competitive struggle between them is being visibly accentuated throughout large districts to which they export their goods—in China, India, the Malay Islands, etc., and the Japanese imperialists' most extreme plans for expansion are even so bold as to penetrate into the realm of the British colonies in Asia.

The role of driving force, in the accentuation of the international contradictions, between the various imperialist powers, is at the present moment, being played by the conflict between Japan and the United States, who are both of them feeling the most urgent need for new colonies, and both of whom wish to subject to their colonial domination the largest nation in the world, the Chinese. Lenin held the view that Japan cannot wage any great war, without forming an alliance with some other imperialist power. This still holds good to-day. In the Manchurian question Japan has hitherto found support from France, and to a great extent from England also. But through this combination, the controversial issues between the various imperialists in Manchuria are linked up, in the most dangerous fashion, with the common antagonism of all these imperialist powers towards the *Soviet Union*. This is a matter about which the diplomats of imperialism



say little, and maintain an obstinate silence. But none the less it remains a fact that all these powers, together with their vassals, have precisely in recent times been most vigorously intensifying their preparations for war against the U.S.S.R. This does not by any means preclude the possibility of what is happening, for example, at the present moment in France, where the Government is pretending to be averse to the pursuance of an aggressive war policy against the Soviet Union. But while the Government is indulging in this gesture of pacifism, the general staff in actual fact is pursuing a course of action of quite another tendency. The same is true of Japan, of England, of Poland and even of Finland. As this Janus-face of the bourgeoisie may foster a tendency, even in our own ranks, to underestimate the importance of these anti-Soviet preparations for war, it is more than ever necessary to wage an intensive struggle against every symptom of an underestimation of the war danger.

## 2.—THE FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

The struggle against an underestimation of the danger of both an anti-Soviet, and also of an imperialist world war should be conducted on the basis of facts. Even the bare figures showing the development of armaments demonstrate, in a most graphic manner, at what headlong speed the imperialist powers are at present heading towards war. We have already referred on several previous occasions to that "prosperity" which, despite the extreme accentuation of the economic crisis, is being maintained in all capitalist countries in the realm of the munitions industries, not, however, without a tremendously lavish expenditure of State funds. Preparations for war do not, of course, affect the actual munitions only. It was, indeed, one of the main lessons which the capitalist states were able to derive from the last world war, that the entire industry of the country, nay almost the entire national economy must be adapted to war conditions, that even

in time of peace all the necessary preparations for this process must be made. But as regards the munitions industry, in the narrower sense of the word, we may say that in general its capacity in the great imperialist countries has increased from 60 to 80 per cent., and in some fields (such as tanks and poison gases) from five to ten times, in comparison with the high-water mark reached in the year 1918. The total production of the world's chemical industry, which is of enormous importance for war, has been almost trebled in comparison with 1913.

The number of military airplanes on the active service list has increased as follows:—

				1914	1918	1932
United States	...	...	...	6	750	10,000
France	...	...	...	90	5,000	7,000
England	...	...	...	90	1,500	5,000

The number of tanks on the active service list likewise shows the following increase:—

					1918	1932
United States	...	...	...	...	280	8,000
France	...	...	...	...	2,700	5,000
England	...	...	...	...	2,000	5,000

Expenditure for military purposes has increased to an enormous extent. The official war budget of the United States, England, France, Japan, and Italy taken together amounted to about 1,153,000,000 dollars on the eve of the world war; whereas in the years 1923-25 it had reached the figure of 1,745,000,000 dollars; and in 1930-31 it was already 2,873,000,000 dollars—in other words almost three times as much as on the eve of the last world war. A large number of capitalist states have set about making a thorough reorganization of their fighting forces; these include Japan, Poland, Rumania, Finland, etc. This reorganisation is going on in connection with the re-

equipment of the armies with the latest technical means of warfare, with their motorization and mechanization. Everybody is trying by a number of measures to insure their being able to begin war as rapidly and silently as possible, in order that the masses of the population may suddenly, to their surprise, find themselves face to face with accomplished facts.

A war by Japan against the Soviet Union is being expected and desired everywhere in the camp of the imperialists. There only remains a certain doubt in how far Japan will be able to conduct this war with success. For this reason it has been deemed necessary to leave Japan some little more time for its war preparations. The Japanese ruling classes are themselves at the present moment steering a determined course towards the declaration of this war, immediately after the termination of the most important preparatory measures which are provided for, in Japan, in the spring or autumn of 1933. With this end in view, the expenditure on armaments has been almost doubled, the production of war materials in Japan itself has been greatly intensified, and large quantities of arms and technical equipment are constantly being purchased from abroad. While Japan's "civil" industry is only occupied to the extent of 50 per cent., the munitions industry is being rapidly extended (during 1932 two tank factories, two airplane factories, several chemical works, etc., were set in operation). Still larger quantities of war materials are being imported into Japan from the most varied countries: France is providing tanks and machine-guns; England, airplane motors, tanks, and rifles; Czecho-Slovakia, field guns, ammunition, and rifles; the United States, airplane motors, rifles, and raw materials for the production of explosives; and Germany, explosives and poisonous materials.

During the autumn of the current year, the Japanese army in Manchuria, which consists of six divisions and two brigades of cavalry, and which is intended for



use against the Soviet Union, will already have completed its concentration. These divisions are for the moment only at their peace-time strength, but at the same time reserve forces are being concentrated in Manchuria and Korea to bring them up to war strength. At the present moment the strength of the Japanese army in Manchuria and in the adjacent districts of Korea amounts to about 115,000 men, which represents about half the peace-time strength of the whole Japanese army. At this very moment, Japanese imperialism is conducting fresh operations in Inner Mongolia, organising a Mongolian army of 25,000 men, financing and arming troops of Whiteguardists. Manchuria is in every respect being converted into a base of operations against the Soviet Union: new strategic railway lines, main roads and air ports are being constructed with all speed. (At the time when the occupation of Manchuria was begun, the province contained 2 airports; in January of this year there were 12, and in July there were already 35.) Great construction work is being undertaken in the sea-ports of Seisin, Port Arthur and Dairen. It is contemplated finishing all these works by the spring of 1933.

### 3.—THE MILITARY ACTIVITY OF FRANCE AND ITS VASSALS.

This year the French general staff has achieved great work towards co-ordinating the war-plans of the general staffs of Poland and the "Little Entente." At the conference of the general staffs of Poland, Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia, held in the spring of 1932, under the leadership of the French general staff, plans for operations against the Soviet Union were discussed (an alternative project for these plans is known among the officers of the general staffs by the characteristic name of the "Black Plan"). Special attention is being devoted to a close co-operation between the Polish and Rumanian general staffs. The Rumanian munitions industry has been especially strengthened of late, despite the miserable condition of Rumania's finances. The Czechoslovakian muni-

tions industry has been drawn into taking an intensive part in the work of the entire anti-Soviet alliance. Czecho-Slovakian firms are now constructing munition factories in Rumania, Poland, and Latvia. The war preparations going on in the Baltic countries—in Finland, Latvia, and Esthonia—are being carried out, to an ever greater extent, under the direct guidance of the Franco-Polish *bloc*, although in Finland, for example, English imperialism is continuing its activity, at the same time.

However, the general staff of the French army is by no means content, merely to prepare the vassals of French imperialism, for the war against the Soviet Union. It is also arming its own fighting forces for this purpose. On the one hand, it wants to insure that the French army, which mainly consists of mercenaries, can with the maximum of ease, and the minimum of noise, be doubled in size. On the other hand, a special expeditionary corps is being organized, the strength of which can very quickly be brought up to 250,000 men and 70 per cent. of which consists of professional soldiers. The cavalry decree, which has been ratified by the Minister of War, contains direct instructions on the methods to be pursued by the French cavalry under East European conditions, *i.e.*, in a war against the Soviet Union. The troops composing the above-mentioned expeditionary corps, which is nominally destined for Morocco or Indo-China, frequently hold their manœuvres, in winter time, at high altitudes in the Alps, to accustom themselves to the East European winter. Part of the French air fleet—a division of 600 airplanes—is likewise being prepared for hostilities in Eastern Europe, while preparations are also being made for the French fleet to commence hostilities against the Soviet fleet, and against Kronstadt.

All these preparations, which were commenced under the aegis of the Tardieu government, are being continued under the present "peace cabinet." Monsieur Herriot is the only person who, ostensibly, knows

nothing about these facts of France's preparations for war against the Soviet Union. . . .

*British* imperialism does not, by any means, want to be left out of a war against the Soviet Union. In recent times there has been a noticeable strengthening of England's war preparations against the U.S.S.R. in the Near East. In particular Iraq, whose foreign policy, army, and finances, are controlled by England, is being prepared as a base of operations for land and air forces with a view to an advance across Persia to Baku and Transcaucasia. A large number of English bombing planes are concentrated in the air ports of Bagdad, Mosul, and Basra; besides this, a new and extremely large air port is being constructed in Bagdad, and a high-road is being built from Iraq, over Persian Azerbaijan, to the borders of the Soviet Union.

These are facts whose political range and import must not be underestimated.

#### 4.—THE IMPERIALISTS IN CHINA AND THE NATIONAL-REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE.

The military preparations of France and England are by no means being directed against the Soviet Union alone, but are, at the same time, systematically aimed against China. If anyone has gained the impression, from the newspapers, that the English and French imperialists in China are busying themselves with nothing more than mere diplomatic brokers' intrigues in Shanghai, this impression is false. In reality, they are developing quite concrete military offensives on Chinese territory—France from the South, while strengthening its positions in the Hunan province which borders on Indo-China, and British imperialism in the Chinese provinces of Chuan-Byan and Tyanhai. In the latter region, the English have already military operations set successfully going, the aim of which is to prepare for the partition of Central and Western China.

Their easy success attained in the Manchurian cam-



paign which was commenced last year, had given the Japanese imperialists swollen heads, and they decided to advance into the valley of the Yangtse, and to start by occupying Shanghai. This fine plan, however, contained one miscalculation. They had forgotten to ask leave of the Chinese people. The Japanese imperialists had imagined that Shanghai would only involve a military promenade, as was the case at the beginning in Manchuria, where all they had to do was to bribe one or two Chinese generals, and then the way to Mukden was open. In Shanghai the case was different. For the first time in history, the Chinese people offered serious resistance to an imperialist army, offered this resistance, despite the most vile form of treacherous sabotage to the cause of national defence, on the part of the "National" Government.

Perhaps you may think that the Nineteenth Army which fought in the defence of Shanghai, was an army of picked heroes, with exceptionally good equipment? No! It was badly equipped, and a year previously, when this army was sent against the Chinese Red Army, it did not distinguish itself at all, and only met with failure. But in the struggle against the Japanese troops, with their first-class equipment, this same army performed miracles.

The heroic defence of Shanghai was not only a surprise for Japanese imperialism; it was above all a tremendous blow against its authority in China. The haste with which the English and French "peaceful mediators" interfered with diplomatic negotiations, was obviously dictated—less by the fear that the Yangtse Valley might fall into the hands of Japanese imperialism—than by the very real danger that—in case the Japanese war leaders should attempt to penetrate more deeply into the country—Japanese imperialism might meet with actual catastrophe. As regards its capacity for self defence, the Chinese people is now, after the experiences of struggle gained in the first wave of the Chinese revolution (after the years 1925-27), a different people from what it was formerly—a

people in which the broad masses have acquired the courage and resolution to defend themselves, even against "great imperialist powers." This fact was demonstrated at Shanghai.

As is well known, it was, above all, the Shanghai workers, and besides them, the revolutionary peasant soldiers, who played a conspicuous part in this defence. True, the treachery of the Kuomintang government delivered Shanghai into the hands of the Japanese imperialists. But in proportion as the fighting anti-imperialist spirit of the Chinese masses rises higher and as the indignation against the Nanking government grows greater, the more do the million strong masses of the Chinese people turn their eyes towards the only reliable army which can defend the independence of their country—towards the *Red Army* of the Chinese Soviet power. As is well known, the Chinese Red Army has already repulsed four major campaigns of the counter-revolution. During the last few weeks, it has been able to extend the Soviet districts in the provinces of Fudsyien and Ankhui, has encircled Wuhan, has fought its way through to the sea, and is now threatening Nanking. The Red Army has become a mighty power through the many successful struggles that it has waged. It numbers more than 200,000 Red Army men, and to this number must be added about 400,000 of the Red Guards and the Young Guard. This army is our pride. It represents the shock troops of the coming victorious anti-imperialist uprising, and agrarian revolution throughout the whole of China. When it comes to the imperialists' war against China, and the Soviet Union, it will certainly play a conspicuous part as an anti-imperialist factor.

During the many important struggles which have been fought during this time, the Communist Party of China has made great progress; especially in the Soviet districts. In Shanghai and Peking it has also taken very active part in the anti-imperialist mass movement. Only in this work it has not been able to find a sufficiently firm anchorage among the masses, it has,

above all, not been able to make use of the great wave of the anti-imperialist mass movement to organise the working masses in trade unions, to extend the existing Red Trade Unions, found new ones and win over the yellow trade unions. Thus it has happened, that in this great anti-imperialist movement, in the non-Soviet districts, we have won much less adherence among the masses, than the objective conditions might have permitted. During recent times the Communist Party of China has, as far as we know, been making serious efforts to make good its omissions in this respect.

#### 5.—PROSPECTS OF THE JAPANESE REVOLUTION.

Many persons who are little acquainted with the conditions obtaining in Japan, might think Comrade Lenin's assertion, as to Japan's being unable to wage any great war, unless it can find support from another imperialist power, a singular one. Is it true that Japan is not a strong imperialist power? In reality this opinion is confirmed, up to the hilt, if we examine more closely what imperialist Japan looks like "from the inside."

Japanese imperialism is very aggressive, but it is not strong within. Its sinews of power are imported from Europe and America. The inner strength or weakness of any given imperialist country is, at the present time, reflected in the value of its currency. Well, as regards the *yen*, we know that since the beginning of the Manchurian invasion it has already lost more than half its value, and the quotations are sinking more rapidly every day, although it may be that this movement towards inflation has been only forced in part upon Japan by necessity, and in part promoted purposely by powerful cliques of finance capital and feudalism. What is the general situation with regard to the development of finance capital in Japan? In certain respects, it may even be said to be highly developed, that is to say, the concentration of capital and the formation of monopolies has advanced as far as in any other capitalist country, but, despite this fact, Japanese capitalism is a



capitalism which is weak in its foundations. Its base is provided mainly by the textile industry, and secondly, also, by the munitions industry—textiles being produced for export and war materials for Japan's own use. This, however, is not the basis upon which a powerful finance-capital has developed in other countries, for example, in Germany or the United States, where the backbone of such finance capital is formed by heavy industry.

Moreover, Japan is not only a country of capital. In examining the character of the Japanese revolution, we have been able to distinguish three main elements in the structure of the existing class domination in Japan: Monopoly capitalism, the monarchy and feudal land-ownership. The state apparatus of the monarchy, even though its position is relatively independent, is naturally most closely intertwined with its class basis, the landlord class. But then the Japanese big bourgeoisie is also intertwined with the apparatus of the monarchy. If we compare, for example, the character of the Japanese governing system with Tsarist Russia in pre-war times, we will find that, on the one hand, the remnants of feudalism are much stronger in Japan than they were at that time in Russia, and on the other hand that the concentration of capital is further advanced, and that monopoly capital is much more closely bound up with the monarchist state bureaucracy of the military and the police. This is the distinguishing feature of the Japanese ruling system. Its three constituent parts are so intertwined that, for example, the main tasks of the first stage of the Japanese revolution, which according to its general character will be a bourgeoisie-democratic revolution, ought not, by any means, to comprise only bourgeoisie-democratic measures, but at the same time also preparatory steps towards the socialist revolution, as, for example, the control of the banks, and of the production of the large-scale enterprises through the Soviets.

My purpose in referring to these characteristic features of Japanese class domination was only to render

the estimation of the prospects of the Japanese revolution, given in our draft for the theses, more comprehensible. If we believe it to be possible that in the immediate future Japan "can reach the situation of a revolutionary crisis," this is because we do not estimate the accentuation of Japan's external and internal contradictions, in a mechanical manner, according to the scale of the other capitalist countries, but bear in mind what an extraordinary quantity of revolutionary explosive material lies accumulated in Japan's peculiar conditions. Japan is infected through and through with the remnants of feudalism. This means an extraordinary increase in the pre-requisites of revolution. Even the crises among the heads of society here, take on a much more accentuated form than, for example, in the older capitalist countries; during the course of one year no less than three or four attempts on the lives of members of the government have been organized, while, on the last occasion, there were also attempts to assassinate several financial magnates. Of much more importance, however, it is the fact that in consequence of feudal oppression the *peasant masses* in Japan have a revolutionary role before them of many times greater importance than in most European countries. This is proved alone by the hitherto unbroken chain of peasant movements in Japan. Until recently cases of direct action by the peasants were not, as a rule, very extensive, but they were very numerous. Thousands of such cases took place every year. Last year, for example, no less than 4,000 cases of conflicts between the peasants and the landowners or the police were officially registered. There is nothing to wonder at in this, if it is known under what feudal slavery, and in what indescribable misery, the majority of the Japanese peasants are living, that landlords rob the peasants of the lion's share of their harvest in the form of lease-rent besides the other burdens which the Japanese peasant has to carry on his shoulders, and that there are large sections of the country where the peasant population is engaged in a desperate struggle

with death by starvation. During the course of this year several widespread movements have already been set on foot among the peasantry.

The militant movements of the peasant masses have, of course, a much greater revolutionary significance than they have in those agrarian countries where the *proletariat* is numerically very weak. In Japan, the proletariat forms one half of the population. True, it is a young proletariat and as yet weak in organization. A large section of the proletariat consists of working women who, however, have already shown in many demonstrations in recent times that, in a revolutionary situation, they can be counted on to take part in the proletariat's struggle for power.

