

13TH PLENUM

Fascism, Social - Democracy and the Communists



Speech by
V. KNORIN

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
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F a s c i s m , Social-Democracy and the Communists

Speech by
V. K N O R I N



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Fascism, Social-Democracy and the Communists

By V. KRONIN

1. Our Tactics Are Correct

COMRADES, only six years have passed since Rudolph Hilferding at the Kiel Party Congress of German social-democracy, put forward a new program of post-war social-democracy, the theory of "organized capitalism" and of "peaceful growing into socialism through democracy."

The Communists are going under. This can only be a matter of time. . . . The Communists have already lost all significance for the socialist movement; they are lost.

A great victory of Social-Democracy is possible. . . . I say once again: we know the path, we know the goal. If we conduct our struggle under the slogan of faithfulness to socialist principles, of unswervingness in the struggle for our aim—the winning of state power—but with freedom to maneuver in our tactics, then the possibility of victory will become reality.

With these words Rudolf Hilferding concluded his speech at the Kiel Party Congress before the Reichstag election of 1928.

The world situation was then characterized by the relative stabilization of capitalism. Production, trade and technique were advancing. The United States was intoxicated with its own prosperity, "the American economic miracle." In 1928 social-democracy was in power in Germany, while the Prussian government had been in its hands continuously

since 1918. The theory of "organized capitalism" was adopted by the entire Second International. In the revolutionary movement the lull which had set in after 1923 was still making itself felt.

It was under these conditions that two world congresses met in 1928—the Congress of the Second International in Brussels and the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow. And while the social-democrats at their Brussels world congress were deciding that capitalism had healed its wounds, at that very same moment in those same months in the autumn of 1928 our Sixth Congress of the Comintern pointed out the coming of a new *third* period in the post-war crisis of capitalism, the period of the shattering of the stabilization of capitalism and the growth of a revolutionary upsurge of the masses. At the time when social-democracy, together with its bourgeoisie, was celebrating the recovery of capitalism, our world Communist Party hurled in their faces the challenging statement:

Gentlemen, you may feast today but you are sick to the death, before you get home the plague of the crisis will seize you.

Within a year the approach of an economic crisis of over-production was already making itself felt throughout the whole world. After the mass demonstrations in 1927 against the execution of Sacco and Venzetti—demonstrations which showed that the lull in the labor movement was already passing away—a mighty strike movement developed in 1928 (Lodz, the Ruhr, Munich-Gladbach, etc.). But social-democracy, which had retreated from Marxism, was the last to recognize the changes that were taking place. It was still fascinated by the theories of "organized capitalism" and of "development without crisis." Brought face to face with the approaching bankruptcy of the Weimar Republic, German social-democracy at the Megdeburg Party Congress in 1929

than in the
dictatorship, then le
acy was intensifying the
y proletariat, against the growing
of the masses, showing ever more
atic face.

to the opinions voiced by social-democ-
t at our Tenth Plenum in July 1929 that
between classes and states were growing,
utionary upsurge was rising, that an eco-
not far off.

The economic crisis was already raging over
ld. In the spring of 1930 the bourgeoisie ex-
social-democrats from their ministerial posts i
n the autumn the Labor Government in Engla
feat. The theory of "organized capitalism"
the social-democrats put forward the "the
italism was seriously ill and that it behoove
democrats to save it.

at this time at the Eleventh Plenum of the
nowed the masses the growing contrast of two
system of socialism in construction and the
aying capitalism; we noted the growth of the
es for a revolutionary crisis in a number
pointed out that for the toiling masses the onl
the crisis is revolution.

Finally, at our last Twelfth Plenum of
Committee of the Comintern, when socia
already lost its head and had commenced
counter-revolutionary situation, we fir
sted that the stabilization of capitalism
the world was confronted v
ed states, that there wa

changes and upheavals, that the transition to a new round of revolutions and wars was being effected.

In all our estimates of the situation we have been proved right. Our analysis has been justified from year to year. We have not had occasion to revise our views on any point. But everything which was put forward against us by the theoreticians of the bourgeoisie and above all by social-democracy, all this has been falling to pieces from year to year like a house of cards. For we have based ourselves and continue to base ourselves on the only scientific theory—the theory of Marxism-Leninism, while social-democracy has long ago betrayed Marxism, for we are not afraid to look facts in the face or to call things by their proper names.

Armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, analyzing with its help the world situation, recognizing the tremendous difficulties which confront us, we call the toiling masses to take up the struggle against fascism and war, for the overthrow of the power of the exploiting classes and the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Recognizing our tremendous responsibility for the fate of the world labor movement, we have carried out all our work during the past year on the basis of the instructions of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

In the two main key points, in Germany and in the Far East, the contradictions of the capitalism system have reached their greatest accentuation. The revolutionary upsurge has continued to grow throughout the whole world. In China the Soviet revolution has extended. In Spain, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and many other countries there have been severe class battles. But for the time being fascism has conquered in Germany. For a short time the German bourgeoisie has consolidated its power. War is spreading in the Far East. An attack by Japan on the U.S. S.R. is on the order of the day. But we can nevertheless

point to the fact that our glorious Communist Party of Germany has done everything for the struggle against fascism which was in its power and which was dictated by the given concrete correlation of class forces. We can also say that the Japanese and Chinese Communist Parties have done everything which was in their power and which was dictated by the given concrete correlation of class forces for the struggle against war. And if at the present time fascism comes to power in a number of countries, if the war danger has become an immediate one, nevertheless we can say now with even greater assurance than at any time before; the forces of the revolution are growing despite fascist terror and social-democracy. No gangs of Hitler and no armies of Araki are able to hold up this growth of the forces of revolution.

Our analysis of the situation is true, our tactics are correct—that is what is shown us by a glance back over the development of events for the last five years since the Sixth Congress of the Communist International.

2. The Contemporary Capitalist State

At the present time, as Comrade Kuusinen said here, on the basis of the unalterable laws of its development, the world is already directly approaching a new round of revolutions and wars.

The firmest foundations of capitalist society are being shattered by the gigantic destructive force of the crisis, the growth in the strength of the U.S.S.R. and the growth of the revolutionary movement of the toiling masses in the capitalist countries themselves. The contradictions between classes and states are being accentuated to a catastrophic degree. Not one single capitalist state can be certain that its frontiers are secure. Not one single capitalist government is confident of what tomorrow will bring. Everywhere sharp

encounters are going on between the forces of revolution and the forces of reaction.

The preparations for the war between states are taking the form of *a war of the most powerful forces of the bourgeoisie against the Communist Party and the working class. The contradictions between capitalist countries are being accentuated to the highest degree.* Meanwhile a wave of nationalism is rising and this is being utilized by the bourgeoisie for setting up in a number of countries the power of the *most extreme reactionary, chauvinist, fascist parties of the bourgeoisie.* The darkest forces of reaction, remnants of the Middle Ages, are being mobilized in order to defend capitalism, which is at its death gasp.

But nevertheless the ruling classes see that they are not masters of the situation in their own system. The capitalist world is drifting rudderless towards its own ruin. The philosophers of the exploiting classes are filled with profound pessimism and argue about the decline of Europe. Their writers write Utopian novels about the war of the future and the setting up of fascist dictatorship, about the dictatorship of the few—the engineers, technicians and airmen. Their economists, while predicting fresh prosperity and the end of the crisis, are shown to be mere stock exchange speculators gambling on a rise in the price of shares or reactionary Utopians raving about turning back the course of history to petty commodity production. Their politicians speak with supreme cynicism about the pending war, as they are accustomed to speak about their plans for a pleasure excursion in the Mediterranean next summer. Senile decay has seized upon the ruling classes, who have shown themselves bankrupt in the face of history.

Capitalism has outlived its day. The best thinkers of capitalist society are beginning to grasp this fact to an ever

greater extent. Their sympathies are ever more turned to us. Hundreds of writers, scientists, engineers and technicians are following the work of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. with great sympathy. The sympathies of broad sections of the intelligentsia, especially in America and in the Far East, are beginning to be claimed by Soviet China, which has become an important political factor in the Far East. Capitalism, however, is maintained by bayonettes, by the state apparatus which has grown to colossal dimensions; this apparatus pumps out of the taxpayers funds for the subsidizing of banks and large trusts and suppresses with fire and sword the revolutionary movement of workers and peasants.

The crisis of capitalism is so profound that even Mussolini in his speech before the National Council of Fascist Corporations in November, 1933, was compelled to say:

We have reached a point where, *if the state were to go to sleep for twenty-four hours, this interval would be enough for the coming of a catastrophe.* From now on there is no sphere of economy in which the state can afford not to interfere. If we want to put off the last hour of this capitalist system, then we will come to state capitalism, which is nothing more nor less than state socialism turned inside out. And this constitutes the crisis of the capitalist system in all its universal significance.