Since the time when the Manchurian campaign was begun, there have been numerous cases in the ranks of the Japanese army of open unrest and rebellion. This has been made possible to a large extent by the activity of the Japanese Communist Party. On June 6th last year, i.e., one-and-a-half months before the Japanese troops invaded Manchuria, the Communist Party of Japan had already published an appeal, in which they drew the attention of the working masses to the fact that Japanese imperialism had decided to occupy Manchuria and China. Such timely intervention on the part of a Communist Party constitutes no small service. If all our Parties were as vigilant and far-sighted at the approach of great events, it would be excellent. The consequence of this was that the masses were already, to some extent, prepared; although the Party is small and illegal, it succeeded in distributing leaflets and newspapers on a mass scale, etc. Thus it was possible to begin an active anti-war movement, at the very beginning of the Manchurian campaign. Workers' and students' demonstrations were held. In a number of enterprises resolutions were adopted against the war (e.g., in three of the tramway depots in Tokio, etc.); strikes were called in a number of enterprises working for war purposes, and even in the arsenal of Osaka there was unrest among the masses against the



intensification of the working day which was being attempted there.

Somewhat earlier the work of the Communist Party of Japan had been hampered in its development by certain sectarian tendencies, but in the new situation the Party was making conscious and successful efforts to overcome such obstacles. At the very beginning of its anti-war campaign it had put forward the demand: "Full wages for all mobilised." This was a concrete workers' demand which met with support among the masses. Now, in the last few days, there have been demonstrations of the unemployed in Tokio; the police have broken up these demonstrations and—according to the information of the Press—the Communists on this occasion put forward the slogan: "Distribution of rice among the unemployed." This slogan has recently become very widespread among the unemployed. These two examples show that the Japanese Communist Party has now learnt how to approach the masses in the correct way—a fact which also finds its expression in the rest of their anti-war activity. In this connection, I must mention that one or two illegal trade unions, in which the Communist Party of Japan occupies a leading position, not long ago adopted certain rather dubious resolutions, tending to obscure the struggle against chauvinism. The Party leadership, however, condemned these decisions. Under the most difficult conditions, in an atmosphere of the most rabid chauvinism in the country, the Party waged its anti-war struggle, and, for this reason, it is all the more to be appreciated that, in this, the Party succeeded in strengthening its influence over the masses, and in raising its own Bolshevik level. The Young Communist League also distinguished itself in this struggle, and I recommend all comrades to read an appeal published by the illegal organ of the Japanese Y.C.L. and reprinted in the *Communist International*, No. 10 (1932), in which are discussed the tasks of struggle against imperialist war. Apart from one lapse in a small question of detail, this appeal is excellent, so concrete and well

constructed that the apparatus of our E.C.C.I. would scarcely be able to compose a better one. (Voice: Very good!) Each of our Parties can take an example from the Japanese Party both as regards this directive, and in connection with the whole anti-war campaign.

#### 6.—SHORTCOMINGS AND MISTAKES IN OUR ANTI-WAR STRUGGLE.

The questions of the struggle against the war danger have been placed as a special point on the agenda of this plenum, and, in this connection, we must exercise serious self-criticism. For, as you all know, our anti-war campaign is developing rather clumsily. I want now only to mention one or two shortcomings and mistakes in this field, which possess a general political significance.

The slogans are very abstract, for example—"Against war" and "For the defence of the Soviet Union." These slogans are correct, they are also necessary, but if we merely repeat slogans in this abstract manner it is impossible to launch a broad mass movement against the war danger.

Still worse are one or two pacifist mistakes, as, for example, those of our French comrades. France is notoriously a country where pacifist hoodwinking plays a greater part than anywhere else in the world. As a result of the terrible experiences of the imperialist war, the working masses have become imbued with a strong pacifist feeling of which the ruling bourgeoisie are making political use. Well then, what significance has it when in France, where every "socialist" has the slogan: "*Pour la paix*" on his lips, where almost every deputy and every minister, especially those of the present cabinet, is juggling with this slogan, the Young Communist League can think of nothing better than simply to put forward the same slogan—"For peace?" This simply means renouncing what is the special and main task of the French Communists in this question, namely, to unmask the pacifist hoodwinking of the bourgeoisie and

their lackeys. At the end of last year the leadership of the Communist Party of France had already had occasion to withdraw this erroneous slogan of the Y.C.L., but after one or two months had elapsed it made its appearance again in Communist documents and in "L'Humanite" on May 1.

Mistakes of this kind do not occur only in France. The April number of the German "Internationale" contains, for example, an article on the occasion of Comrade Litvinov's speech at Geneva. I do not know who the author is; he signs his name with the initials G. K. He has no idea of how to face the question from the revolutionary standpoint. He writes quite simply: "Communism has peace as the keypoint of its being," and even that "the struggle for peace represents the backbone of the entire revolutionary strategy and tactics for the present period." If that at the present time is the backbone of our strategy and tactics, it would be a pretty soft backbone, a pacifist backbone. (Laughter.)

The leadership of the Communist Party of the United States undertook in its anti-war campaign "to make use of the imperialist contradictions." That is without doubt a correct task in itself, provided only that it is *correctly performed*. But how was it performed by certain American comrades? They adopted the following "line": When, for example, a bourgeois newspaper correspondent sent a dispatch saying that Radek, writing in the "Izvestia," had described the United States as "a natural ally of the Soviet Union," certain comrades in New York immediately took this seriously, and wrote in the DAILY WORKER that "this new step in the policy of the Soviet Union opens up new possibilities for the mobilization of the masses in the United States for the immediate support of this policy!" Nor can it be regarded as an accident that the DAILY WORKER, which is quite vigilant in reporting all cases of the transport of arms and munitions from European countries to Japan, says extraordinarily



little, and that only on rare occasions, about the fact that war materials are being sent to Japan from the *United States*. What does this mean? Is not this perhaps opportunism? If the Communist Party of the United States is combating the war danger by conducting its struggle only against the Japanese, but not against American imperialism, then I ask, comrades, who is going to fight against the war preparations in the United States? Perhaps some European Party should take over this task? It is proposed to make use of the imperialist contradictions. But with what end is one to make use of them? The most important thing is to make use of them for the purpose of mobilizing the masses against your "own" imperialism, against your "own" bourgeoisie. Here lies the main purpose of a Communist Party's utilizing the imperialist and national contradictions in the capitalist country. How, then, can the Communist Party of the United States best make use of the existing contradictions between Japanese and American imperialism in its anti-war campaign? By unmasking the Janus-face of the American bourgeoisie before the masses, and showing that this bourgeoisie, on the one hand, is stirring up the American people against the Japanese by chauvinist propaganda, but at the same time supplying Japanese imperialism with war materials, and egging it on against the Soviet Union. Also by exposing the colonial policy and the plans for expansion of American imperialism, the Communist Party of the United States can make use of the extreme contradictions of American imperialism for the purpose of mobilizing the masses.

It can also do this by fighting against the oppression of the Negroes. This constitutes revolutionary utilization of national and imperialist contradictions, as was recommended by Lenin. But not what was offered us in the erroneous anti-war campaign in the *DAILY WORKER*, or at the last Plenum of the American Party.

## 7.—EXPOSURE OF THE SOPHISTRIES OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS.

In the struggle against the war danger and in making propaganda for the achievements of the Soviet Union, much more attention than formerly must be devoted to concrete exposure of anti-Soviet lies and distortions of the Social-Democrats. At the beginning of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, the social-fascists gave us a sample of the sophistries with which they are going to defend the war against the Soviet Union. Beginning with the statements of Vandervelde, the Social-Democratic Press of all countries immediately began provocative attempts to cast suspicion on the Soviet Union: "There may well exist an alliance between Japan and the Soviet Union." However, in our work, we must take into account that, in most cases, nowadays these people do not dare to speak openly in favour of war against the Soviet Union. That is easy to understand. There are even Japanese fascists who feel themselves impelled to declare in public, that they are opponents of the war planned against the Soviet Union. In all parts of the world, one can meet with a certain category of counter-revolutionary enemies of the Soviets who feel themselves obliged to assure the workers: "No, we are not enemies of the Soviets, we are not in favour of a war against the Soviet Union." Even the Menshevik Dan is now swearing that he is no enemy of the Soviets; he has always been "in favour of coalition with the Bolsheviks!" For this reason, such persons cannot be exposed by arguments of a too simple nature. Nor must we under estimate the danger that arises from the fact that a certain section of the Social-Democrats are stirring up feeling among the unemployed in favour of war in general. "War brings bread and work." This is the most underhand and criminal method of preparing an atmosphere favourable for war. We must under no circumstances rely upon the desire for peace among the working masses

achieving its purpose, without the most vigorous activity on our part. So long as the masses do not sufficiently realize what is at stake, so long as the Government and the general staff succeed in hushing up their preparations for war against the Soviet Union, the masses cannot be convinced of the real danger of war. The inadequacy of the successes, which our Parties, in Europe and America, have hitherto been able to attain in their anti-war campaign, best shows how great a danger there is that the broad masses of the people may be *taken by surprise in the event of an imperialist war*.

The Menshevik methods employed by Trotzky in this matter are also highly characteristic. He assures us on the one hand that there is no immediate danger threatening the Soviet Union, in particular not from the Far East. On the other hand, he demands, in a provocative manner, that the Red Army should march against Germany to prevent Hitler from taking power there, and that the Government of the Soviet Union should say nothing about a policy of peace, nothing about disarmament, etc. And while he is thus diverting attention from the danger of war against the Soviet Union, he, at the same time, tells France and England that they have prospects of a further lengthy period of pacifist democracy. All these Social-Democratic sophistries and diversive manoeuvres must be met by our sections by an intensified struggle to expose and unmask them.

#### 8.—DEFENDING THE BASIS OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION.

I will not here attempt to describe the various tasks of the anti-war struggle, for they are contained in the special resolution which has been put before you. I will only emphasize that we will not make headway in this struggle, will not, that is to say, really enroll the great masses, until we learn how to wage this struggle in a more concrete fashion than hitherto. We ought, everywhere, to make clear why it is, that the workers



of all countries should fight hand in hand with the Soviet Union in case of a war; that it is not a question only of mere sympathetic action for the defence of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is not impotent; it has grown stronger, and it is able to release the whole power of its peoples against the warlike attacks of its enemies. It is a question of defending the cause of the workers of all countries. The war against the Soviet Union is war against the toilers in all capitalist countries. And the defence of the Soviet Union is the defence of the vanguard of the world proletariat, of the basis of the socialist world revolution. As Comrade Stalin wrote as far back as 1924:

“They are wrong who forget the international character of the October Revolution, but they are wrong also who remember the international character of the October Revolution, but are disposed to regard this revolution as something passive, something which is called upon, to receive support only from the outside. In actual fact it is not only the October Revolution which needs support from the revolutions in other countries, but it is also the revolution in these countries which needs the support of the October Revolution in order to hurry on and bring forward the cause of overthrowing world imperialism.”

It is only by waging a Bolshevik struggle, from day to day, against all the concrete measures of war policy taken by the imperialist bourgeoisie and its agents, in every country, that we can guarantee that, in the event of an imperialist war and intervention against the Soviet Union, we may not only put forward the slogan of turning the war into a civil war, but also be in a position really to turn the imperialist war into a civil war; nay, more, not only to turn it into a civil war, but to wage this civil war to a victorious conclusion. (Applause.)

# TASKS OF THE BOLSHÉVIK MASS POLICY.

## I.—MASS PROPAGANDA FOR THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE

### PROLETARIAT AND THE SOVIET POWER.

At a time when we have reached the end of capitalist stabilization, when we are effecting the transition to a new series of wars and revolutions, it is highly necessary in our agitation and propaganda to enlighten the broad strata of the toilers on the principles of Communism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the Soviet Power. This does not mean reverting to the methods of that time—the time of the First or Second Congress of the Comintern—when our task was still to consolidate the Communist vanguard, and when revolutionary *propaganda* was accordingly placed in the foreground. For more than ten years past the Communist International has been emphasizing the fact that propaganda alone is not enough, that we are a Party of action which must understand how to link up propaganda for its principles, with the struggle for the partial demands of the working masses. With this end in view, Comrade Lenin, in 1920, wrote his book against the “Infantile Disorder of Communism.”\* And, in the actual fact, the Communist International set its face the whole time against such sectarian tendencies as appeared in several Communist Parties (for example in the American Party) during the course of years, that workers who wanted to join revolutionary mass organizations, or trade unions, should be required to acknowledge the dictatorship of the proletariat as a condition of their being admitted. This ought not to be done, even to-day, but what we have to bear in mind, in the present situation, is the following fact: If we formerly insisted on the linking up of revolutionary

propaganda, with the struggle for partial demands, it is, at the present time, even more necessary to most sharply raise the question of Power in our agitation and propaganda. How necessary this is is shown especially by the example of Spain, where the Communist Party had omitted (or was unable), in the face of a revolutionary situation, to enlighten the masses of workers and peasants by their propaganda, as to what the Soviets are and what their significance is; in Spain it was therefore impossible, when revolutionary events began to occur, to employ the slogan of the Soviets as a slogan of direct action, and to undertake any practical action in this field.

This is the first reason. The character of the present situation demands that we explain to the masses what proletarian dictatorship is. A second reason is the fact that in many countries the Social-Democrats are still able to distort this basic question, and to use it, in order to build up a political barrier between the Communist Party and the broad masses of reformist workers. "The working class," they say, "can only come to socialism on the basis of democracy. We are therefore in favour of democracy; the fascists are in favour of dictatorship, and the Communists are also in favour of dictatorship." In this way they are able, in all cases where our comrades do not sufficiently explain the question, to give the broad working masses an absolutely distorted conception of what the Communist standpoint really is. The conception of proletarian dictatorship is not clear to the masses. These masses are not in favour of "dictatorship in general"; they are just as little in favour of it as we are. We want to win over the reformist workers for the *proletarian* dictatorship, and it is perfectly feasible to win them over to this cause at the present time, only the question has not been explained to them yet. It is difficult for them to grasp, that proletarian dictatorship in the form of the Soviet Power is precisely the state form of proletarian democracy. And therefore the question must be explained to them.



The third reason is as follows:—Recently the “left” Social-Democrats have again begun to manœuvre with their slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, just as, in the first period of the Comintern, persons of the “2½ International” category such as Crispian, Kautsky, MacDonald, and others paid lip service to this slogan. At the present time it is, above all, Max Adler, the theologian of German “left” Social-Democracy, who wants to make capital out of the use of this slogan. It is, of course, easy for us to see, at the first glance, that what such a man as Max Adler is trying to offer the masses under the spurious title of “the dictatorship of the proletariat” is nothing more or less in its essence than what Kautsky at the present time is recommending as “bourgeois democracy”; the only difference lies in a sophistical playing with words. This is obvious to us, but it is not so to the wide working masses.

We thus have every reason to make this point clear in our mass propaganda. Only in this we must be careful to explain it with real correctness and make it comprehensible to the workers. As a guiding principle to this end, I recommend the theses of Comrade Lenin, written at the First World Congress, on the subject of bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship.\* These theses have not only retained their value in general, but can still be applied directly as such in the practice of the present day. During the course of thirteen years we have allowed ourselves to forget them a little. It seems to me that what Comrade Lenin wrote is better suited precisely for our present mass propaganda than the too simple way of facing the question which has often been allowed to pass muster in our Party literature. The following brief resolution adopted at the First World Congress demands: “To enlighten the working class as to the historical significance of the political and practical necessity of creating a new

---

\* Reprinted in “Revolutionary Lessons.” Modern Book : London ; W.L.P., New York. 1s. 35 cts.

proletarian democracy to take the place of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarianism.”\* In the theses of Comrade Lenin, stress is laid (Point 14) on the fact that “the Soviet form of the dictatorship of the proletariat means for the toiling class, i.e., for the overwhelming majority of the population, the practical possibility of democratic liberty and privileges to an extent never before known, even approximately, in the best democratic bourgeois republics.”† We must explain this to the workers, who can, of course, be won over for proletarian democracy; then they will better understand what is meant by proletarian dictatorship. Another passage (Point 20) in Lenin’s theses is also of especial importance:

“The annihilation of the power of the State is the aim all socialists have had in view first and foremost amongst them Marx. Without the realisation of this aim, true democracy, i.e., liberty and equality, is unattainable. It can only be achieved by the Soviet or proletarian democracy, for this system prepares at the very outset for the ‘withering away’ of any form of the State by bringing forward the mass organizations of the working people into a constant and absolute participation in State administration.”‡

We must also learn from this what Comrade Lenin said about the practice of the Bolshevik Party in carrying out the slogan of the Soviets:

“... In our revolution, our procedure was practical, not theoretical. For example, we did not formerly raise the question of the constituent assemblies as a theoretical question; we did not say that we did not recognize the national assembly. Not until later, after the Soviet organizations had spread

---

\* Ibid. page 86.

† Ibid. page 82.

‡ Ibid. page 84.

themselves out over the entire country and conquered political power, did we proceed to sweep away the constituent assemblies. We can see to-day that the question has taken on a much more acute form in Hungary and Switzerland. This is on the one hand a very good thing; it gives us the firm assurance that the revolution in the countries of western Europe will advance more rapidly and bring us greater victories. On the other hand, however, there is a certain danger in this, namely that the struggles will be so tempestuous that the consciousness of the working masses will not be able to keep pace with this development. The significance of the Soviet system is not yet clear to the great mass of politically educated workers in Germany to-day, because they have been brought up under the parliamentary system and amidst bourgeois prejudices."

Precisely this example of the turning of a revolutionary propaganda slogan into a revolutionary slogan of action was highly characteristic for the mass policy of the Bolsheviks in 1917. It goes without saying that this example should not be imitated mechanically. It is not a question of convening the constituent assemblies, for example, in Italy or Spain. Of course not. It is a question of the method. We have much to learn from what Lenin said on the method of the Bolshevik mass policy.

## 2.—CARRYING OUT THE SLOGAN "TURN TO MASS WORK."

As you know, during the course of the last few years, the E.C.C.I., through its organs, and with the co-operation of the Party representatives present at the E.C.C.I., has exercised a steady pressure on the various sections of the Communist International to see that they might carry out the slogan: "Turn to mass work." From this standpoint, the work of a number of Communist Parties, e.g., the Norwegian, French, English, American C.P., etc., and also that the Youth International, has been subjected, during the last few



years, to a thorough examination. At the XIth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., Comrade Manuilsky laid great emphasis upon this question, both in his report and in the theses.\* Well, comrades, it is now time to ask about the results. How far has this slogan "Turn to mass work" been carried out? Let me admit that there are some Parties represented here who are able to show certain results, though insufficient ones, in this respect. But as for most of the Communist Parties—what steps have they taken to effect this turn? Or are we to suppose that the unanimously adopted decisions were, perhaps, not intended really to be put into effect? This question must be raised at our present Plenum in an open, decisive and comradely way. Otherwise, comrades, what headway are we making? How can we adopt decisions here without the absolute conviction that they are going to be carried out? We cannot, after all, adopt decisions with the tacit reservation that a "scissors"† is to exist between our decisions, and their execution. That is the Second International's way of doing things, but it must never be allowed to enter into the practice of the Communist International.

What are the most important preliminary conditions, for the real carrying out of this slogan, in our practice? In this connection, two things, above all, should be taken into account. Firstly, a correct approach to the non-Party and reformist workers, to establish a living link with them; and secondly, a concrete, practical, and at the same time a revolutionary way of raising the questions.

~~What is meant by creating a link with the majority~~ or workers, for example, in an enterprise? We mean by this *working* among these broad masses. To be sure, not any and every sort of work is suited for establishing a link between us and the masses. Should we come forward in an incorrect way, we are liable even to

---

\* Modern Books, London ; W.L.P., New York.

† Divergence. Ed,

destroy connections previously made, instead of winning new ones. We, all of us, know that our comrades not infrequently act in such a way, that they isolate themselves from the masses, that the majority of the workers are unwilling to give a hearing to us. In general, we must learn better how to *obtain a hearing* among the masses. It seems to me important to lay special stress upon this factor if we want to make quite clear what is meant by this task of creating a living link with the masses—a task, the necessity of which, was again and again emphasized by Lenin, in his speeches and writings.

On what does it depend, whether the masses lend us a hearing or not? It depends on how we approach them, what slogans we put forward, whether the questions which we raise at a given moment interest the majority of the workers, in what way we throw light upon these questions, whether our proposals are suited to the concrete situation, etc. Our ability to get ourselves a hearing among the masses is thus not only a question of organizational methods, but above all a question of correct tactics. For example, in one passage in his book on the "infantile disorders,"\* Lenin mentions how difficult our English comrades often find it, to get themselves a hearing among the masses; and he proceeds to give them certain quite concrete pieces of advice, as to what tactics they should employ, in the given situation, in order that the masses may listen to them. (At the time he wrote, it was a question of supporting the candidates of the Labour Party against Lloyd George, at the parliamentary elections, "as the noose supports the hanged man.") Generally speaking, if we make an exact study of what Lenin especially keeps in view, in establishing the connection with the masses, we shall find, often, that the starting point consists precisely in the question, how the masses can first be brought to listen to us. In this connection, however, two points must not be lost sight of.

---

\* "Left Wing Communism." Ed.

Firstly, when the majority of the workers lend us a hearing, when they take an interest in our statement of the case, reflect on the questions we have raised, and perhaps want to discuss these questions with us, etc., this does not yet mean that we have already won these masses over to our side. It only means that we have already established *connection* with them. This constitutes the first important stage on the path of winning the masses, the stage which is most difficult for us, in practice, and in which the efforts to win over the majority most often come to grief.

Secondly, when we speak about mass policy—and we will have occasion to speak about it not a little at this Plenum—we must not for a moment forget, that there are two different kinds of mass policy—opportunist “black policy,” and Bolshevik mass policy. The Bolshevik policy does not mean being taken in tow, by the moods of the masses; it is “a steady activity with a view to *raising* the class consciousness of the broadest masses, emancipating them from petty-bourgeois prejudices and reformist illusions, *activizing* them and *revolutionizing* them” (from our draft for the theses). Under circumstances when the masses, for example, are swept away by a chauvinist psychology, it is our job to fight determinedly *against* this mood of the masses, just as Lenin battled against the stream, in this way, during the war.

The most important point in the Bolshevik mass policy, is to assist the masses to convince themselves of the correctness of the policy of the Communist Party, above all, through their own experience. This experience, and this conviction, must be imparted to them in strikes, and all other forms of the mass struggle, as well as the parliamentary struggle. Lenin clearly stated the fundamental character of the Bolshevik mass policy when he wrote as follows against the German “radical” Communist Workers’ Party in 1920:

“For the Communists in Germany parliamentarism is, of course, ‘politically outworn’; but—and



this is the whole point—we must not deem that that which is outworn for us is necessarily outworn for the class, the masses. Here, again, we see that the 'Left' do not know how to argue, do not know how to behave as a class, as a party of the masses. True, it is our duty not to sink to the level of the masses, to the level of the backward strata of the class. This is incontestable. It is our duty to tell them the bitter truth. It is our duty to call their bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices by their right name. But, at the same time, it is our duty to watch soberly the actual state of consciousness and preparedness of the whole class, and not of the Communist vanguard alone; of the whole labouring mass, and not merely of its foremost men.”\*

I hope, that in the course of our discussions at this Plenum, these general observations will be illustrated by examples from the practical experience of the Communist Parties of different countries.

### 3.—ON SLOGANS.

Perhaps the greatest shortcoming with our Parties is, that they do not have sufficiently well-tested slogans, and that they have not a clear idea of the methods of Lenin, in the employment of slogans. This is, in fact, a very difficult question, and the remarks I am going to make do not, of course, claim to be an exhaustive treatment of this question.

Lenin says: “It is one of the most dangerous sins of revolution to substitute the abstract for the concrete.” The abstract and the concrete, and the relation between them is one of the fundamental questions, not only of knowledge and science, but also of politics. Lenin always taught to think concretely. But concreteness in Lenin's sense is never the concreteness of unprincipledness; it is dialectical concreteness.

---

\* “Left Wing Communism,” page 42.

It reflects and expresses the principles of our programme (the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the Soviet power) in living slogans of action, and partial demands. Lenin says explicitly that "the slogan of the *immediate* imminent struggle cannot simply and directly be deduced from the *general* slogan of the definite programme." "It is necessary," he goes on to say, "to take stock of the concrete historical situation; it is necessary to study the whole development, and the whole logical course of the revolution, and to derive our tasks not only from the principles of the programme, but from the previous steps and stages of the movement." To divorce our principles from our partial demands inevitably leads to a deviation, either towards opportunistic unprincipledness, towards regarding reforms as an end in themselves; or towards a sectarian policy of revolutionary phrases. The Leninist slogan is always concrete, but in this slogan the concrete is linked up; welded with Communist principles. This concrete slogan *draws* the masses towards the revolutionary aim.

In our draft for the theses we have now raised these questions as a practical issue, have attempted to give certain practical instructions for the "concretizing" of the agitational methods and slogans of our sections. We emphasize, above all, that in agitation, and the drawing up of our slogans, we must seize on to those questions and daily events which particularly agitate the workers at various times in the shops, in the trade unions, in all those places where the masses are. It may sometimes be only small events, perhaps only such events as have a significance within the sphere, for example, of one single enterprise (cases of unjust treatment, on the part of an employer, etc.); but it may also be great events which, in a given locality or district, or the whole country give occasion for stirring up the working masses. These concrete events, these "burning questions" of the workers must be taken as a point of departure, we must seize on to them, and under no circumstances, "seize on to the illusions of

the masses," as Brandler argued in 1923, when his advice led to such bad results. In seizing on to such concrete occasions, we must at all costs understand, how to take as our basis, the level of development of class consciousness, and of activity, which the masses have already reached; not in order to lower ourselves to this level, but in order to raise the level of the broad masses.

In this way we can draw up correct slogans of mass policy—slogans which, it goes without saying, are not to be regarded as a talisman, but which may serve, so to speak, somewhat as a "spark." Lenin has, on several occasions, employed the expression, that any concrete occasion may serve as a "spark" and "show itself able to set the conflagration going, in the sense that the masses awake." The Leninist slogans also possess this quality of a spark, and we must learn this art of how to formulate correct slogans. As regards the content of our mass education and mass policy, this is, without doubt, a most fruitful idea for our practice. In recent times, various individual comrades from different countries have devoted their attention to this question.

If we devote more close attention to the error or abstractness from which the work of many Communist Parties suffers, and which, above all, hampers them in establishing a living link with the broad masses, we can observe, in fact, that, in most cases, the Communist agitators, editors, etc., derive everything which they say, or write to the masses *directly* from the principles of our programme, *directly* from the idea of the necessity of revolution. They *presuppose* that the mass reader, or the mass listener, has already grasped, and acknowledges, our principles and the necessity of revolution, and that he only needs to be told what is to be done for a revolution to follow as a result. But it is just this which represents an incorrect approach to the broad masses. For it is just the necessity of revolution, which the reformist worker does not yet realize. It is precisely our task to help him to realize



this necessity. It is for this purpose that our Bolshevik work is required. But we are refusing to perform this work, if we start from the assumption that the wide masses already understand the necessity of revolution.

This error of "left" doctrinairism results in the fact that Communist agitation is often so abstract and stereotyped that it is only understood by the already conscious minority, but is unable to establish any connection with the majority of the workers; that is to say, such agitation is regarded by the not yet conscious or semi-conscious workers, by the non-Party and reformist workers—despite all their sympathies for the idea of socialism—as unreal, unpractical revolutionism, remote from reality; as sectarianism. This state of affairs results, on the one hand, in the fact that one section of the members of our Parties considers in practice that the task of winning over the social-democratic workers is too difficult, is impossible ("They're all of them 'little Zoergiebel's," "\* "There's no talking to them at all.") On the other hand, it provides the social-democratic parties, the reformist trade union leaders, and all opportunists, with a favourable opportunity of creating the illusion that their treacherous policy is a necessary piece of "realist policy," that it is the sole practical and useful method of defending the daily interests of the workers, and in this way of holding up the process of the radicalization of the working masses and their going over into the revolutionary camp. The terror of "left" doctrinairism thus, in actual fact, has the effect not of accelerating, but indirectly of delaying the process of revolutionizing the working masses.

In his lectures on the "Fundamentals of Leninism," Comrade Stalin says:

"It is not a question of the vanguard realising the impossibility of maintaining the old order of things and the need for ending them. It is a ques-

---

\* The bloody Social-Democrat police chief.

tion of the masses understanding this necessity, and showing themselves ready to support the vanguard. But this state of knowledge can only come from their own experience. To give them the possibility of understanding by their own experience the inevitability of the overthrowing of the old order, to show in advance methods of fighting and forms of organisation enabling them to discover experimentally the truth of the revolutionary slogans, this is the task to be accomplished."

For this purpose, the employment of the *tactics of the united front* is above all suitable and necessary.

#### 4.—THE UNITED FRONT FROM BELOW.

We lay claim to the leadership of the wide working masses, but we often do so without accomplishing any systematic work among these masses in order to win their *confidence*. It is for the most part only during the parliamentary election campaigns that the majority of Communist Parties develop mass work on a broad scale in order to attract the non-Party, social-democratic and syndicalist workers. The Communists do not possess a constant living contact with these non-Party, social-democratic and syndicalist workers.

It is, however, necessary to create "a mutual confidence as between the advance guard of the working class and the working masses." (Lenin.) What does this mean? In 1926 Comrade Stalin gave the following answer to this question—an answer which I hold to be of extraordinary importance for our present-day practice in capitalist countries:

"First of all, that the Party must have a good ear for the voice of the masses, must pay close attention to their revolutionary instinct, must study the actualities of their struggle, must carefully enquire whether their policy is sound—and must, therefore, be ready, not only to teach the masses, but also to learn from them.

"This means, in the second place, that the Party must from day to day win the confidence of the pro-

letarian masses; that, by its policy and its activities, it must secure the support of the masses; that it must not order but persuade, helping the masses to become aware by their own experience that the Party policy is right; that it must, therefore, be the guide, the leader, the teacher of the proletariat."\*

Without daily work among the broad working masses, without daily struggle for the defence of their living interests, the Communists, in laying claim to the leadership of the masses, can only isolate themselves. This daily work is a necessary pre-condition for us, if we are to prove ourselves to be the Party of the workers in practice and win the confidence of the majority of the working class. Opportunistic capitulation means renouncing revolutionary agitation among the masses; it means giving ground before the petty-bourgeois prejudices, illusions or temporary feelings of depression among the majority, it means hushing up, or glossing over, the fundamental differences between Communism and reformism. If, however, we should on occasion meet with failure in our struggle in principle against the reformist leaders for the winning over of the majority of the workers and despite this carry on this struggle, conscious of our aims, on the basis of proletarian democracy, this constitutes a correct Bolshevik course of action.

Until quite recent times, the slogan of a united front from below has, in most cases, either remained a mere empty phrase with which Communist practice is not in accord, or, where the policy of a united front has actually been applied, there has sometimes been a deviation in the direction of opportunist "drivelling about unity" (as, for example, at the municipal elections in France and in one or two cases in Germany). The correct Bolshevik tactics of the united front must, however, be made to penetrate the whole mass work of

---

\* "Leninism," page 38. Modern Books, London; W.L.P., New York.



the Communist Parties, for these tactics represent "an essential part of the tactics of the Communist International during the whole pre-revolutionary period"\* as a means in the successful struggle against capital, in mobilizing the masses, and in unmasking and isolating the reformist leaders.

The proletarian united front, in the Bolshevik sense, is a militant agreement between the conscious revolutionary Communist vanguard, and the not yet revolutionary masses of the toilers. Only the immediate practical aims of the present class struggles of the proletariat, the actual action slogans of Communist policy, can serve as a political platform for the formation of this militant agreement, not the principles of the Communist programme which are, as yet, incomprehensible to the non-Party and reformist workers, but which ought to be popularized among them during the course of the actual partial struggles. As an organizational form for creating the united front from below, that is, for linking up the Communist vanguard with the broad masses, only the forms of proletarian democracy can be used, not the much more highly centralized forms of Communist Party organization. The policy of the united front consists precisely in the correct employment of the forms of proletarian democracy; the correct policy of the united front consists in making the best use of the forms of proletarian democracy for the purpose of revolutionizing the majority of the proletariat.

In this general sense, the tactics of the united front from below represent the line which must be followed in the entire work of the Communist Parties in agitation and in mobilizing the masses (in the Press, in every campaign, in every case of mass direct action, in the daily work, in the shops, and trade unions, among the unemployed, among proletarian women, young workers, etc.). In its *special* sense, the method of the united front should take the form of a Communist or-

---

\* The Programme of the Communist International,

ganization approaching—either in its own name or otherwise—all the workers employed in a given enterprise or locality, district, or trade, or in the most important cases, throughout the whole country, with the proposal to carry out a joint mass action around some definite concrete question.

Such united front initiative should comprise short and lucid practical proposals as to what sort of action is involved, what is to be done, what demands are to be voiced, and how the workers are to make decisions on the initiation, the leadership, the further conduct, and conclusion of the given action. Every united front initiative of this kind should be supported by an intensive preparatory campaign among the masses. In such cases, it is also possible to approach the members of a definite trade union organization (or of several trade unions), on occasion also the worker-members of other political or cultural proletarian organizations. This constitutes the special method of the united front from below. This method does not pre-suppose, but on the other hand, does not preclude the possibility, that in special exceptional cases a Communist proposal of unity may be sent to a lower trade union organization as such, or even to a local social-democratic organization; this, however, must be most rigorously checked in each particular case (and in my opinion should not be undertaken without the express consent of the Party leadership). The tactical expediency of such a step depends, above all, on how far we can keep the initiative in our own hands, and how far we are in a position to create organizational key-points for ourselves among the masses during the course of such a united front action; we cannot reckon on any success unless we are able to accomplish really systematic Communist fractional work in the development of such an action.

The Bolshevik policy of the united front is not a "*bloc*" policy; it does not mean "making peace" with the social-democratic or reformist leaders (as the renegades of Communism, Brandler, Trotsky and

others would have it). All opportunistic tendencies in this direction (for example, glossing over the differences with the reformist leaders who, it is alleged, are becoming "revolutionized") should be most decisively rebuffed. The united front of the Communist and non-Communist workers *against the bourgeoisie*, must be unequivocally contraposed to the social-democrats' policy of the united front *with the bourgeoisie*. The whole meaning of the Bolshevik united front lies, firstly, in the *class struggle against the bourgeoisie* and, secondly, in *isolating the agents of the bourgeoisie from the mass of the proletariat*.

In most countries, the Communists seldom understand how to initiate and carry through a united front action in practice in such a way as to really attain the isolation of the reformist workers from their social-democratic leaders thereby. In many cases plans for such actions (in the sense of real mass actions) are doomed to failure from the start, because the Communists demand from the social-democratic workers, as an absolute *preliminary condition* that they break with those in whom they have hitherto trusted, and subordinate themselves to Communist leadership. But, in almost all cases, the reformist workers, however much they may want to fight together with the Communists against the bourgeoisie, are not yet ready for this *before the united front action begins*. Not until they have taken part in this common action together with the Communists can they gain the necessary experience which will convince them that their reformist leaders do not deserve their confidence; and this result, which is of decisive importance, can be attained not only in cases where Communists are placed at the head of the mass action in question, but also in cases where the majority of the workers taking part at first entrust the leadership of the action to social-democratic bureaucrats. This, however, presupposes that the Communists prove themselves, during the course of the action, to be the very best champions of the demands of the working masses, and at the same time make use



of the fact that they are in opposition in correct Bolshevik fashion, i.e., in order to expose all measures of bourgeois compromise taken by reformist leaders. In this case, as also in their work in the reformist trade unions in general, the Communists should challenge the working masses to demand from their reformist leaders that the latter take definite practical steps towards the real defence of the workers' interests and the strengthening of their actual militant action. As a rule, Communists hesitate to do this from fear of falling into opportunism. The Branderites actually did employ the slogan: "Force the bureaucrats" in an opportunistic manner in order to "force" the masses to pin their hopes upon the apparatus of the reformist trade unions (it being alleged either that the present bureaucrats would pursue a better course of policy, or that the apparatus could be transferred into the hands of better people by way of trade union democracy). The Communists, on the contrary, should free the reformist workers from such illusions. This, however, cannot be achieved simply by telling the workers, who still place their confidence in the reformist bureaucrats, that these bureaucrats neither can, nor will, defend the interests of the workers. This must be *proved* in a practical manner; the reformist workers must be brought to the point where they can see, with their own eyes, how those, in whom they have placed their confidence, are sabotaging and betraying the necessary measures, which have been decided upon by the masses, and which point to successful action, how they are visibly revealing by their methods of leadership both their characterless vacillations and hoodwinking methods and also their infamous sycophancy before the bourgeoisie. This method of "graphic instruction" is much more calculated to help the reformist workers to free themselves from the influence of their former leaders, than mere agitation and propaganda on our part.