If the contemporary monopolist-capitalist bourgeois state went to sleep for twenty-four hours, then capitalism would collapse and power would pass into the hands of the Communists—this is what Mussolini, the prominent representative of contemporary monopolist-capital, here admits.

But in proportion as the crisis grows deeper, and things go worse for the bourgeoisie, the parasitism of the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie grows ever larger and larger.

And those figures which have been given here at the Plenum by Comrade Kuusinen* showing the tremendous growth of

* Before the war the total state budget of Germany comprised 7 per cent of the national income; in 1929, the expenditure of the Reich and of the various states and municipalities comprised 26 per cent, and in 1932, 33 per cent of the national income. In the United States the federal budget in 1913 comprised only 2 per cent of the national income; in 1932 the share increased sixfold. In England the pre-war budget comprised 8 per cent of the national income, and in 1932, 23 per cent; in France, pre-war budget 14 per cent, now 25 per cent; in Italy, pre-war budget 16 per cent, now 34 per cent of the national income.

The proportion of the expenditure on armaments to the total budget is as follows: in France, direct expenditure on armaments in 1920 represented 17 per cent of the total budget and in 1931 it rose to 32 per cent; in Italy the proportion rose from 30 per cent in 1929 to 35 per cent in 1932, in Japan it rose from 28 per cent in 1929 to 37 per cent in 1933. These figures apply to expenditure on armaments in the strict sense of the word. If, however, we include expenditure on the police and on the National Debt, we will find that the expenditure of bourgeois states on past and future wars represents from 40 to 70 per cent of their total budgets. Truly, a gigantic increase in parasitism.

To these figures must be added the enormous sums that bourgeois governments spend on efforts to save the big trusts and banks, and on saving their profits. We have already pointed to the fact that in the United States the measures taken by the Roosevelt government in 1933 involve expenditure on subsidies and guarantees amounting to 15,000,000 dollars. In Italy, the government allocated 7,000,000 lire to compensate for the losses incurred by the big concerns. In Germany, for the purpose of saving the big banks alone the government spent 1,100,000,000 marks. "Provision of work" schemes in Germany will cost the "Third Empire" 3,967,000,000 marks. The Hitler government is making this expenditure on account of the budgets of future years: thus, in 1933 expenditure has been made on account of anticipated budget receipts for 1934 amounting to 700,000,000 marks, and on anticipated receipts from the budget of 1938 of no less than 2,000,000,000 marks. This swindling and robbing of the Treasury is called "pre-financing." (From the speech of Comrade Kuusinen at the Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.)

that part of the national income which is absorbed and swallowed up by the state—these figures I regard as a proof of the unusual accentuation of the class struggle and the struggle between states, as a proof of the weakness and instability of the capitalist system. Capitalism wants to prolong its life by augmenting the state machine, by increasing the means by which it suppresses the exploited classes.

“The state,” as Engels said, “is first and foremost detachments of armed people with material appendages such as prisons.” The more capitalism reaches its state of overmaturity, the more does the bourgeoisie base itself on the army, the police, and on all modern military technique for the suppression of the resistance of the toiling masses, the greater is the growth of terror against the toiling masses. The rule of the bourgeoisie becomes a bloody regime where workers’ demonstrations and peasant uprisings are shot down, where the villages of colonial peoples are attacked with gas and airplanes and where the prisons of the so-called advanced, cultured, civilized countries use the methods of the medieval inquisition. The October Revolution in Russia and the Civil War which ensued upon it have already been far exceeded in the number of their victims by the Chinese revolution and the struggle in Germany.

But despite the fact that terror has become the common method of government employed by the bourgeoisie, nevertheless it has not succeeded in consolidating its rule. This is why the ruling financial oligarchy is trying still further to strengthen the state apparatus, to create a state power, the aim of which is to overcome the internal contradictions of the capitalist system by means of terrorism, the bloody suppression of the growing revolutionary movement, the mobilization of all forces of the capitalist state for the struggle against the toiling masses. Therefore in the present period, on the eve of a new round of revolutions and wars, the

financial oligarchy naturally adopts the policy of fascism, this most desperate attempt of the most reactionary, terrorist nationalistic groups of the bourgeoisie to maintain state power in their own hands by strengthening the state apparatus of suppression, terror and civil war against the toiling masses, this attempt to find a way out of the crisis by means of intensified preparations for a new imperialist war, for a new repartition of the world.