What has been said above is based, first and foremost, on the concrete experience of the Communist

Parties of Germany, Poland, and Czecho-Slovakia during recent times. The Communist Party of Germany has now achieved a marked improvement in its methods of developing the united front movement. True, in individual cases many mistakes have been committed; there have, above all, been frequent cases of mistakes of a Right tendency and also of a sectarian tendency to resist the development of an anti-fascist united front. But the leadership of the Central Committee has succeeded in correcting these mistakes and in developing a great and vital united front movement. This is a fact which promises much for the revolutionary movement in Germany.

The welding together and development of the united front from below is, at the present time, an urgent task not only for the German, Polish, and Czecho-Slovakian Parties, but for all sections of the Comintern. Without carrying out this task in practice, we can make no progress. In a certain sense it can even be said that, in the pre-revolutionary period, the united front from below is just as necessary for the working class as the fully-developed forms of proletarian democracy after the seizure of power. Under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie the working class has at its disposal only rudimentary fragments (sorry remains) of proletarian democracy. Making full use of these in the interests of the revolution means precisely employing the policy of the united front from below. Under the proletarian dictatorship, the working class has at its disposal above all the *soviets*, in whose hands power is vested; and just as under these circumstances it is absolutely necessary to do everything in order to uphold these highest forms of proletarian democracy and to strengthen them ever more and more, so in capitalist countries we have the task of developing and consolidating the proletarian united front from below to an ever greater extent. It can only be developed in more or less loose organizational forms. It ought, however, to be developed as a permanent coherent movement, instead of individual scattered actions of the

united front, which pass without leaving anything behind them. It is just this which we have to learn, namely, how the united front from below is to be further developed, consolidated and revolutionized as a continuous series of mass actions and brought ever more securely under the leadership of the Communist Party.

#### 5.—ON STRIKE TACTICS AND THE WORK IN THE REFORMIST TRADE UNIONS.

As the lessons to be derived from strike movements have been chosen as the theme for special reports at this session of the E.C.C.I., I only want to direct your attention to one main question. What is the guiding criterion, according to which, we are to estimate the political results of the strike movement? In my opinion, according to the results of the strike movement on the working masses and, first and foremost, on the strikers themselves. Of decisive importance is the answer to the question of whether our positions in the ranks of the working masses have been strengthened or weakened by the strike in question, whether the militant preparedness of these masses for great struggles in the future have been increased or not.

During recent times, it has often happened that the reformists have called a strike and placed themselves at its head, while we, who had as yet only a minority of the workers behind us, have not understood how to employ the correct tactics in such a position of opposition, which is, in itself, favourable for us. In such cases it is a mistake of the first magnitude, if we refuse to take part in the strike. Yet such examples are to be recorded in a number of countries (Germany, Sweden, etc.). From the point of view of winning over the masses, this is nothing better than a travesty of revolutionary policy. In such cases we have, after all, every chance of increasing our minority during the course of the action, and turning it into a majority.

We have many fine examples of strikes in Poland.



In some of these strikes our comrades were able to take the lead, and, in this way, we increased our influence over the masses; in other cases we made considerable gains, although we were not at the head of the strikes; and finally there were also some strikes where our comrades were at the head, but where, after the end of the strike, there were absolutely no favourable results to be recorded. In general, we may say that the circumstance that we succeed in getting the leadership into our hands at the beginning of a strike, does not, by any means, mean that in this way we score a political success, i.e., effect a strengthening of our positions in the revolutionary trade union movement. This success depends above all on whether we succeed in leading these struggles under the—for us, often very difficult—conditions.

In many cases strikes have either broken out spontaneously without our comrades knowing anything about them, or in cases where they have taken part, they have not known what to do when the strike was over. The task of making correct use of the strike situation, with a view to strengthening the revolutionary trade union organization, often presents our comrades with great difficulties in practice and ought therefore to be concretely illustrated in the discussion. I refer to a case which is well known to the English comrades—that of Lucas. This is a large factory where several comrades have been working for many years without, however, achieving any results. Suddenly, a great movement sprang up under their leadership. These comrades were probably themselves astounded to find that the great masses were following them. The success was so brilliant that workers' delegations even came from neighbouring places and asked our comrades to come to them, too, to organize and direct mass action. However, our comrades were not in a position to make organizational use of the high state of feeling among the masses. In this place the reformists have only one or two rather weak groups, but the Communists did not understand how to make the element-

any practical suggestion: "Organise yourselves. Form a trade union, since no mass trade union exists here as yet" to the workers. *Later* it would have been possible to decide whether this trade union should join the Minority Movement, or any other reformist confederation, or whether it would perhaps be more expedient for it to remain, for the time being, as an independent local trade union organization. However, our comrades for several weeks failed to clarify the issues in these less urgent questions, and, in this way, the favourable mood of the masses passed by, and to-day we have not appreciably more members of the revolutionary organization in this place than we had before the movement began.

When we are formulating our task in regard to strike movements, it is not quite correct to speak of the task of "politicizing" the economic strike. We have here to do with something different, with something more. This formulation has already been rejected in connection with the Vth Congress of the R.I.L.U., and instead of this, the *revolutionizing* of the economic struggle was discussed. This is the correct formulation. The task does not by any means consist in converting every economic strike into a political strike; the task is that when once an economic strike has been started—I am not now discussing political strikes—we must do all we can to strengthen the strike struggle, to raise it to a higher level, to isolate the reformists from the mass of strikers, to extend the programme of the strike, and above all, to supplement the strike demands by political slogans which are not merely chosen at random, but which are themselves in direct and clear connection with the whole course of the strike.

In the struggle for the correct slogan "Independent leadership of the struggle," our comrades have, in many cases, committed mistakes which are tantamount to an obvious violation of proletarian democracy in the strike movement. Instead of winning over the working masses to our side by means of agitation, instead of

electing a strike committee which is independent of the leadership of the reformist trade unions, the Communists take the course of simply appointing a strike committee themselves—a committee which is not recognized at all by the majority of the strikers. For example, in the great South Wales miners' strike at the beginning of 1931, a group of 40 English Communists, who had no adherence among the masses, nominated 30 comrades from their midst who proclaimed themselves to be the "central strike committee" for this gigantic strike! The Communists can only isolate themselves by such childish tactics.

In many cases, where our comrades are at the head of a strike, they do not understand how to terminate it in an organized manner, but attempt—maybe like true revolutionaries, but like revolutionaries who think little about the political implications of their actions—to continue the strike "to the last man," till the strikers are bled white. This may, in the long run, produce a dangerous split among the working masses (as happened, for example, in the great miners' strike in Pennsylvania last year) and this can only have highly derimental results upon our influence. It is our task to throw ourselves with determination into the work of strengthening and extending every strike and to enlighten the mass of strikers, as soon as they begin to waver, on the importance of continuing the struggle; but when the great majority are no longer able to continue the strike, when they decide to begin work again, then as a rule (though there are exceptions to all rules) we should take measures to firmly put an end to the strike and enlighten the workers as to the conclusion.

We do not deny the existence of certain objective difficulties for the development of the strike movement, as for example in Germany and in one or two other countries. But the weak development of our work in the ranks of the reformist *trade unions* cannot be excused by any objective difficulties. It cannot be denied



that the reformist leaders lay difficulties in our path—nay, this was foretold by Lenin as early as 1920:

“Undoubtedly the leaders of opportunism will have recourse to all the tricks of bourgeois diplomacy, will appeal to the help of bourgeois governments, to priests, police, courts, in order to prevent Communists from entering the Trade Unions.”\*

But at the same time Lenin provided the best instructions as to what the Communists should do in these circumstances:

“It is necessary to be able to withstand all this, to go the whole length of any sacrifice, if need be, to resort to strategy and adroitness, illegal proceedings, reticence and subterfuge, to anything in order to penetrate into the Trade Unions, remain in them, and carry on Communist work inside them, at any cost.”

In all capitalist countries we have had far greater possibilities of development of revolutionary work in the reformist trade unions than we have actually made use of. There is no excuse for the actual neglect of this work, least of all, in such countries as England, in the Scandinavian countries, etc., where there still remain comparatively large remnants of trade union democracy, which, however, have been made use of by our comrades to an altogether insufficient extent. In one or two cases the reason may be that our comrades are afraid of falling into the error of trade union legalism. But making revolutionary use of trade union democracy does not in any way mean any concessions to trade union legalism. On the contrary, in all cases where we are able to make use of trade union democracy, we should use it, in order to try to bring the majority of trade union members into conflict with the reformist bureaucracy who have entrenched themselves in legal positions.

I think that our work in this field is being hampered not only by pure negligence, but also by certain

---

\* “Left Wing Communism,” page 39.

political mistakes. In the first Trotsky discussion on the trade union question in 1921, Comrade Stalin laid down two different methods of approach to the working masses: The method of compulsion, which Trotsky wanted to employ in the trade unions, and the *method of persuasion*, which is the correct trade union method. The fact that our trade union work in capitalist countries does not progress better, is, in many cases, to be attributed to some incorrectness of method: A certain tendency to underrate the method of persuasion, a certain tendency to replace this method by methods of command, which can only result in our isolation from the broad masses.

In any case the non-participation of Communists in the reformist trade unions, the fact that they have neglected to develop widespread opposition, and revolutionary work within the reformist organizations in general, should, in my opinion be most severely condemned at this Plenum, and a radical change in the practice of our Parties in this field should be demanded. This was also the opinion of Comrade Lenin, who wrote as follows as far back as 1920:—

“The Executive Committee of the Third International should, in my opinion, directly condemn the policy of non-participation in reactionary Trade Unions; and they should suggest to the next conference of the Communist International the necessity of issuing a general condemnation of such policy, stating in detail the reasons for the irrationality of non-participation and the excessive harm it brings to the cause of the proletarian revolution. They should specify in particular the line of conduct of some Dutch Communists who, either directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, wholly or partially, supported this erroneous policy. The Third International must break with the tactics of the Second, and not evade or belittle sore points, but face them squarely.”\*

---

\* “Left Wing Communism,” page 39

## 6.—THE STRUGGLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GERMANY.

At the last Plenum of the E.C.C.I., the situation in Germany was characterized by the formula—"An increase of the pre-requisites for a revolutionary crisis." Is there any fundamental difference in what is happening in Germany now? In my opinion there is not. Of course we may clearly observe a further increase in the pre-requisites for a revolutionary crisis there, but we cannot as yet register such a vast difference as would occasion us at the present Plenum to give a substantially new characterization of the situation in Germany.

The rise of the revolutionary upsurge in Germany is advancing irresistibly, despite the additional objective difficulties which are created temporarily there both by the economic crisis, and also by the wave of fascism and chauvinism.

A few years ago Kautsky prophesied in his book *Historical Materialism* that bourgeois democracy would enjoy a "butterfly existence." Well, to-day we may observe in Germany what the butterfly existence of the Weimar constitution looks like in reality. *Fascism* has made a great stride forward there—a stride forward not only in the sense of the growth of the nationalist-socialist movement, but also in that of the establishment of fascist dictatorship in the state regime. For a long time, the Communist Party of Germany underrated the nationalist-socialist movement; and in part neglected to struggle against it; but this does not, of course, mean that the German Party's sins of omission have made the growth of fascism possible, for this growth has had its objective reasons. We cannot say, in general of course, that fascist dictatorship is a necessary between-stage on the way to revolution. What we can observe in Germany to-day, however, without making any liberal antitheseis between dictatorship and democracy, is the beginning of fascist dictatorship. It



would be incorrect to assert that the present regime in Germany constitutes a full and complete fascist dictatorship. The Communist Party of Germany has every reason, as vanguard of the proletariat, to mobilize the entire revolutionary forces of the German working class for the struggle against the concrete measures, which the present government is taking to establish complete fascist dictatorship. This question with regard to the final setting up of fascist dictatorship is not yet determined in Germany. The decisive struggles have not yet come to pass. "The main task of fascism," we read in the programme of the Comintern, "is to annihilate the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, that is to say, the Communist strata of the proletariat and its leading cadres." This has not yet come to pass in Germany, nor will it come to pass without the revolutionary proletariat of Germany under the leadership of the Communist Party resisting it with all its might. Of this fact we are all firmly convinced.

Meanwhile the German bourgeoisie is encountering difficulties on the way of fascist dictatorship. Every day we receive news from Germany showing, for example, that there is no little schism and dissension in the ranks of the bourgeoisie, above all, differences of opinion as to the methods to be used in suppressing the revolutionary proletariat, and the peasant masses, who are rising in revolt in many places. With a view to effecting this suppression, the Rapen government is trying to attract not only the national-socialists, but also the heads of the All-German Confederation of Trade Unions to save the bourgeois dictatorship, and help in the completion of fascist dictatorship, to carry through the policy of compulsory labour service, the measures of inflation, the further fascisation of the trade unions, etc. All these are fascist tasks, which, however, cannot be carried to completion without coming up against the resistance of the revolutionary proletariat.

It may remain a matter of doubt whether the leaders

of the German bourgeoisie are, in general, pursuing a wise policy or not; in any case, they proved completely wrong when they reckoned on a defeat of the Communist Party prior to the last *Reichstag* elections (in July this year). The date of the *Reichstag* elections was fixed on the strength of this calculation. In all probability the government was led to make this miscalculation by the fluctuations which showed themselves in the Communist vote in the presidential elections, and the elections in Prussia. However, at the *Reichstag* elections the C.P.G. more than ever extended its basis of support among the masses. The Press of the entire world bourgeoisie was also more or less unanimous in viewing this circumstance as a menacing sign for the bourgeois order of society in Germany. In other ways, too, the C.P.G. has recently gained in mass influence, although this gain still remains insufficient when compared with the tremendously great tasks which the German Party now has to carry out.

The question with regard to the objective and subjective factor in Germany should not be viewed only from one side. We cannot, for example, claim that the C.P.G. must have met with success in launching a great wave of strikes. A wave of mass strikes cannot simply be effected to order. It has its objective conditions, and it is not Marxism to disregard these conditions. But how are we to state the case now? I consider that which the Central Committee of the C.P.G. itself said, in the resolution on the lessons to be derived from the presidential elections correct:

“We have not understood how to launch and to lead struggles and actions of the proletarian and other labouring masses, and in this way to create the pre-requisites for converting these struggles into the struggle for the revolutionary way out of the crisis.”

Here, as we see, the C.C. does not speak only about strikes, but about mass struggles and mass actions in general; and this is quite correct. If we take all the

different forms of mass struggle suited to the situation of the C.P.G., as one might have expected of it, has said this openly in its self-criticism.

It is, above all, to be attributed to this omission, that the slogan of the political mass strike which the leadership of the C.P.G. issued on July 20, met with so little response among the working masses. This slogan was absolutely correct; it was also issued at the right time. But, as very little had been done during the whole year to mobilize the workers for mass actions—for mass actions in all those forms which would have been suitable for the situation at that time—it was quite natural that the sudden appearance of the Party with the slogan of the political mass strike should not have met with any success. There had been too little preparation for this, during the previous period, by means of struggles for partial demands. Moreover, this slogan was not supported by any organizational measures. Immediately after the slogan was issued, every effort should have been made to launch and organize demonstrations. This would have been quite possible in Berlin, at any rate. Various comrades, who were in Berlin on July 20, have told us that a definite urge towards direct action was to be observed there, among the masses on the streets. But the moment was allowed to pass by. Comrade Thalmann has quite rightly directed the most serious attention of the Party to this omission, in order that nothing of the sort may occur again in future.

In certain circles within the Party, there were still certain inhibitions to be met with, against the development of this action, and against the development of the anti-fascist united front in general. Many revolutionary workers, who had all become acquainted with the crimes and knaveries of Severing and his colleagues, found it difficult to grasp the revolutionary import of this anti-fascist action, the external occasion for which had been given by the government's cam-



paign against Severing and Grzesinsky. The C.P.G., however, must logically reject such tendencies towards a too rigid revolutionism, and must make it clear to all Party members that it is a question of the revolutionary education of the social-democratic workers, by means of the proletarian united front from below.

I think I am justified in expressing the hope that the Communist Party of Germany will soon succeed in very quickly getting rid of any "scissors" which may exist between the decisions, and their execution. This shortcoming is peculiar, not only to the C.P.G., but to all our sections in capitalist countries. But the position of the Communist Party of Germany as the most important Party of the Comintern in the capitalist countries, obliges it to set an example to the others in this respect, above all, in the development of the mass struggle against fascism, in the further development of the broad united front of millions and millions of toilers, and in smashing the S.P.G.\* in the enterprises, the trade unions and the Employment Exchanges.

#### 7.—THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM.

It cannot, at this moment, be clearly seen whether the national-socialist movement in Germany will still further extend its influence. This possibility is no more precluded than the possibility of its rapid, even astonishingly rapid, shrinkage. At any rate, the fact remains to-day that disintegration has already set in, in the ranks of the fascist organizations. The Press prints news of a large number of minor revolts in the S.A.†—cases where the leaders have been thrashed and the fascist flags torn to pieces, cases where small peasants who have hitherto been adherents of the national-socialists, now turn their backs upon them and demonstrate this change in the most stormy fashion. What sort of conclusion are we to draw from these pheno-

---

\* Social-Democratic Party of Germany.

† Storm Detachments.

mena? Not by any means the conclusion that our struggle against the national-socialist movement is to be weakened, but, on the contrary, that it is to be strengthened so that the workers and toiling peasants, who have been led astray by the national-socialists, may be turned away from them. The Communists must everywhere approach proletarians who vote for, and adhere to the Nazi cause; they must penetrate into the ranks of the workers who have been sent into the barracks and colonies for compulsory labour. During recent times there have been a number of strikes in these places. The factory committees must also be mobilized for the struggle against fascism. Hitherto, there has been very little to be seen in Germany of activity of the factory committees, whether they be Red or social-democrat. Despite this, however, the national-socialists' "Into the factories" movement seems, at the present time, to have been brought to a standstill. We must, at all costs, see that this movement is finally killed off. The C.P.G. must make every effort to prevent the further development of fascist dictatorship in Germany.

Is fascism to be regarded as an element of disintegration in capitalism? During the period of imperialist wars when capitalism was enjoying the plenitude of its powers, it did not need any fascist movement for its support. Now it needs this movement. In this sense we have to do here with a symptom of the weakening of capitalism's positions. But I am unable to recognize that the fascist movement, as such, constitutes an element of disintegration for capitalism. The fascist movement is, in my opinion, to be regarded as the weapon, the instrument of struggle, the mailed fist of class violence of the great bourgeoisie against the revolutionary proletariat, and not as an instrument of the disintegration of capitalism. However, the fascist regime, the fascist dictatorship has two sides to it. On the one hand, it represents a reactionary, counter-revolutionary attempt to consolidate the position of the great bourgeoisie. But, on the other hand, it produces

a number of phenomena of the disintegration of capitalist class domination, above all the attenuation of the social basis of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Fascism is able to develop its methods. We can see this in Italy. Our Italian comrades have no reason to underrate the mass work of the fascists, in particular their trade union work. Comrade Ercoli can give us many examples of how the fascists make their trade union functionaries play at "opposition," how these functionaries convene various workers' conferences to present themselves before the workers as "better fascists" by means of "left" radical demagoguery and so wheedle themselves into their confidence. This requires, of the Italian Party, the development of an active and correct mass policy, above all, in the ranks of the fascist trade unions, where the Communist Party of Italy is as yet accomplishing only very weak work.

#### 8.—THE STRUGGLE AGAINST NATIONALISM AND CHAUVINISM.

In the struggle against fascism, we must not for a moment underrate the necessity of a pertinacious struggle against the fundamental ideology of fascism, against nationalism and chauvinism. In Germany, in particular, there has recently been a great wave of chauvinism. This phenomenon has its economic causes also. It is precisely the circumstances of an advanced economic crisis which provide a favourable soil for an efflorescence of reactionary nationalism, since such a crisis forces the capitalism of individual countries into a tendency towards economic autonomy—which is, of course, a reactionary phenomenon in the economic sense. Just as reactionary is the chauvinist ideology of the present time. Capitalism has already produced its own bourgeois brand of internationalism—"cosmopolitanism," as Marx called it—and although this has not at all developed in contra-distinction to bourgeois nationalism, but rather on the basis of this nationalism, the recrudescence of a narrow and restricted national-



ism represents, after all, an absolutely reactionary retrogression in bourgeois ideology.

To struggle successfully, against nationalist and chauvinist ideology, is by no means an easy task. It demands of our Parties everywhere great attention, and a careful study of the special characteristic features of chauvinism as it appears in individual countries. Chauvinism can be robbed of its support among the masses, not by its condemnation "in general," but only by a concrete struggle. In this field, the Communist Party of Germany has to develop great work. But this task is of no less importance for the French, Italian, and Polish Parties, each of which has to do with a most dangerous form of nationalism in its own country.

In Poland a "national-communist" group has recently sprung up. This is not the first time. It is very instructive to trace when such groups have originated there. The first case was in 1920, during the advance of the Red Army on Warsaw. The second case was in 1923, during the Cracow rebellion, and again in 1926, prior to a fascist *coup d'etat*—that is to say, on each occasion, it was at a critical moment, when the masses were in a state of ferment and it was urgently necessary for the bourgeoisie to side-track the state of mass feeling on to chauvinist lines. It is the same story to-day. Numerically, this group has not many adherents, but it would be a mistake to underestimate its importance. Who knows but that nationalist prejudices and tendencies may still be found in the ranks of the Polish working class. I wish to tell the Polish comrades quite openly that, despite all the great merits in their mass work, especially in recent times, their weak point has been the struggle against nationalism in the ranks of their own class. Above all, from the point of view of the approaching war, the work of formulating the tasks of this struggle demands the greatest attention and care on their part. It goes without saying that the most important thing is to develop a relentless struggle against the oppression of different nationali-

ties by Polish imperialism, against the oppression of Ukrainians, White Russians, etc. Only on this occasion I want to emphasize the task of fighting against Polish nationalism from another aspect than was emphasized at the last Plenum of the E.C.C.I. I emphasize the task of making this struggle clear to the *Polish* workers and peasants and of freeing all sections of them from the relics of national prejudices by means of stubborn Bolshevik work. For these workers and peasants will have arms in their hands in time of war and, we hope, in time of revolution also, and it is then a question of their standing the test—whether they will fall victims to the misleadership of the national-communist group or whether they are sufficiently prepared ideologically to take up the victorious struggle for power against the Polish bourgeoisie, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Poland.

#### 9.—THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SOCIAL DEMOCRACY.

If anyone had perhaps fancied that the social-democratic leaders were no longer able to undertake “left” manœuvres, he must have realized his mistake in recent times. These people will not surrender us their political basis among the workers, without a struggle. These political “illusionists” have produced no small number of tricks during recent times. In Poland, for example, the P.P.S.\* has advocated not a strike, even though they immediately got cold feet no sooner than this slogan had been put forward. If circumstances demand, they are able to juggle with anti-reformist, nay, even with revolutionary phrases; in Poland, for example, the P.P.S.\* has advocated not a “Polish People’s Republic,” but also a “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government.” (Lenski, interjecting: For the dictatorship of the proletariat!)

Well, you see what remains yet to be wished!

On the other hand, we should not exaggerate the

---

\* Polish Socialist Party.

effects of social-democracy's "left" manœuvres. If, for example, we attempt to explain all our failures by a reference to such manœuvres of the social-democrats, then it ceases to be an explanation. If it were the case, that the social-democrats, as might sometimes be concluded from the statements in our Press, were in a position to "manœuvre to death" even the best strike movements in which the Communists had great influence, we would only have the more reason to examine what mistakes we have made ourselves to make such manœuvres possible for social-democracy.

The question has arisen—somewhat unexpectedly—as to whether social-democracy is still to be regarded as the main social support of the bourgeoisie. We need only ask ourselves what would be the position of the bourgeoisie if it did not have social-democracy as its support, if, for example, the German bourgeoisie did not have the S.P.G. for its support, if the French bourgeoisie did not have the Socialist Party, or if the English bourgeoisie did not have the Labour Party. In that case, comrades, we should, indeed, have an easy time of it! The bourgeoisie would have lost, in these cases, its main support. The majority of the working class would rally around us without more ado, and we would have a hegemony, nay, in many countries even a "monopoly," in the leadership of the working class. It is thus clear that social-democracy still remains the main social support of the bourgeoisie, and to me it is absolutely incomprehensible how one can dispute over this question. If, however, we want to draw the correct political conclusions from this judgment of social-democracy, we must, in my opinion, distinguish two different questions: Firstly, the strategic task of an especial concentration of our struggle against social-democracy, and secondly, the tactical question in the more narrow sense of *how* we can and should fight social-democracy in the most expedient manner. These questions are not identical. As the bourgeoisie cannot be overthrown without the overthrow of its main social support, it is not incorrect to say that we ought to



direct our *main offensive* against social-democracy. However, we must at the same time emphasise the fact that we must direct this main offensive against social-democracy, in such a way, that we may win over the social-democratic workers. This is a question in which we are interested to the highest degree.

This is why the second question means that we must fight social-democracy *in another way* than we fight fascism, or any other conservative parties of the bourgeoisie, because in our tactics, and in the drawing up of our slogans, we must take into consideration the working masses who still adhere to the social-democratic leaders to-day. If we do not do this, if the social-democratic workers get the impression, from the way we act, that the Communists are more interested in fighting the social-democratic leaders, than in fighting against fascism, or against the offensive of the big bourgeoisie, or the government, as the case may be, we will not win over these workers, we will only alienate them from ourselves. It is here a question of giving such a form to our struggle, that we may strategically direct the main offensive against social-democracy, but do so in such a way that we may at the same time attack fascism and the big bourgeoisie with the full weight of our powers. All tactical mistakes which we commit in this regard, revenge themselves upon us, by the fact that the broad masses hold aloof from us.

#### 10.—ON THE STRENGTHENING OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.

We have grown. Since the XIth Plenum our organizational department can count 350,000 new members of the Communist International, without reckoning the membership of the C.P.S.U. or the growth in the membership of the Communist Party of China (in the Chinese Soviet districts the number of members is difficult to calculate). Excluding these two great factors from the calculation, we may reckon that the

growth in the membership of our sections is from 550,000 to 900,000. But we must at once add, that the picture would be much more satisfactory, if we did not have any *fluctuation* in the membership. While the number of members grows, fluctuation is growing, too. The Communist Party of Germany loses, as a rule, one half of the number of its new members, and it is the same story almost everywhere else; there are even Parties which can show a higher degree of fluctuation.

In order to throw light upon the question of the reasons for this fluctuation, I will take one or two examples from the Party statistics of the Ruhr district. There, for example, 241 new members left the Party in January of this year, and 99 in February, because, in their own words, they "had no money." In some cases this may have been only a pretext, but if it is really true, that a considerable number of new members could not remain in the Party, for the sole reason that they had no money, this shows that something is out of order in the apparatus of the Party. Others leaving the Party gave as their reason "difficulties in the matter of being accepted." Sixty-five members in the Ruhr district left the Party on these grounds during January. Difficulties in getting accepted! Please, comrades, get rid of these difficulties as quickly as you can, so that at any rate *such* causes of fluctuation may not occur again. In addition to this we often meet with the following in the Party statistics: So-and-so many members have left the Party "for unknown reasons"—vanished without a trace. Does not this also show the defects in our organizational work?

The largest part of the members of our Parties are at the present time unemployed, so that the number of members who are employed is steadily undergoing a relative decrease, while in Germany it is actually undergoing an absolute decrease. In the work of recruiting members we almost always follow the path of least resistance. And in this way we only get a few

new members from the factories, especially the large-scale enterprises.

What is to be done? Comrade Vassilyev proposes, firstly, the creation of strong leading committees in the various localities and sub-districts which are in close connection with the factories and can give instruction to inexperienced Cell members; secondly, bold recruiting of new Party members from among the active fighters in strikes, etc.; thirdly, a determined struggle against bureaucracy. All these proposals seem to me to be acceptable and useful. I would like to emphasize another task; systematic development of the *education of new members*. This seems to me to be the keypoint, if we do not want to go on losing so many new members, in the future. In capitalist Russia the process of educating new members in Party circles used to begin even *before their entry into the Party*. As a rule, they also took part in Party work for several years before they formally become Party members. When they entered the Party, they had already received their schooling. At the present time, in capitalist countries, the act of joining the Party is, in many cases, an easy step which is, for the most part, taken according to the mood of the moment, and does not pre-suppose any, or hardly any, preparatory political schooling. If, then, no special measures are taken by the Party to provide a Bolshevik schooling for the new members, it is quite natural that a large proportion of them are soon lost. As members of the lower Party organization, they have small chance of receiving a schooling in revolutionary mass work in practice, since it is an unfortunate fact that our Cells and trade union fractions only occasionally undertake such work. We can produce quite "classic" examples to prove this from the practice of the American Party. Workers have come to the Party leaders, and said that they were leaving the Communist Party. In answer to the question "Why?"—they would answer: "We want to do mass work, and that is impossible for us as members of the Communist Party." "Why isn't it possible?" An



swer: " We have meetings of Party members every evening, and besides that, there are so many circulars to be read that there is no time left to do mass work." It is a fact that several workers have left the American Party on these grounds. It was, of course, not good Communist behaviour to do so. But what sort of a Party regime is it, which gives occasion for such non-Communist behaviour? Is it bureaucracy, or is it "super-centralization?" or is it, perhaps, only "a formal attitude to the Party tasks?" But whatever it may be—the representative of the American Party will explain to us what it is—in any case it has got to be stopped.

The question with regard to the character of our *Press* should, in my opinion, be raised this time sharply. Our agitation and propaganda department has, unfortunately, been unable to provide me with concrete material on this question; but it is a well-known fact that the Communist newspapers in capitalist countries do not possess the character of mass newspapers. If, however, we are to insist that in the field of our practical work among the masses, the slogan of the "Turn to mass work" is now really to be carried out (and not merely promised), then the character of the majority of our newspapers must also undergo a radical change in order that they may become real Bolshevik mass newspapers.

#### 11.—ON WORK IN THE ENTERPRISES.

We have talked a hundred times on this question and adopted many resolutions. Is it your wish, comrades, that we once again talk and pass resolutions, and do nothing? If that is not your view, then please tell us—when your turn comes to speak—what is to be done in regard to this "sore point," to attain a real improvement.

Hitherto we have directed our main attention to organizational methods in factory work. The improvement of these methods still remains an important ques-

tion for us at the present time. But on this occasion I would like to direct your main attention to the content of factory work, i.e., precisely to the question of what partial demands, what questions and "occasions" we are to seize on to establish a real connection between the Communist group, and the majority of the staff in a given factory. Are there occasions and "burning questions" in the factories, which agitate and excite the workers? As many as you please. Anyone who knows the conditions obtaining in modern enterprises, knows that there are plenty of such occasions there. And outside the works also, there are continually arising burning questions and events of this sort, which agitate the working masses on a local scale, nay, not infrequently there are even greater occasions, as, for example, the case of July 20 (see speech of Piatnitsky, "C.P.s of France and Germany"), in Germany, the significance of which was on a nation-wide scale. The only thing is not to let the moment pass by, and to take the right initiative at the right time, without hesitation. It seems to me that our mass work has got into a rut, first and foremost because suitable opportunities and occasions, of which there are plenty, and which we could seize on to bring the majority of the workers into movement, are, as a rule, allowed to pass by us; we are caught napping. Our "mass work" is in many cases nothing but a series of missed opportunities for mobilising the masses. We seldom understand how to grasp the main link in the chain, by which the masses may be set in motion at any given time.

Comrade Doriot has given us several concrete examples from France, of such acute questions which have been allowed to pass. He has, thereby, made a valuable contribution to the discussion at our Plenum. He has also called our attention to the fact that actual topical questions and demands (for example those of the unemployed) may very quickly change; questions which are most acute among them one week, may turn out next week, perhaps, to be shoved into the back-

ground by quite other questions. Our task is therefore to keep in the most close connection with the masses, in order that we may be exactly acquainted with their needs, their problems and their moods; otherwise it is impossible for us to take the correct Bolshevik initiative at the right time.

As, however, our Parties have not attempted with sufficient seriousness and in the true Bolshevik manner to adjust the machinery of our factory work, many comrades in the factory Cells have had the "experience" that it is impossible to improve this work. It would be wrong to say that our comrades have not made any attempts, at all, to conduct a mass work in the factories; no, attempts have been made, but then, in many cases they found that they couldn't win over the reformist and social-democratic workers. This only happened because the attempt was not made in the correct manner, because the comrades did not understand how to seize on to the burning questions and events which offered themselves.

One circumstance should not pass unmentioned in this connection. Among many comrades in our factory Cells there exists a special reason for their passivity—a reason of which they do not like to speak themselves, because they think it might be interpreted as cowardice. They acknowledge the necessity of Communist factory work, but they are afraid of being chucked out of the factory through this work. The enemies facing them in the factories are not only the trade union bureaucrats and fascists, but also the employers. Thus, on the one hand, they have little hopes of succeeding in mobilizing the staffs, and, on the other hand, they are afraid that if they attempted to, despite this fact, they may be thrown out. The carrying on of mass work in the enterprise therefore appears senseless to these comrades, because they do not understand that the necessary rules of conspiracy must be observed in this work, and even think sometimes that under capitalist conditions it is altogether impossible to perform our mass work other than openly, in a form



which everyone may recognize as Communist work. This, however, is a mistake. The task of camouflaging our mass work in the factories is not by any means more difficult, than carrying on work with small conspiratorial circles. On the contrary, when our comrades only busy themselves among certain workers of "left" tendencies, the *agents provocateurs* (see *The Agent Provocateur in the Labour Movement*) in the factory will have less difficulty in identifying them, than if they merged themselves with the great mass of workers. They do not need to proclaim themselves as Communists from the housetops; they do not always need to speak at meetings themselves, but should so organize things that other workers speak as often as possible. When they really learn how to combine illegal with legal work in the factories in a Bolshevik fashion, they have prospects of remaining comparatively long in the factory and winning the confidence of the majority of the staff.

I wanted to get a number of positive examples of factory work from the practice of our best sections and include them in my report. But I have received no examples in this connection from the various departments to whom I applied. At the instance of the organizational department, a good example has been reprinted in the last number of the *Communist International*. (Comrade Lozovsky, interjecting: "You ought to apply to the Secretariat for Anglo-American countries!")

The example is in fact from England, from Glasgow. (Applause.) A factory Cell there, consisting of nine Communists, at first developed a good campaign in the factory. Then the Communists made the proposal in their shop to send a delegation to the office on the question of raising piece-work rates. The delegation was refused a hearing. The Communists thereupon mobilized all the workers of the shop in question and convened a meeting. It was decided that the whole meeting, as a body, should march to the office. On the way to the office a crowd of workers from other shops

in the factory joined the marchers. Several hundred workers, the Communists among them, thus made their appearance in the office, and were able to carry through their demands. The workers were so delighted by the success of this move, that on the appearance of the next number of the Communist factory newspaper (which had formerly had no readers), the paper was sold out at once, the size of the edition being quite inadequate to meet the demand.

(Comrade Gottwald: "I can give you a hundred such examples from Czecho-Slovakia.")

Comrade Gottwald promises us a hundred examples. This would be good, though still not enough.

On the subject of work among proletarian women, I have received some good material, but unfortunately, it has come so late that it is now impossible to utilize it. I hope that competent comrades, both men and women, will make use of this material in the discussion, so that this question may not be left in the background; for this branch of our work will have a very great significance in the period we are approaching.

## 12.—THE COMMUNIST YOUTH MOVEMENT.

In its development, the Communist Youth International reflects both the strong, and the weak sides of the Comintern. The Communist Youth International has grown somewhat in the number of its members in capitalist countries. However, the leading countries of the Communist Youth International have been quite right in describing this small growth as altogether insufficient. The comrades have exercised Bolshevik self-criticism. They have openly acknowledged, that in most countries the Communist Youth Leagues do not possess the character of mass organizations. Only in one province which is connected with the youth movement, in the province of the Red sport movement, it is already possible to speak of a mass character of our movement in some capitalist countries, though not

everywhere. Otherwise not. In the ranks of the Communist Youth League of Germany, there even exists, as the leadership of the Youth International has noted in its report, a certain opposition to the carrying out of the decisions on the development of the Youth Leagues into a real mass organization. However, the present situation confronts the Communist Youth with great demands. The youth movement ought to be the strongest arm of the Comintern in the approaching struggles for power. But when the situation is such that the Communist Youth organizations, which ought to be numerically much greater than the Communist Parties—as is the case in the Soviet Union—are still much smaller and in a number of countries are almost extinct, then the Communist youth must make strict demands on itself: An end once and for all, with the practice of paper decisions—carry out the decisions adopted with true Bolshevik determination and energy!