The present wave of fascism is not a sign of strength, *but a sign of the weakness and instability of the whole capitalist system, which the bourgeoisie is trying to strengthen by increasing the state machine and by adopting fascist methods for the suppression of the masses.* The bourgeoisie is going over to government by methods of terrorist fascist dictatorship, *not of its own sweet will, but of necessity.* It is organizing for itself a mass support from among the petty-bourgeoisie who have gone raving mad in the conditions of the crisis, promising them that it will support the petty proprietor. It is forming terrorist gangs out of nationalist-chauvinist elements. It makes these gangs a part of the state apparatus, and, relying upon them, declares civil war against the working class because *its old normal apparatus has already lost the power to cope with the task of suppressing the downtrodden classes.* It is doing away with bourgeois law because the prestige of the bourgeois state power and law has ceased to have any influence on the working masses, because the illusion of the possibility of peaceful development of capitalism and of the democratic path to socialism is vanishing, because decisive battles are approaching, because the bourgeoisie has been brought face to face with the inevitability of supremely severe wars which represent a danger to itself, because parliamentarism is no longer able to secure the defense of capitalism against the growing revolutionary movement, and to secure the prepara-

tions for a war for a repartition of markets among the imperialists. It is beginning to interfere in economic activities, to take so-called state capitalistic measures because the whole system of capitalism has been undermined, because the collapse of a single bank or trust is beginning to threaten that the whole state apparatus will collapse. There is therefore nothing to be surprised at if such a government of finance capital, such an arch-reactionary government as the fascist government of Hitler or Mussolini tries to unite the banks or talks of nationalizing them. This is not a step toward socialism. On the contrary, it is an attempt to save the power of finance capital from complete bankruptcy.

But the victory of fascism becomes inevitable and possible only where social-democracy has succeeded by means of its system of centralized mass workers' organizations in holding back its proletarian adherents from a united revolutionary front with the Communists, in preventing the winning over of the majority of the proletariat, despite the most profound crisis, to the side of the Communist Party and besides this in preventing these successes of the class struggle of the proletariat and thus discrediting Marxism and the class struggle in the eyes of the broad masses of the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Fascism cannot conquer even in one country without the direct help and support of social-democracy, which over a prolonged period of time splits the ranks of the proletariat, holds it back from struggle, weakens its fighting capacity by way of police violence, terror and deception, delivering it over to fascism with its hands bound.

3. Fascism and German Social-Democracy

The more organized the masses are, the more grave the situation of capital is, the more rapidly and more completely

does fascist dictatorship effect the abolition of all non-fascist or not completely fascist organizations and the more does it stand in need of so-called state capitalist measures and of the corporate system. Mussolini in Italy achieved the abolition of the old bourgeois parties, because their existence did not greatly hinder fascist dictatorship. Mussolini for a time tolerated social-democracy because in Italy it played a relatively small role. He destroyed it when it entered its first severe crisis. Hitler came to power in a country which is *durchorganisiert*, in a country in which it is impossible to strengthen centralization of leadership without smashing up the old bourgeois parties and organizations, and in which it is impossible to do away with that struggle which weakens the bourgeoisie itself, the mad struggle between different capitalist groups for the distribution of a diminishing share in the surplus value, of a diminishing quantity of profit, the struggle to have their losses made good by the state, without destroying the representations of these groups (parties, organizations). Hitler came to power in a country in which the working class was more highly organized than in any other. But the trade unions of the German proletariat, the leadership of which had been seized by the social-democrats, had long ceased to be militant class organizations. The largest party, that which leads the majority of the proletariat, had become social-fascist. The Communist Party, despite the rapid growth of its influence, had not yet been able to undermine the mass influence of social-democracy.

Without its revolutionary class leadership, the working class is not capable of action of any kind. In order to be able to act in a revolutionary way, the working class must be united around its revolutionary party. Since the Communist Party did not yet have the majority of the working class behind it, the fate of the German proletariat depended on the conduct of the social-democrats.