\* \* \* \*

I hope, comrades, that those actual and important problems which I have not touched on here, and also the tasks of our individual sections, will be illustrated during the discussion by the Party representatives who are present, and also that such leading comrades as Comrades Piatnitsky, Manuilsky and others will supplement my report.\*

Comrades, the character of the time which is approaching us makes the highest demands upon our energy. One might say that we are approaching a new heroic epoch. In his opening speech, Comrade Thalmann mentioned our heroes. I want to give the following figures from the statistics of the International Labour Defence: On January 1, 1932, the number of proletarian political prisoners was 192,673. From 1925 to 1931 the number of arrests was 1,223,052; the number of those mis-handled—630,159; of those murdered and tortured to death—1,040,608. When and

---

\* See Page 2 of Cover.



where in the history of the world has there ever before been such a gigantic class terrorism! And when in the history of the world has there ever been heroism on such a gigantic scale as in our movement! I do not doubt for a moment that our Parties will fight heroically in the coming struggles for power. But the point is that our Parties must learn to mobilize the widest masses for the revolutionary struggles, and lead these struggles in such a way that the *victory* may be assured. From this standpoint, we must, more than ever before, lay stress upon the leading role of the Communist Party, and upon the necessity of an iron Party discipline. The greatest task in the preparation of the proletariat for the imminent struggles for power is the creation and widening of the revolutionary united front from below. However, should our comrades anywhere represent this preparation of the Party and the proletariat as an abstract propagandist task, and, at the same time, pursue the policy of the united front in such a way that it may lead to making peace with social-democracy, then we would say to them: "Rather reject the 'united front' altogether." Nor is it possible to prepare for the revolution as the opportunists in Germany did in 1923—only by certain technical measures, otherwise remaining quiet and inactive, waiting for the "great day" to arrive. No, a Communist Party prepares for the revolution by the development and leadership of mass actions for partial demands at the present time.

Somebody has complained that in our draft for the theses the general tasks bear too much the character of defence, which is not suited to the general situation. Here, however, it is necessary to take into account the fact that we do not any longer put forward the general main tasks as strategic tasks, but state them already in the form of mass slogans, by formulating as follows:—(1) Struggle against the capitalist offensive; (2) Against fascism and reaction; (3) Against the approaching imperialist war and the intervention against the Soviet Union.

Will this struggle be only a defensive struggle? No! These are slogans with which it is best possible to launch a counter-offensive.

Comrade Stalin called our attention to the fact that the October Revolution, during the period of organizing the storm, was concerned to take every, or almost every, step in its attack under the guise of defence. "The revolution has, to a certain extent, veiled its offensive operations under the guise of defence in order that in this way, the undecided and vacillating elements may the more easily be swept into its whirlpool. This also explains"—Comrade Stalin continues—"the outer semblance of defence in the character of the speeches, articles and slogans of this period, which none the less, by virtue of their inner content, possess a pronounced offensive character." In the light of this peculiarity of the October Revolution, we may also obtain a deeper understanding for our present slogans, although the latter are not slogans for a revolutionary situation. These slogans are also well suited for the revolutionary attack, if only we understand how to mobilize the masses for this attack. And these slogans are well suited for a revolutionary offensive, if only we understand how to mobilize the masses for this offensive.

This mobilization of the revolutionary forces is impossible without a decisive struggle against all tendencies towards capitulation and faint-heartedness, which always make their appearance in such situations. We have had an example of this in the last appearance of Comrade Humbert-Droz. It is quite clear that the Communist International must relentlessly rebuff all such tendencies. Nor must we tolerate, however, that real work towards preparing and mobilizing the masses should be replaced by mere revolutionary phrases. We must relentlessly extirpate any tendency towards a policy of "tailism," i.e., lagging behind, but we must never lose our heads; we must constantly estimate the revolutionary level which has already been attained by the wide masses, must estimate it cold-

bloodedly and without any false idealization, and must always continue to work for the raising of the revolutionary level of the majority of the working class.

The political line of the Communist International must not on any account be changed. It was correct. It was the Bolshevik line. Our present theses will not subject this line to the smallest alteration. There is no other correct line than the Bolshevik line. But if the line of the Party, if the policy of the Party is correct, and if the correct relations between the vanguard and the class are not disturbed, what then do we mean by *leading*?

To this question our leader has given the following answer:—

“Under these conditions to lead means to understand how to convince the masses of the correctness of the Party's policy; it means drawing up and carrying out such slogans as may bring the masses nearer to the standpoint of the Party and make it easier for them, on the basis of their own experience, to attain an understanding for the correctness of the Party's policy; it means raising the masses up to the level of consciousness of the Party and thus assuring ourselves of the support of the masses and of their preparedness for the decisive struggle.”

Long live the Soviet Union! The C.P.S.U. and Comrade Stalin!

Long live the Communist International and the Socialist World Revolution! (Loud applause.)



## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Comrades, we establish the fact that *capitalist stabilisation is at an end—the general crisis of capitalism is rising to a new plane, is entering a new cycle of revolutions and wars.*

With this evaluation of the objective situation as the point of departure, we draw the corresponding revolutionary conclusions with reference to our entire policy.

We fight against every vacillation concerning this evaluation of the situation and every under-estimation of the political significance of the facts characterising the end of capitalist stabilisation. This means, in the first place, struggle against the under-estimation of the international significance of the socialist upsurge in the Soviet Union; struggle against any under-estimation of the *war preparations* against the Soviet Union, and the danger of a new imperialist world war; struggle against every under-estimation of the *revolutionary upsurge*, and the revolutionary perspective in the imperialist, as well as in the dependent and colonial countries.

The world economic crisis, which has arisen out of the internal contradictions of the capitalist system, has crushed out, in the course of three years, the economic results which world capitalism attained during the entire period of relative stabilisation like a gigantic steam hammer. This enormous economic destruction, the capitalists, and, above all, the ruling magnates of monopoly capitalism, have performed

themselves; in fact, they are continuing this, because under the present conditions of the general crisis of capitalism, of the intensification of all the basic contradictions of capitalism, they are unable to pursue their profit interests in any other way.

Our theses read :—

“ The larger the share of the declining aggregate profits the upper stratum of the financial oligarchy succeed in grabbing for themselves (at the expense of others), the more they rob the toilers, and the higher the tariff walls are raised, to this extent home and foreign markets are still further restricted and the crisis is further deepened.”\*

This must be understood, and firmly borne in mind, in order not to vacillate interminably between the correct evaluation that stabilisation has come to an end in capitalist economics, and the illusions concerning a return of capitalist stabilisation, as well as a new era of prosperity. In my report I specially emphasised that there is no purely economic way out of the crisis. Without comprehending this, it is now impossible to possess a clear understanding of the perspectives of the world situation, of the unavoidable transition to a new cycle of revolutions and wars.

One must understand that *this transition has already commenced*.

The war of Japanese imperialism against

---

\* Theses and Resolutions. XIIth Plenum E.C.C.I (Modern Books, Ltd.)

China already began even last year. This war does not denote a merely local, punitive expedition, but the prelude to the world war of all imperialist Powers for China, for the monopoly of the colonial enslavement and plunder of the greatest nation on earth, possessing world importance. The Japanese occupation of Manchuria also denotes the prelude to the counter-revolutionary war of the imperialist Powers against the Soviet Union. Preparations for this immense world crime are being pushed feverishly ahead not only in Japan, but no less by France, England, Poland, Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia, Latvia, Esthonia, Finland, etc. It may even be said that they are in a great measure being pushed on clandestinely by their respective general staffs. None the less, these preparations are a fact.

This new phase in the preparation of the war of intervention against the Soviet Union is one of the most important facts in the present international situation. This fact constitutes now the greatest military secret of the capitalist states which, however, we shall unmask ruthlessly in all countries. The active participation of American capitalism in Japan's armament for war against the Soviet Union, and in egging on Polish and Roumanian war-mongering is to be pilloried, before the broad masses of the people, no less than is the war policy of French imperialism.

Every under-estimation of the war danger, every tendency to relegate to the background the approaching imperialist world war, and the intervention against the Soviet Union, or to



neglect the fulfilment of these tasks, *is to be fought as the most dangerous opportunism.*

We Communists must therefore exert every effort, in all countries, to force the bourgeoisie to refrain from precipitating the war. To this end, we must mobilise the broad masses of the toilers without delay for the struggle against war. But how far we shall succeed in frustrating the consummation of the war plans of the bourgeoisie in the individual countries is beyond our ken. We only know that there is one single sure guarantee against war: *the proletarian revolution.* Therefore the preparation of the revolution is the most important part in the anti-war struggle just as the mobilisation of the workers for the struggle against war is, at the present time, one of the most important tasks in their preparation for the revolution. The two tasks are inseparably intertwined. There is not a single capitalist country to-day of any international importance where these tasks could be severed.

The fatalistic attitude that war will come anyway, and that the revolution can be ushered in only through the gates of war—an attitude against which Comrade Manuilsky correctly warned us—would signify a renunciation of the struggle for the revolution, as well as a renunciation of the struggle against war. If such an opportunist attitude was wrong four or five years ago, it would be a hundred times more erroneous in the present situation, with the stabilisation of capitalism a thing of the past. As far as it depends upon our struggle, there will not be

any war first at all ! It will come to revolution, *before* the bourgeoisie begins the war—this is the way the question is put from the Communist point of view. But the revolution does not depend upon us *alone*, but also upon the objective factors of the revolutionary crisis; and, in the event of the bourgeoisie beginning the war, before we can begin the revolution, we, nothing daunted, shall utilise the war to accelerate the revolution; we shall do everything in our power to convert it into the conquest of power by the proletariat. This is how the question is put in a Leninist manner.

Not only the transition to imperialist wars, but also the *transition to a new cycle of revolutions has already set in*. Whoever fails to see this to-day, fails to see it solely because he does not want to see it. The facts proclaim it from the housetops: for the revolution in China is a fact, the Chinese Soviets, the Chinese Red Army are facts of revolution which the repeated expeditions of the Kuomintang Government could not remove. On the contrary. The latest dispatches received from China betoken something entirely different. I cite a few of the latest news items:—

The Shanghai correspondent of the "New York Times" reports that the 19th army had to call a halt in its expedition against the Soviet troops in the province of Fuchien, in view of the "refusal of the soldiers to defend the interests of the capitalists and landlords. Hundreds of the mutinous soldiers were shot and 8,000 were disarmed."

The newspaper "Dunsanshenminbao" in-

forms its readers on September 4 that the 3rd and the 8th divisions of the Government troops, which have been despatched to the province of Honan, to fight against the Red Army, have mutinied and gone over to the side of the Red Army. At the same time, the 6th division of the Nanking troops in the province of Tsiangsi staged an insurrection; the greater part of the division crossed over to the side of the Red Army.

The newspaper "Bintsashibao" of September 12 writes that the united forces of the Red Army, under Ho-lung, had occupied the city of Chang-Chuan (west of Hankow) and were advancing upon Wuhan. The Red troops operating in the territory of the Uchan-Changsha railway have occupied Siang-Nin and Tzunan. The advance guard of the 3rd column of the Red troops, under Kuan-Tsi-sun has entered the district of Yanlo (east of Hankow). Thus, Wuhan has been encircled on all sides by the Red Army."

This is Bolshevism in practice!

A further fact is the revolution now going on in Spain, which can no longer be suppressed by force, or demagogy on the part of the bourgeois-socialist counter-revolution.

The revolutionary development is proceeding on a world scale in an *uneven process*, and can never mature in any other manner. How do we describe this unevenness in our theses?

"In Germany there is a tremendous sharpening of class antagonism. On the one hand the growth of fascism, and on the other hand the growth of the revolutionary mass struggle, the



accelerated maturing of the pre-requisites of the revolutionary crisis. Certain other countries are either approaching very closely to a revolutionary crisis (Poland), or, as a result of the extreme sharpening of antagonisms at home and abroad, may find themselves in the situation of a revolutionary crisis in the near future (Japan). In India, and the Latin American countries, the development of the revolutionary crisis is retarded primarily by the low degree of organisation of the proletariat and the immaturity of the Communist Parties. In all capitalist countries the forces of the international proletarian revolution are steadily growing, but in such important countries of world capitalism as the U.S.A., England and France the upsurge of the revolutionary movement, although developing, is still lagging greatly behind the high intensity of the whole international situation.”\*

Despite this great unevenness, the indisputable fact remains, as I have already stated in my report, that in all important imperialist and colonial countries, the revolutionary upsurge has become more pronounced since the last Plenum of the E.C.C.I.†

This revolutionary upsurge was one of the main factors that terminated capitalist stabilisation. This upsurge also signifies the international process of transition to a new cycle of Soviet revolutions. We do not by any means dispute the possibility of an ebb and flow in this process of development, in the separate

---

\* Ibid.

† XIth. March 31, 1931.

countries. We do not at all imagine the further growth of the revolutionary movement to be a simple triumphal procession. On the contrary, we figure upon an extreme intensification of class contradictions, of the class struggle, in which the fighting army of the proletariat will not only deal blows, but will itself receive blows also, and we stress the necessity for every Communist Party not to lose sight of the objective difficulties, but to probe its way carefully to apply the most expedient methods of surmounting them. But, all that notwithstanding, we now say, and repeat, to our Sections: "*We are approaching revolutionary crisis at a whirlwind pace, we are approaching the revolution—the preparation of the proletariat, for the impending struggle for power, is at stake.*"

We have established that the rising radicalisation of the proletariat evinces itself primarily in the fact that the proletarian mass struggles increase, not only in number and scope, but assume an increasingly revolutionary character. To fail to recognise this fact, to undervalue its significance, would inevitably lead to an opportunist misapprehension of the revolutionary tasks of the present preparatory period.

What is the testimony of the numerous political strikes which have taken place lately in a number of countries? What is the testimony of the barricade fights in connection with numerous economic strikes, the occupation of factories by strikers, the violent demonstrations, the numerous street battles of workers against the police, military and fascists? All

this testifies, above all, to a fighting mood of the workers, such as has not been noted, as a mass phenomenon, for a long time. This attests to the *great possibilities* now opening up for the mobilisation of the widest masses for class struggle.

Whoever does not see this, is a blind opportunist. "The masses cannot be set in motion," "the workers do not want to struggle"—such was, and is, the constant pretext of Right opportunism in practice. Latterly, we have seen innumerable instances, in various countries, that some of the strikes break out spontaneously, without any initiative on the part of the Communists; or that the workers, belonging to the reformist trade unions, compel their bureaucrats to undertake strike action. And the Communists sit and wait round the corner—this was so in many instances—who believed and complained: "the masses cannot be made to budge, the workers do not want to struggle. . . ."

This Right-opportunist *disbelief* in the possibility of mobilising the masses, this passive attitude, and often even stubborn resistance to unfolding revolutionary activity, in the sphere of mass movements, has not yet been overcome, by far, in the ranks of our Parties. This constitutes the main danger in our midst, which is particularly pernicious in the present situation, and which must be finally overcome in all organisations of the Party. Here, we must bear in mind, that this tendency does not always find expression in passivity *in general*; it can be quite well linked up with active work on various inner-Party, and other matters. In



this case, it presents a serious obstacle to the further development of the revolutionary movement.

The "Leftist" perversion of this opportunist passivity, which hides itself in revolutionary phrases, forms the second danger in our ranks. It may well appear upon the scene, in combination with a revolutionary evaluation of the situation. It lacks no faith in the possibility of mobilising the masses for revolutionary struggles; it merely lacks will power to do the necessary Bolshevik work for this mobilisation, and for the correct carrying out, of these mass struggles. The pretext, submitted in defence of this "Left" passivity, bears a different guise from that of the Rights: it (the "Left") alleges that the broad masses are *already* revolutionary, conscious and active—that there is no need to go to the trouble of *working* among the masses to prepare them, to revolutionise them, to set them in motion and lead them onward; that you could save yourself the trouble of doing this work, by merely proclaiming that we were steering toward revolutionary mass struggles, and by radical appeals from without. Thus, in this case, Bolshevik mass work is not looked upon as "impossible" or "without prospect of success," but is despised, as if it were some non-revolutionary, useless or almost opportunist occupation.

This tendency in our ranks must likewise completely and unconditionally be now overcome, if we want to make progress. It is wrong and harmful. It is based upon an idealisation of the masses, in general, that is

erroneous and wholly alien to Bolshevism, and an over-estimation of our revolutionary influence, which we have allegedly already gained upon these masses. In essence, it signifies an opportunist deference to the spontaneity of the revolutionary development of the proletariat, and an actual renunciation of the execution of the task of the Communist Party: to accelerate and direct the radicalisation of the broad masses of the proletariat. Only *part* of the proletariat is first won over to the revolution, not yet the majority. A part of the proletariat has already been seized by a strong urge to engage in the revolutionary mass struggle, but not yet the majority. But the majority is already on the way to becoming radicalised. It *can* already be mobilised for a movement, to struggle in some form or other, if we so desire and know how to lead them in the correct manner. In some cases it is easy for us to do so, but in most cases it is far from easy; in some countries it is easier, in others more difficult. The difficulty depends upon many concrete circumstances, but mostly it is essentially dependent upon the influence of the reformist trade union bureaucracy, and the Social-Democratic Party. In the first place, we must overcome the influence of the Social Fascist agency of the bourgeoisie in the working class, to gain the majority of the proletariat for the revolution. And if the "Left" deviation under-estimates the mass influence of reformism, and therefore does not seriously aid the masses of the workers to liberate themselves from the spell of reform-

ism, the results are not much better than those of the Right-opportunist under-estimation of reformism, and its capitulation to it (reformism).

The Comintern has repeatedly emphasised the importance for its Sections of working in the factories, and developing the struggle for partial demands, for the daily needs of the labouring masses, during the last few years. All Sections have reiterated these directives many times in their resolutions, but only a few have been able to convert them, to some extent, into deeds. But the present situation makes the greatest demands upon all Sections with reference to the scale, and the pace, of mass activity. As Comrade Stalin told us, as far back as 1929, it has now become necessary to work "not at the usual pace, but at an accelerated pace, for time waits for no man, and we must not allow events to take us by surprise."

It is now necessary not to content oneself with ordinary results, but to achieve much more important gains. And *now, the favourable objective pre-conditions for really great achievements in revolutionary work are present in all capitalist countries.*

Therefore, it is not sufficient to-day merely to re-emphasise the *necessity* of organising mass activity. The point at issue now is to *guarantee the fulfilment* of our general decisions, and to achieve *greater successes.*

*How* can we mobilise the majority of the working class really for actions, so that we shall not merely draw up new resolutions on the



necessity of such mobilisation? That is one question.

The second question is: *What aim* do we pursue in carrying out the individual struggles for partial demands?

It seems to me that these two questions are of the greatest practical importance to our Party at the present time. With reference to the first question, I will collate what I deem the most important in the following seven points:—

(1) Our comrades will not learn how to argue in a concrete and convincing manner, comprehensible to the masses, to agitate successfully and issue correct action slogans, if they do not come into *personal contact* with reformist and other non-Communist workers, to ascertain, through them, their daily needs, sentiments, political opinions and objections, and enter into discussion with them. This is one of the necessary pre-conditions for steady work by the Communists, among the masses, especially in the factories and trade unions.

(2) More important still than constant detail work among the masses is the correct and *prompt utilisation of the various actual conflicts* in which the workers become involved, either with the employer, the authorities, the fascists, or the reformist trade union bureaucrats, as well as of other occasions which cause a particular stir among the majority of the workers. Such occasions are often afforded in the factories by acts of relatively slight injustice, on the part of the boss or his minions, which can be utilised, at the right moment, for the pur-

pose of evoking violent protests and even strikes. It may often be observed that the general offensive of capitalism does not, immediately, give rise to a broad strike movement. If, however, you add to it some act of relatively slight injustice on the part of the employer, it is like the last drop, which causes the cup of accumulated class-hatred of the masses to overflow. Here is an illustration supplied by the material of the Communist Party of the United States. A general wage cut was carried out in a rather large factory, without encountering any resistance on the part of the workers. After that, the firm decided to discontinue paying for the gloves (which the workers needed for their work) and decided that the workers must stand the cost of their working gloves themselves. The price of a pair of these gloves is not more than 10 cents, which is not a great expense item for these workers. But this expression of the employers' boundless profit greed immediately evoked great indignation among the workers. - To clip on to such an occasion, at the right moment, means getting the masses in motion. But our Party comrade, who was responsible for Communist work in the factory group in question, did not do this. He explained afterwards: "I did not want to come out against this measure, because I did not want to show myself a Red, in order not to be given the gate." This is opportunism in practice. If one finds it impossible to do anything even on such an occasion, what is the use of speaking about work in the factories at all?

It is equally important to watch and follow carefully, not only in the shops, but also on a local and national scale, what current events evoke particular indignation among the workers, to issue concrete slogans, without delay, on such occasions, and organise protest movements. In the present situation, it is particularly characteristic that an immense mass action may arise out of relatively minor immediate causes. If you observe the history of the origin of the great mass actions of late, you will find this to be the case, in most instances.

(3) We must not be unmindful of the fact that the mobilisation of the *majority* of the workers for the struggle, whether in the shop, in the trade union, at a Labour Exchange, or in any locality, pre-supposes a manner and method of approach, and a kind of slogan, and practical proposals, *different* from an appeal to the revolutionary minority of the workers. We pay very little, often no attention whatsoever to this difference, in our press, agitational work and tactics. As a rule, the Communist newspapers write for their "own" comrades, and are, for that reason, seldom read by non-revolutionary workers and are of almost no account in the work of enlightening the latter. Often the same must be said of the Communist orators; they forget that "when it is a question of the practical action of the masses," as Lenin said, "here you get nowhere with propaganda habits alone, with the mere repetition of the truths of 'pure' Communism." Here it is a question of reckoning not on thousands, as is done essentially by the propagandist of a small



group, which has not yet led any masses, here you must reckon on millions and dozens of millions." We absolutely must learn how to come forward as revolutionary people's tribunes. Until we do so, we shall not become a leading party of mass action of the proletariat. Even in agitating for a simple economic strike, we must aim to mobilise not only the class-conscious minority of the workers, but the entire mass. The more so in political mass strikes. It is positively harmful to blur this really important task by indulging in phrases about the "initiative struggles" of the revolutionary minority.

(4) It is the task of the Communists to fight for the leadership in every mass action. But they must not forget that in these struggles during the preparatory period of the revolution, *the method of convincing the masses* is to be considered the principal method. The issuing of orders, military fashion, or the use of steam-roller tactics cannot win the majority of the workers to our side. Comrade Stalin has emphasised that "day in, day out, the Party must seek to gain the confidence of the proletarian masses," that it "must not issue orders, but must, above all, convince, by bringing home to the masses the correctness of the policy of the Party, on the basis of their own experience, that therefore it must be the leader, guide and teacher of its class." And Comrade Stalin added: "To violate these conditions is tantamount to the violation of the most important inter-relations between the advance guard and the class, the undermining of the 'mutual con-

fidence ' (Lenin's words), the disintegration of class as well as Party discipline."

(5) A bold application of the forms and methods of proletarian democracy, of the *united front from below*, to render it easier for the workers to convince themselves of the correctness of our policy, on the basis of their own experience. I have already gone into this so thoroughly in my report that it is superfluous to go into further detail on this point in my concluding remarks.

(6) The special attraction of the proletarian *women* to all mass movements. When a Communist Party has learned how to organise its revolutionary work also amongst the masses of proletarian women, it may well be said that it is a Bolshevik Party. But it is precisely through their shortcomings in this work that our Parties reveal that they are only half-way Bolshevised. The Communist Party of Germany is also still weak in this domain. For years they have been busy organising the women-delegate movement, but what has come of it? The latest data discloses that, of late, this work has been developed along a wrong track; the construction of a separate women's organisation is in progress along the road of women's conferences and women's congresses, i.e., a reversion to the old feminist form of organisation, which was rejected as early as the 3rd Congress of the Comintern, July 1921. The Party leadership must mend matters here, and, in general, this work is to be considered the work of the entire Party, much more so than heretofore. In France, the work in this

sphere of activity is completely separated from the general Party work, and is conducted absolutely without system. In Poland, until recently, the condition of this work was quite unsatisfactory, but lately a decided improvement can be noted. In all countries there are numerous big factories, and even entire localities, where the women workers constitute a *majority* of the workers, but where, none the less, our Party leaderships leave this work entirely, as a departmental task, to some weak women's department. Such an under-estimation of this work is anything but Leninist.

(7) The strike must, beyond doubt, be considered the most important form of proletarian class struggle at the present period. Where, however, it is not possible to mobilise the workers immediately for a strike, we must learn how to apply other forms of mass action that meet the situation, e.g., protest meetings in the shops and at the factory gates, the election of large deputations to the employers and the authorities, driving this or that especially hated tool of the exploiters out of the works by mass force, or short protest strikes, local demonstrations and the like. Leninism decidedly opposes the fetishisation of any particular form of struggle, or that this, or that, form of struggle be simply rejected. The most important thing in partial struggles is not that the most radical form of struggle possible should find immediate application, but that the workers in their entirety, or the greatest possible majority of the workers, should participate in the direct action organised by us. By skilfully starting



the movement in a form of struggle which is less radical in itself, but which, in the given case, brings the widest masses on their toes, it is often possible to enhance their readiness to struggle to such a degree that thereby in a short period of time, a relatively favourable situation is created for the organisation of an economic or political strike. We must learn how to apply the general *factory meeting* as the simplest form of mass action, and, in connection therewith, to utilise various kinds of *meetings and conferences of factory delegates* (also separate meetings of women delegates). The task of revolutionising the economic struggles, the transition from lower to higher forms of struggle, the extension and sharpening of the slogans to meet developments in the struggle and, under corresponding conditions, the preparation and execution of the *political mass strikes* or of the general strike, are at present of special importance.

The second question concerns the *strategic purpose of the separate partial struggles*, especially of the strikes. This question is often put in a very hazy manner, or not at all, in the course of the day-to-day struggles. But in every individual mass action it is necessary to be clear on the main objective from the very start, the political results which we want to attain in this action, otherwise it is impossible to work out a correct and suitable tactic.

The immediate demands for which a strike is declared represent no end in themselves and are not identical with the chief political objec-

tive. The winning of these demands is, of course, to be considered as the serious purpose of the struggle. It is to be regretted that our comrades often forget in practice that there is no use talking of political results, if they do not conduct an absolutely serious struggle for the immediate demands of the workers. The struggle to win partial demands is especially important in the present situation, although this does not appear to be so superficially. Formerly, we used to say that reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary struggle. To-day this by-product is much smaller; its magnitude has almost reached the vanishing point. To-day, as a rule, we are not even dealing with minor reforms, but with the prevention of major deteriorations in the position of the workers. The issue in the struggle is the standard of living, in most instances the minimum of existence. But, if the working class successfully resists the offensive of capitalism, this is apt to-day to occasion the capitalists' difficulties a hundred times greater than were created by the most important reforms, such as the working class could formerly achieve, at a time when the capitalists could always quickly find some ample compensation. Reforms, within the framework of capitalism, are a thing of the past. The hunger offensive will not rescue capitalism from the claws of the economic crisis, but where the working class succeeds in defending its standards of wages, even if only partially, it causes considerable woe to capitalism.

But this fact must not be exaggerated, as if

the political purpose of the strike struggle consists in weakening the economic basis of the bourgeoisie by effectively preventing the offensive of capitalism, and thus clearing the path to revolution, as if the partial struggles could be considered a sort of "partial destruction of the power of the bourgeoisie." No, the material successes of the strikes are insignificant at best, and not appropriate to shake the positions of the ruling monopoly capitalism economically. The possible material gains are, as they have been, a by-product of the revolutionary struggle, only that now they are much rarer than formerly.

So what is there left by way of the political effect of strikes? *The effect upon the working class itself* remains. What effect? The usual answer is: the revolutionary experience of the workers, which they gain, in the struggle in question. That is correct, if properly understood. However, not infrequently, it is interpreted in the narrow sense, as if it were a question of some "revolutionary training" of the workers, by means of these strikes. This is absolutely wrong, and its practical effect is quite harmful, if, in the case of a strike, the Communists present the matter to the masses in such a light as if they were going through some revolutionary gymnastics or a "dress rehearsal." We must be exceedingly careful to see to it that no such harmful phrases appear in the Communist press, for the masses of the workers will not tolerate any fooling with strikes.

Often strike statistics are handled in a manner devoid of criticism. Calculations are



made showing that so and so many strikes have taken place, from which one immediately jumps to the conclusion that, therefore, so and so many gains have been scored for the revolutionary movement. The matter is not so simple as all that. If all these strikes had really strengthened the revolutionary movement, this would be so. But there are strikes which take place under the leadership of the reformists, in which the Communists have not given the least sign of life, or if they participate they can do it in such a manner that, as a matter of fact, the authority of the reformists is strengthened. In such event, the political result of the strike is negative only. Or there may also be strikes which are led by Communists, where, however, serious mistakes are made, with the result that the masses will turn their backs to the Communists for a long time. The statistics, however, enumerate these strikes alongside of the rest that really yielded us positive results without any differentiation. In reality, there is a substantial difference.

Why is it necessary to stress this point? In order to emphasise the decisive importance of removing the shortcomings and mistakes in our strike tactics. What is the most important "revolutionary experience" which the working masses are to receive through the strike movement and other partial struggles in the present-day preparatory period? This is, above all, the teaching *that the reformists betray their interests and that the Communists protect their interests in the right way.* Inasmuch as the majority of the workers has not yet learned this

and does not comprehend the necessity of refusing its support to the reformists, the reformists are enabled to play the role of the main bulwark of capitalism. It is precisely in the present period that their mass influence must be destroyed, and the mass movements, the partial struggles of the present day, are to be utilised to this end. The fascists cannot win the voluntary support of the majority of the workers. The Social-Democratic Parties, the reformists can win them, and even now they enjoy great mass influence which only we Communists can wipe out. This is the main strategic goal which we must keep permanently before us in the present period.

We must warn our comrades of the *danger of under-estimating the Social-Democratic Party*. The Social-Democratic Party may again become a grave danger, especially in a revolutionary situation, if we do not do our utmost to drive a wedge between the Social-Democratic workers and their leaders, to isolate the Social-Democratic Party. It should not be forgotten that in 1918-19 it was the Social-Democratic Party that saved the bourgeoisie in Germany. The same is true in many other countries. In 1923 the Social-Democratic influence in Germany had even penetrated the ranks of the Communist Party leadership, whereby the revolution was again rendered impossible. The greatest revolutionary struggles are now impending; of this there can be no doubt, and the question is whether the Communist Party will be able at the decisive moment to paralyse the counter-influence and the counter-revolutionary

manœuvres of the social-fascists. *This* must now be made a certainty.

It is not always self-evident that the Social-Democracy is the *main support of the bourgeoisie*. Some comrades are of the opinion that, for instance, the position of the Social-Democratic Party in Italy contradicts this thesis. What did the years of 1921-22 in Italy teach us? The same as in many other countries: at every critical moment that really endangers the bourgeoisie, whenever it needs a support outside the ranks of its own class to save itself, Social-Democracy has always proved itself to be the main support of the bourgeoisie. And, as the Italian comrades have reported, even to-day the ideological influence of Social-Democracy and of reformism in Italy is very important, and should not be underestimated by any means. The danger would be small if the social-fascists would always resort to undisguised strike-breaking tactics, if they would openly march shoulder to shoulder with the fascists. Then the role of Social-Democracy, as the main social support of the bourgeoisie, would soon come to an end, and our task would be easier. But that is not how things stand.

The *main blow*, as I have already stated in my report, must in the present period of preparing for the revolution be directed against social-fascism and the reformist trade union bureaucracy. This, however, does not at all mean that the bourgeoisie, that the capitalists, are not to be considered the main enemy. Our principal strategic blow, now aimed at social-



fascism, is likewise aimed simultaneously and with full force against the class enemy, against the principal enemy himself.

Many of our comrades fail to understand that a fatal credulity or, as Lenin called it, a "gullible lack of consciousness," still pervades the broad masses of the workers, with reference to the Social-Democratic and reformist leaders. Their credulity is apt to induce the masses in critical moments to bestow their confidence first on the social-fascists, if the preceding experiences of the masses and the work prepared by the Communists has been inadequate. It is one of the *most important tasks* of the present day, in *each partial struggle*, to overcome this credulous gullibility of the masses of the workers, with reference to the reformist leaders.

Many comrades emphasised in the discussion the necessity of improving our mass policy, and many useful suggestions have been made to the end that we may not only chatter concerning the mobilisation of the masses, but really be able to organise mass actions, to lead correctly and to win the masses. I, for my part, have drawn particular attention to the establishment of contact with the broad masses, and I once more stress the importance of this task. At the same time, I wish to emphasise most clearly that the establishing of contacts with the masses is not everything, by far. Connecting the Communist Party with the broad masses is only the *necessary prerequisite* for the successful development of the revolutionary mass struggle. The real leading role of the Communists only *begins* with and after the establishment of con-

tact with the broad masses of the workers. This must not be forgotten. And it is correct and necessary to say that in a correct approach to the masses we must proceed from the level of class consciousness already attained by the majority of the workers concerned—this we must learn to do. But it must be clearly understood: only *proceed* from this level, and not ourselves descend to it. Our main task is to educate the wide masses, to lead them further, to raise their activity and their revolutionariness above the present level. If we forget this but for a moment we cannot help committing gross opportunist errors. Precisely of late we have seen how, while some of our Parties—the Communist Party of Germany, the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia, and the Communist Party of Poland—have made considerable progress in the correct application of the united-front tactics; in certain cases a number of opportunist errors could be observed at the same time. This unavoidable risk of opportunist error is no ground at all for refraining from applying united-front tactics, but furnishes most serious grounds for systematically instructing all Party organs and members how to correctly overcome these errors, and how to conduct an indefatigable struggle against opportunist tendencies.

It is not always necessary to institute a united-front action in the name of the Communist Party. In many instances it may be more advisable to do this in the name of some revolutionary mass organisations, as, for instance, in the name of a trade union, in the case of an

economic struggle. Care must, however, be exercised to see that this is not done in opposition to the Communist Party, but in the sense of solidarity with it. In this respect we must also differentiate between the manner in which a mass action is to be started and how it is to be continued. It is absolutely impermissible in the course of the mass struggle, and in leading the same further, to conceal the face of the Party. A correct relation to the Communist Party must always be safeguarded in the revolutionary mass organisations. A report has reached us from the United States that the Communist Party in the Red Textile Workers' Union is "almost beyond the pale of the law," as one of the members of the Central Committee expresses himself; the name of the Party is never heard in this union, and the leading comrades in the union consider the Party an "obstacle to the construction of trade unions." It is quite possible that this attitude has its origin in a reaction to incorrect leadership on the part of the Party; but, even if that were so, it is absolutely impermissible and opportunist.

It is necessary to touch upon the question of the character of *nationalism and chauvinism in Germany*. This question, which was broached in our theses, was specially elucidated by Comrade Thälmann during the discussion (see No. I. (1933) "Communist International.") The events of the last few days afford us an opportunity to return once more to this question. The German bourgeoisie has now exhibited greater activity in its struggle against the system of Versailles. But it would be a great mis-



take to see only the one side of German nationalism and chauvinism, to see only the national wrath against the yoke of Versailles. There is also a reverse side to this question: the anxiety and rage of the German bourgeoisie by reason of the Communist danger, the danger of the proletarian revolution. These two sides have coalesced in present-day German nationalism and chauvinism. Doubtlessly the German bourgeoisie, which formerly represented a mighty imperialist power in its ascendancy, is inspired with hatred against the enslavement of Versailles, and with sentiments of revenge, against the victorious imperialist Powers. At the same time, it realises its impotence to engage in a real struggle against imperialist Powers, and in the circumstances of the intensified economic crisis, it is seized with the fear that German capitalism may collapse, and therefore it—together with the upper stratum of the petty bourgeoisie—seeks its revenge at the expense of the revolutionary working class, of Communism. The German bourgeoisie has evinced this feeling of impotence with reference to its imperialist power, in the course of many years through an almost similar cringing before the mighty imperialists, such as the Chinese bourgeoisie has exhibited through the policy of the Kuomintang.