In order to suppress the working class, fascism set itself above all the task of destroying the Communist Party. But in such an accentuated situation as existed and continues to exist in Germany, the Social-Democratic Party, and the trade unions in particular, could have become reservoirs for the gathering together of elements discontented with fascism. Even in March any organization, even such a reactionary organization as the Steel Helmets, was becoming such a reservoir. Because social-democracy was still *sufficiently strong* to hold back the masses from resistance to the coming of fascist dictatorship by means of its system of centralized organizations, but was already *insufficiently strong* to ensure the stability of the capitalist system by its support, fascism when it came to power smashed up *its assistant, social-democracy*, and broke up the social-democratic organizations in order to pulverize the working class, in order itself to attempt to lead the working masses, now disorganized and deprived of their organizations, to include them in the system of the fascist state or, if this proved impossible, at least to pulverize them. The tempo at which the German fascists have effected their "incorporation" of all bourgeois parties and capitalist organizations and also that of social-democracy and the reformists and Christian trade unions—this tempo is to be explained not by the fact that Hitler has learned anything from Mussolini, but *first and foremost* by the fact that Hitler came to power under conditions when German capitalism could be saved for the time being only by the immediate subordination of all its parts to the rabidly centralized dictatorial power of the fascist state. Secondly, it is to be explained by the fact that in Germany the parliamentary system, and together with it social-democracy which had participated in the government since 1918, had become bankrupt and decayed more than in any other country. German social-democracy was ready to agree to anything;

German social-democracy itself permitted Hitler to come to power, but fascism demanded of social-democracy such large doses of nationalism and chauvinism, such a subordination to the will of finance capital as would in any case have meant the destruction of its organizations, "incorporation," merging with the Nazis; and social-democracy, while no imperialist war had as yet broken out, could not yet bring its organization to this, although it tried to do so. This fact is proved by the resignation of Wels from the Second International in the beginning of March 1933, and by the social-democratic fraction in the Reichstag voting in favor of Hitler's policy on May 17, 1933. Hitler was obviously in a hurry. The whole situation in Germany, the catastrophically serious position of German capitalism, compelled him to make haste. He was therefore obliged to demand of social-democracy, this over-ripe Fraulein, more than she was able to give, and since she could not satisfy his desires, he killed her. German social-democracy has perished as a party after having played to the last its role as concubine of the German bourgeoisie, after having satisfied to the extent of its powers all the desires of all its masters from the Democratic Party to the party of the National-Socialists inclusive.

Incidentally, this resembled suicide rather than murder because social-democracy, as Comrade Heckert correctly wrote in his article *What Is Happening in Germany*, perished not because Hitler proved stronger. Social-democracy perished because it *killed itself politically and morally, having refused to fight fascism, capitulated before fascism, consented to enter its service.*

The fact of German social-democracy's bankruptcy is so evident even to the Second International, even to its theoreticians and its publicists, that any attempt to deny it would be ridiculous. But while admitting the bankruptcy of German social-democracy, the other parties of the Second In-

ternational try to hide their own bankruptcy. They want to conceal the fact that they have lost their political line, that they are drifting rudderless; they want to represent things as if it were only German social-democracy that had gone bankrupt, as if the blame lay on the leaders of German social-democracy, as if the blame lay on the special conditions existing in Germany, as if the blame lay on the mistakes of German social-democracy and not on the line of the Second International, not on the fact that they have become social-fascists. For us, the whole point is that they have become social-fascists.

But there is nothing new in all this criticism directed by the Second International against German social-democracy, against its disaster, against its bankruptcy. Wels only did what MacDonald had done before him, only less successfully and with different consequences. Then Wels and Vandervelde criticized *MacDonald*; now Vandervelde, Blum, Henderson and Bauer have criticized *Wels*. MacDonald split the English laborites, went over openly to the side of the bourgeoisie, kept his post as minister of the crown. He proved necessary. Wels proved unnecessary. He was thrown out. The quarrel between Wels and Vandervelde has ended in a temporary reconciliation because Wels *could not* join the German national front and *was compelled* to return to the Second International. This is how it was: he left the Second International, went to Hitler, was not accepted, was told—"Better serve in the Second International," and returned to the Second International, where he was accepted.