Is it now to be entirely different? I do not think so. What has been the nationalism of the Nazis in the question of the territories of German nationalities, severed from Germany? An open betrayal of the national cause of the Tyrolese. Unconditional surrender in the

Anschluss-Question of the Austrians. The Nazi leaders have not even dared to put point-blank the question of the reunion of the Polish territories snatched from Germany, with their German population. Instead of that, they only dared to wreak their Fascist frenzy on the German revolutionary working class. Now the Papen Government advances its demand for an equal status in the question of disarmament. This concession the Papen Government seeks to purchase from French imperialism, through its anti-Soviet policy; and, besides, it seeks to make this deal acceptable by intimating that a larger German army is necessary against the internal foe. But it is clearly perceptible how little all this is appropriate to reconcile French imperialism with this demand of German imperialism. The French imperialists are not at all averse to having the German bourgeoisie make every effort to throttle the internal enemy, and they are prepared to welcome the fact that the German bourgeoisie is conducting a palpably anti-Soviet policy. But it is quite a different matter to meet German claims to equal imperialist status. The French bourgeoisie may be expected to reply to the German bourgeoisie somewhat as follows: "At home you have set up an internal Versailles system against the working class, and there you can exert as much pressure as you want, for aught we care; but your aspiration that our Versailles peace treaty be abrogated and you be given an equal status with us in the question of armaments is an idiotic Utopia!" And as far as their anti-Soviet imperialist policy

is concerned, this should strengthen French, Polish and British imperialism, but not German imperialism. If, however, the German bourgeoisie should take steps to attain its demands, the French Government can without doubt find some "section 48" or other in the international imperialist treaties, or can make use of some "emergency decree" of the League of Nations.

Comrade Thälmann told us yesterday in his speech what the programme is, which the Communist Party is opposing to the fascist-nationalist programme. The Communist Party fights for the complete liquidation of the Versailles system of enslavement in all its constituent parts, but it simultaneously fights for the social liberation of the workers of Germany. It now sets up its concrete programme of national and social liberation, and we are convinced that the Communist Party of Germany will be able to utilise the rich experience which it has gained during all the previous turns in the German revolutionary movement in its struggle for this programme, by overcoming the weaknesses which, of late, have been in evidence in the work of the German Communist Party. Comrade Thälmann in his speech (see No. I., "Communist International," 1933), has subjected these weaknesses to frank self-criticism. I call the attention of those German comrades, who latterly have much more indulged in sharp criticism of the Party leadership than engaged in self-criticism, to the fact that there is a difference between criticism and criticism. Criticism which helps the Party is one thing. Such criticism has been exercised by us at the



Plenum. But the Comintern will certainly set its foot down upon undermining criticism against the Party leadership. The E.C.C.I. supports the present leadership of the Communist Party of Germany. It is convinced that the latter will now be able to overcome its weak points and to lead the masses of the German proletariat to victorious class struggles.

I am in solidarity with the formulation given by Comrade Manuilsky concerning the character of the fascist regime in Germany that it is *one of the forms of fascist dictatorship*. It seems to me to be of the utmost importance that we do not, in any way, under-estimate or slur over the necessity of an active struggle against German fascism. We are dealing here not only with the struggle against the National Socialists. Thus we have seen recently that the "Stahlhelm" is a deciding factor in the class struggles in Germany of particular importance, which dare not be under-valued in any event. Though it does not represent a great mass organisation, it consists of picked and well-equipped fighting forces of the bourgeois counter-revolution. Already significant symptoms of disintegration may be noted in the ranks of the fascist mass movement. But the political conclusion that we ought to draw from this may under no circumstances be that we abide the automatic disintegration of fascism. On the contrary. The more the symptoms of its disintegration multiply, the more we must intensify our anti-fascist mass struggle and our struggle against the ideology of nationalism and chauvinism. The mass influence of the

Social democracy is on the wane. This likewise gives rise to the conclusion: not to rest for a moment in the struggle against Social-Democracy, but to redouble and intensify this struggle tenfold! From day to day we see how in Germany the anti-fascist united front, initiated by the Communist Party of Germany between the Communist, Social-Democratic and even Christian workers, between the Red Front Fighters and members of the *Reichsbanner*, grows and marches on. Yesterday we received the news of the anti-fascist mass demonstration in Düsseldorf. Every one of us received this piece of news with the greatest joy. This is the path of the correct preparation of the German proletariat for the impending struggles for power.

Comrades, in all that we have said at this Plenum concerning the forms, methods and content of the Bolshevik mass policy we have once more endeavoured to impart to our Sections "a portion of the Russian experience," as Lenin expressed himself. You may recall his words at the IVth World Congress on the occasion of the question: how can our comrades in the capitalist countries absorb a portion of the Russian experience? He said: "I don't know how this will be done. Perhaps the fascists in Italy, for instance, will do us a good turn by showing the Italians how, after all, they are not yet so highly cultured, that the development of the black hundreds in Italy have become impossible." Precisely by struggling against fascist banditry and terror quite a number of our Sections have doubtlessly

accumulated useful experiences so far on how incessant revolutionary work among the masses must be conducted, in correct Bolshevik fashion. But the task itself is difficult. At all events, it cannot be said that our Parties, no matter how much they may have missed or neglected in the sphere of work in the shops and reformist trade unions, made no attempts to organise this work properly. No, numerous attempts have been made, and in individual actions we could even point to a number of successful steps. But it is not so easy to get *constant*, proper Bolshevik work in the shops and trade unions started, to adapt the "Russian experience," not in a stereotyped manner, but correctly, to the West-European and American conditions. This we are still far from having mastered sufficiently, yet it is quite possible and necessary to learn how to do so.

We must determinedly liquidate every "scissors" (divergence—ED.) between our decisions and their practical execution; must call a halt to fictitious "paper-leadership," to our countless circulars and protocols, must encourage the local Party organisations to take the initiative and—without making a fetish of inner-Party democracy—remove super-centralism, which has developed in many of our Sections to the detriment of their work. The development of really Bolshevik cadres, as is required by the forthcoming period of great revolutionary struggles, must be pursued with much greater energy and system than heretofore.

We have deemed it expedient in the further



elaboration of our theses to abridge the original draft considerably. But I believe I am expressing the opinion of the Political Commission, and of the Presidium, when I say that the detailed advice given to combat the shortcomings and errors in our mass work, which part was dropped in the process of abridgement, has not simply been dropped overboard. On the contrary, special tactical commentaries on the abridged theses, which are now in your hands to be voted upon by you, will in all probability be published.

Now let me add a few words on the internal questions of the French and Spanish Party leadership. The work of the Communist Party of France was taken in hand by a special committee of the Plenum, which has not yet terminated its labours. The work of the commission has shown that the present condition of affairs in the leadership of the Communist Party of France affords occasion for uneasiness. The E.C.C.I. will take all steps possible to help the French Party to completely overcome its weak spots, which are in evidence.

The Communist Party of Spain, as you all know, has shown some successes of late. But the Party could have achieved better results, in the mobilisation of the masses, if the Party had not been headed by Comrades Bullejos and Adam, who have represented a sectarian line, not by chance, but from conviction, and who have been supported from here by Comrade Trilla. They have sabotaged various decisions of the Communist International, and now, after the arrest of the responsible Party workers in

Spain, they attempt to seize the Party leadership and remove the other comrades. The Political Commission of the Plenum has gone into this question, and decided to invite the comrades concerned here, to put a stop to such disruption of the Party leadership. I hope that the Plenum will agree to this line.

At the outset of my remarks I referred to the under-estimation of the *international significance of the Soviet Union* as an expression of opportunism. This under-estimation is not always conscious in form and may often appear disguised in a pleasing form, *e.g.*, in the formulation "defence of the Soviet Union as a duty of international solidarity." By posing the question in this restricted manner we block our path to the mobilisation and revolutionising of the masses. The defence of the Soviet Union is absolutely necessary. What do we defend in the capitalist countries, when we fight for the Soviet Union? We must understand what is most important: we defend the basis of the international revolution, the basis of the socialist revolution of each individual country. In doing so, the German workers defend in the first place the international basis of the German revolution, the French workers defend the international basis of the French revolution, etc. We must therefore make it clear to the workers of all capitalist countries that it is not at all merely a question of fulfilling a duty of international solidarity with respect to the Soviet Union, but we need the support of the Soviet Union no less than the Soviet Union needs our support.

*In the struggle against war* the greatest danger in our ranks does not consist in the fact that our organisations cannot lead the struggle, but in the fact that they remain fixed to the abstract anti-war phraseology, in the fact that they are not able to develop an effectual mass struggle against the concrete measures of the war and intervention policy of the bourgeois government—measures which it is not always easy to unmask, because the bourgeoisie cunningly disguises them. The point is to mobilise, not only the masses of the workers, but also the allies of the proletariat, the masses of the peasantry and other toilers against the war danger. We must work during the forthcoming period, with increased energy, to mobilise the liberation movement of the oppressed nations of Europe, and everywhere else. This sphere of activity has been neglected in all countries, where there are oppressed nations. I laid particular stress upon this task at the last Plenum, and now its importance is to be enhanced. In this struggle, the successful unmasking of the national reformist parties is of special importance. As soon as the war danger, on the part of Japan, against the Soviet Union became acute, we were treated to the spectacle in Poland, for instance, of a frenzied anti-Soviet Union hue and cry raised by the various national-reformist groups of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie on the pretext of defending the interests of some Ukrainian colony or other, which is leading a perfectly peaceful life in the Far East on the territory of the Soviet Union—that is to say, for an alliance with



Japanese imperialism, for the purpose of fighting the Soviet Union. These are the gentry who claim to represent the national cause of the Ukrainian people, who are being oppressed by the Polish bourgeoisie! It is our task to unmask such traitors to the anti-imperialist liberation struggle of the Ukrainians, but to unmask them so that the Ukrainian peasant masses can really see them through and through.

The example of the Japanese Communist Party which, as I have already stated in my report, has done the best work so far in the anti-war struggle, should, in the immediate future act as an incentive to all the remaining Sections of the Comintern, in the capitalist countries, to improve their work in the bourgeois *armies*. At the same time, the proletarian self-defence must be organised everywhere and further developed.

If but little was said at this Plenum about the *colonial movement*, this is by no means to be interpreted as an under-valuation of this movement. A powerful increase in the revolutionary upsurge may be observed in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and a number of Communist Parties, in these countries, have done splendid work, in the mobilisation of the masses, for the revolutionary struggle. This is especially true of the *Chinese Communist Party*. This Party works under the constant threat of the executioner's axe outside the Soviet territories, under difficulties that are not exceeded in any other country. There, the physical destruction of all revolutionists that they can lay their hands on is the

rule and an almost daily occurrence. The Communist Party of China deserves great credit for not having lost its contacts, and playing an important part in the imperialist mass movement, despite this bloody terror. At the same time, however, we draw the attention of the Communist Party of China to its neglect of trade union work, especially to the absolutely inadequate use it made of the last anti-imperialist upswing of the masses, to strengthen the revolutionary trade union movement.

Comrades, our programme has predicted that "the development of the contradictions within modern world economy, the development of the general capitalist crisis, and the mighty imperialist attack upon the Soviet Union inevitably lead to a mighty revolutionary outbreak which must overwhelm capitalism in a number of so-called civilised countries, unleash the victorious revolution in the colonies, broaden the base of the proletarian dictatorship to an enormous degree, and thus with tremendous strides bring nearer the final world victory of Socialism."—"Programme of the Communist International," page 50.)

It seems to me that this is the perspective, which must now be borne in mind, when we speak of the world-historic process of the transition to a new round of revolutions and wars.

The task of the present, which we set down in the theses as the general task of the Comintern and of our Sections in all capitalist countries, is the concrete struggle against the offensive of capitalism against fascism and reaction,

against the approaching imperialist war and intervention against the Soviet Union. These are not three separate and distinct tasks, but they are inseparably intertwined, so that they are to be considered as essentially one single task of struggle. To wrangle over whether this struggle is defensive or offensive in character would harbour a scholastic contra-position. If we are real Bolsheviks, we will do everything in our power to develop every defensive struggle into a mighty counter-attack of the proletariat.

But, whatever be the character of the separate economic and political mass struggles of the present, the point is to prepare the proletariat, in the course of all these struggles, for the decisive mass struggle. The point is to win the majority of the working class for revolution. Lenin said: "No victory can be won with the vanguard alone. To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive struggle, while the wide masses do not directly support the vanguard, or at least practise a benevolent neutrality with reference to it, and have exhibited their absolute inability to support their opponents would not only be folly but also a crime."

The point therefore is to form, in the words of Comrade Stalin, the "*political mass army*," which will not only fight for power, but will also be victorious in this fight. This political army of millions is the *proletarian united front*, which must now be forged under the leadership of the Communists in all capitalist countries.



The point is now *to organise and assure the victory*. This is being done under the leadership of the Communist Party of every individual country, under the leadership of the Communist International.



## SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON O. W. KUUSINEN

*Reprinted from the "Communist International,"  
No. 18, October 15th, 1931.*

**H**E is fifty years of age and has spent twenty-six years in the revolutionary struggle in Finland and thirteen years in the ranks of international bolshevism. From being the leader of the small Communist Party of Finland he has advanced to being one of the workers on the staff of the world revolution. Since the Third Congress of the Comintern he has been a member of its Executive Committee, one of the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. and a member of its presidium. Such, in short, has been the career of Comrade Kuusinen.

In 1905 Comrade Kuusinen took his degree as Master of Philosophy, but he was not attracted by an academic career. He did not remain content with the lofty abstractions of academic science, but plunged into the wave of revolution in 1905, took part in the general strike, and was one of the Finnish red guards.

Becoming editor of the theoretical organ of the Finnish Social-Democratic Party, "The Socialist Journal," and its central organ, "Tyuameyess," Comrade Kuusinen was always on the left wing of the Social-Democratic Party, struggling against opportunism, ministerialism, etc.

The defeat of the Finnish revolution in 1918 was the result fundamentally of a repetition of the errors of the Paris Commune. Comrade Kuusinen, who had taken part in leading this revolution and had been a member of the late revolutionary government, was the first after the defeat to submit to the criticism of the Finnish revolution from the bolshevist point of view and so lay the ideological foundations for a new Communist Party in Finland. But he was not only one of the foundation members of the Communist Party of Finland, he also stood at the cradle of the Communist International. At the First Congress of the Communist International, Comrade Kuusinen opposed those comrades who considered that it was as yet premature to announce that Communist conference as a congress. "I think," said Comrade Kuusinen, "that the strength of the new International will be commensurate with the strength of the revolutionary proletariat and not with the strength of this small gathering."

Comrade Kuusinen having sketched the theoretical foundations of a Finnish Communist movement in his pamphlet, "Revolution in Finland," now proceeded to translate these theories into practice. Under the threat of execution he carried on underground work in Finland and was active there from May, 1919, to the summer of

1920, while the most rigorous terrorism was in progress, during which, thanks to his courageous conduct, he twice succeeded in escaping the police cordons of the Finnish executioners. While he was working underground, Comrade Kuusinen laid in Finland the foundations of a legal revolutionary mass party working under the leadership of an illegal Communist Party.

His practical experience in organisational work in Finland of uniting legal and illegal work and his study of Leninism gave Comrade Kuusinen the possibility of working out for the Third Congress of the Communist International theses on organisational construction and the tasks of a Communist Party. On the subject of these theses, Comrade Lenin wrote to Comrade Kuusinen on the 10th of June, 1921:—

“ I have read through your article (three chapters) and theses with great pleasure.” At the same time, in another letter, Comrade Lenin insisted that Comrade Kuusinen should without fail read to the Third Congress this document on the question of organisation, remarking in this connection: “ He (Kuusinen) necessarily knows and *thinks* ” (underlined by Lenin). At the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, Comrade Lenin said on the subject of these theses: “ The resolution is excellent, but it is almost purely Russian, that is entirely bound up with Russian conditions.” Comrade Kuusinen thoroughly assimilated this critical observation of Comrade Lenin, and in his further work for the Communist International has striven strenuously to translate bolshevik tactics from “ the Russian language ” into the language of the cor-



responding sections of the Communist International, studying all their individual local conditions.

Comrade Kuusinen, like a real bolshevik, having assimilated Leninism, has fought against all deviations from the general line of the Communist International. He has combated "left" Trotskyism and the policy of Ruth Fischer; at the Sixth Congress he struggled against the right opportunist theory of "decolonisation." At the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. he fought against the conciliatory criticism of capitalist rationalisation. But besides this, in his day to day work for the Communist International and in all those spheres to which he has devoted special attention (i.e., national and colonial problems), having studied the testaments of Lenin, he strives always to face a question concretely and ever to adopt a flexible tactic and one which is a result of careful reflection on the subject to be approached.

We send our good wishes to this professional revolutionary who has so staunchly defended the banner of Leninism in his responsible post in the Communist International, and hope that for many years to come he will fight for this banner till the victory of the world revolution.

(Signed) Wilhelm Pieck, J. Bratkovsky,  
O. Piatnitzky, Manner, P.  
Furubottn, Bela Kun, J. Sirola,  
D. Manuilsky, Sen Katayama,  
Khatavey, Kolarov, Furini,  
Knorin, Okano, Chemodanov.

## "BOLSHEVIK HISTORY" SERIES

*A Series of Short Sketches Dealing with Various  
Aspects of the Pre-War Experiences  
of the Bolsheviks*

BOLSHEVIKS ON TRIAL.....	10c
BOOK PUBLISHING UNDER TSARISM.....	10c
ESCAPE FROM THE GALLOWS.....	10c
PROVOCATEURS I HAVE KNOWN..	10c
THE STRIKE OF THE DREDGING FLEET, 1905.....	15c
UNEMPLOYED COUNCILS IN ST. PETERSBURG IN 1906.....	15c
THE REVOLT OF THE ARMoured CRUISER "POTEMKIN".....	10c
FROM THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION TO THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION..	25c
BOLSHEVIK SMUGGLERS.....	10c

---

## "BRIEF BIOGRAPHY" SERIES

IVAN BABUSHKIN— <i>Friend of Lenin</i> ..	10c
Y. M. SVERDLOV— <i>The First President of the Republic of Labour</i> .....	10c
KAMO— <i>The Life of a Great Revolutionist</i>	10c

---

*Order From*

**WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS**

P. O. Box 148, Sta., D.

New York City