While "accusing" German social-democracy for the fact that the German revolution of 1918 did not consummate the historic tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1848—such tasks as converting the semi-absolutist state into a democratic state, consummating the bourgeois agrarian revolution against feudalism which was begun in France in 1789,

the general offensive against the *Junkers* who continued to play a great part in the Germany of the Weimar Constitution, they tried to lay the blame on the "special conditions of the revolution of 1918," which they alleged "made it difficult to effect the transition from the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to carrying out the tasks of the proletarian revolution," blaming social-democracy in Germany for the fact that "it did not ensure the stability of the democratic regime in Germany and surrendered power to Hitler." The theoreticians of the Second International in criticizing German social-democracy, want to save the so-called "honor" of so-called "democratic-socialism," to make it at any rate appear as if their whole strategic plan had not proved bankrupt, to preserve the life of the Second International, somehow or other. By explaining the defeat of its leading party which had disgraced their tactics and strategy, by these specific conditions prevailing in Germany, they wanted to keep the masses of other countries under their leadership, to save the leaders and the system which have proved bankrupt, to save and resurrect social-democracy.

But all these attempts to explain the catastrophe of the German social-democratic party are absolutely futile. It is, of course, true that the revolution of 1918 did not consummate the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1848 and 1789; it is true that social-democracy, by disrupting this revolution, added the Weimar constitution as a superstructure to *Junker* landownership, preserve the *Junkers* and the Hohenzollern officers, securing them their pensions. It is, of course, true that in 1918 social-democracy did not take the path of socialist revolution, although all conditions were present for it, and in alliance with the *Junkers* and officers smashed the socialist revolution which was beginning.

But that is by no means all.

In the last analysis the main point is that since 1918 Ger-

man social-democracy has brought about the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in the form of the Weimar republic, which, under conditions of the general crisis of capitalism, in particular, in such a country as Germany which suffered defeat in the imperialist war, could not be anything else but the reactionary dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The point is that while fighting against all really revolutionary forces in the country, it extended complete freedom to the fascists, and by breaking up the revolutionary labor organizations German social-democracy led the German proletariat under the yoke of fascist dictatorship. Without German social-democracy there would not have been fascism in Germany. Without the direct help given by social-democracy, the bourgeoisie cannot set up fascist dictatorship, cannot govern the country.

4. If Social-Democracy in 1932 . . .

Three years ago Mueller, then a left social-democrat of Breslau, wrote a fantastic novel entitled *If in 1918 We Had . . .* that is to say, how events would have developed if social-democracy had been a revolutionary party in 1918. We could now draw a utopian picture of what might have happened if social-democracy in July 1932 had been willing to defend Weimar "democracy"—just that and no more—if it had only been willing to defend the Weimar "democracy." At that time we proposed to form a united front with social-democracy for the declaration of a general strike. The working masses were in favor of a general strike. They were only awaiting instructions from the trade unions and the Social-Democratic Party. The social-democratic workers hesitated to answer the call of the Communists and to go against social-democracy. If social-democracy had accepted the Communist's proposal of a united front for a general strike, if

it had only taken advantage of its state apparatus for offering resistance to the fascist *coup* in Prussia, then the fascists would have been compelled to retreat. The petty-bourgeois and peasant masses would have been turned toward the path of revolution. The fascists, unable to seize power, would have collapsed. The symptoms of collapse in August 1932 were very marked, despite the fact that Prussia was already in the hands of Papen's commissars. The Communists were ready for a struggle. The struggle was broken by the social-democrats. In January 1933 the situation was already less favorable, but the social-democrats would none the less have been stronger than the fascists. If the social-democrats had supported the January demonstration of the Communists against fascism in Berlin, Hitler would not have dared to sneak into power. If, even on January 30, 1933, social-democracy had accepted the Communists' proposal of a general strike, had declared a general strike and not held the masses back from a strike, had not broken the general strike, Hitler could have been beaten by the united forces of the whole proletariat despite the fact that the time was up and that a nationalist upheaval was already there.

How long the Weimar Republic would have been maintained after such a strike would have depended only on the working masses themselves. The Communists would have continued the struggle to win over the majority of the working class with still greater energy. They would have shown the masses that the only way out of the crisis lay in socialism, that the fascists could only finally be beaten by setting up the dictatorship of the proletariat. But such a militant union against Hitler would not yet have denoted a socialist revolution until a majority of the working class followed the Communists. This would have been in its way a struggle against a "Kornilov revolt." The German Communists would have fought together with the social-democratic workers

against the gangs of Hitler and the Steel Helmets, at the same time exposing the weakness, the vacillation of Braun and Severing, exposing their attempts to conciliate Hitler, preparing to create those conditions under which the proletariat could really take power into its own hands.

But German social-democracy held the masses back from struggle, capitulating to Hitler without a fight; it even welcomed the coming of Hitler as a man of working origin. German social-democracy itself destroyed the Weimar Republic once and for all and killed itself.

But this is happening not only in Germany.

In Spain, after the revolution of April 1931, social-democracy came to power in coalition with bourgeois parties. Having come to power, Spanish social-democracy went wholly and completely over to the counter-revolutionary path of German social-democracy. The Spanish coalition government, basing itself on the old state apparatus of the monarchy, on its *Guardia Civil*, police and army, waged a struggle against the masses of workers and peasants who were fighting for bread, for social insurance, for the seven-hour working day for the workers and for land for the peasants, for the right of self-determination for oppressed peoples. The feudal landlords, monasteries and churches retain their rights. Remnants of feudalism, remnants of serfdom and of the middle ages continue to exist. Not one revolutionary measure has been put into effect. Not one bourgeois-landlord militant organization has been disarmed, nothing has been done to organize resistance to the forces of counter-revolution. But the Communist Party is subjected to persecution, its press has been closed down. Revolutionary workers and peasants are being persecuted. And there is nothing surprising in the fact that, thanks to this policy of social-democracy, the masses are turning against it, that at the recent elections, Spanish social-democracy suffered a severe defeat.

Spanish social-democracy also criticizes the policy pursued by German social-democracy, but it pursues this policy itself, for social-democracy cannot do otherwise with whatever "left" phrases it may seek to hide itself. Spanish social-democracy is just the same as German; it will surrender power to the fascists if the Spanish Communists do not quickly isolate it from the masses.

In Austria, Otto Bauer has frequently written that Austrian social-democracy in 1918 could not pursue a policy for the winning of socialism, because Austria is a small country and would have been crushed at once by interventionists if it had tried to fight against capitalism. But Otto Bauer wants to conceal the fact that in Austria too—where he was in power—not only was nothing done for the setting up of socialism, but even the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution were not thoroughly carried out, the influence of the *Junkers* was not destroyed nor that of the Hapsburg officers. Otto Bauer, while criticizing German social-democracy, wants to conceal the fact that on Dec. 1, 1929, he had already had something akin to the Prussian July 20, that Austrian social-democracy, disguising itself in radical phrases, has retreated and is retreating step by step to make way for the fascist dictatorship, that Austrian social-democracy is disrupting the struggle of the Austrian proletariat against incipient Austro-fascism, in just the same way as this was done over a period of many years by German social-democracy. Otto Bauer forgets that only four years ago his friend and associate, the other Austro-Marxist, Karl Renner, was trying to show that social-democracy, learning a lesson from Italy, should try to collaborate with the fascists, renounce parliamentary activity, fight to retain its places in the state apparatus. Consequently Karl Renner four years ago was already finding theoretical arguments for that shameful policy which Loebe and Kuenstler pursued in the Ger-

man Reichstag on May 17, 1933. This must not be forgotten.

Austrian social-democracy, thanks to this policy which it has pursued, has grown considerably weaker during the last few years. Nevertheless it is still incomparably stronger today than Austrian fascism. If it wanted to make use of the strength of the Austrian workers who follow it, the Austro-fascists would vanish from the face of the earth. With antagonisms sharpened as they now are, not one general staff—and Bauer is always referring to these staffs—would venture to interfere. It is hardly likely that any large state would make up its mind to start a war on account of Austria in the present situation. But Austrian social-democracy can only chatter that it will call upon the workers for a general strike in the event of foreign troops invading Austria, in the event of Seitz, the social-democratic Mayor of Vienna, being removed from his post, in the event of the Social-Democratic Party being suppressed and the reformist trade unions being “incorporated.” It misses one opportunity after another, and by its passivity it alienates the petty-bourgeois masses from the proletariat.

By its policy of refusing to fight, it is demoralizing the proletariat. It is preparing for its complete capitulation to fascism, for the surrender of both Vienna and Austria to the fascists. By its whole policy it is preparing for the defeat of the Austrian proletariat.

Five-sixths of the Austrian proletariat still follow Austrian social-democracy. The Austrian workers are in favor of the general strike; they want to fight. But they still suppose that social-democracy represents their organization, which will call upon them to fight when this is necessary. If social-democracy had called a general strike, the proletariat would have been *united* in the struggle against fascism, and would have repulsed the fascist offensive. The Communists would have been the first organizers of the struggle. The

Communists would not have raised the question of immediately setting up the dictatorship of the proletariat until the majority of the working class were behind them. For the time being they would only have carried on agitation for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for Soviet power as the only salvation for the working class of Austria from poverty, want and fascism. They would have waged a struggle for hegemony in the Austrian labor movement, showing that the only salvation, the only way out of poverty and want, lies in the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only after winning over the masses would they have undertaken an armed uprising for the setting up of Soviet power.

But the Communists would have fought against fascism together with the social-democrats if the social-democrats had been willing to fight.

The Austrian Communists stand alone against the united front of social-democracy and the bourgeoisie, and they cannot yet successfully conduct a general strike since they cannot get the main sections of the proletariat to follow them. But they set themselves the task of showing the workers the way to fight against fascism. They make it their task to organize the struggle which the social-democrats do not want to wage. If social-democracy takes advantage of the relative weakness of the Austrian Communists and surrenders power to the fascists, the responsibility will lie solely on social-democracy for all those horrors which will fall to the lot of the Austrian working class. The Communists will not capitulate. They will fight on alone against fascism and war, for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In Latvia and Esthonia fascist dictatorship is being set up. And here again, just as in Austria, it is social-democracy which decides the question of whether there is to be a fascist dictatorship or not. It and it alone bears the responsibility

for the fate of the Latvian and Esthonian working class in the present concrete situation.

Without the help of social-democracy fascist dictatorship would not have been set up in Germany, cannot be set up either in Austria, in Spain, in Latvia, in Esthonia or in any other country.

In Czechoslovakia fascist dictatorship is rapidly being established. In April 1933 the secretariat of the E.C.C.I. had already written as follows to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia:

The process of the fascization of Czechoslovakia is proceeding in its own special war. To speak at the present time of a Brueningiade in Czechoslovakia, and all the more so of a Brueningiade which is just beginning, would mean to underestimate the seriousness of the present moment and the possibility of a sudden attack and provocation against the Communist Party on the part of the *present government*, and also to underestimate the counter-revolutionary role of social-democracy. The main thing for Czech Communists at the present time is to grasp the fact that the "Burg" group represents the leadership of the Czech bourgeoisie which is trying to carry out the national concentration and fascization of Czechoslovakia under the banner of the defense of "democracy" and of a warlike so-called "defense" of the Versailles system in alliance with fascist Poland, Yugoslavia and Rumania under the leadership of France, both against the proletarian revolution and also against the fascist revisionist plans of Germany. The wave of nationalism in Germany was directed against the Weimar republic as the expression of Germany's enslavement to the victorious countries. The symbol of victory of Czech nationalism is the "Burg," because it represents the main channel uniting nationalist tendencies which are arising in the Czech people, and under conditions of a growing menace to Czechoslovakia it will play this role to a still greater extent than hitherto.

In this way, as we see, the fascization of Czechoslovakia is being accomplished up to the present moment. Social-democracy has here acquired a most active role as the force

which ushers in fascism under the banner of defending democracy.

Social-democracy in Czechoslovakia is the author of the extraordinary law, of plans to suppress the Communist organizations and the Communist Party. Czech fascism is being established by Czechoslovakian social-democracy and by its coalition with the bourgeois parties. But of course this process of fascization will not stop there. It need not necessarily happen that Czechoslovakian social-democracy will be destroyed as German social-democracy was. Its end may come somewhat differently and in a less tragic form than was the case in Germany. But in the last analysis the consequences will be the same. Czechoslovakian social-democracy is killing itself as a party by doing away with "democracy" in the country. Czech social-democracy is showing in practice that it is not only not a socialist party but not even a democratic party in the old Masaryk sense of the word. It is a party of the reactionary bourgeoisie and together with it is establishing fascist dictatorship.

If there had been a truly bourgeois-democratic party in Czechoslovakia, it would have taken the course of broadening democracy, of liberating the oppressed peoples, of consummating the agrarian revolution, of the plebian struggle against fascism and war. But there is no such party in Czechoslovakia. Such a party is no longer to be found in any imperialist country.

All the bourgeois parties, including social-democracy, have become parties of reaction, of counter-revolution.

There is only one party of revolution—the Communist Party.

Social-democracy has lost its own independent character as a party; it occupies a place in the united counter-revolutionary front together with the whole bourgeoisie.

The success of fascism is the consequence of the fascization of social-democracy, the consequence of the fact that social-democracy has become a social-fascist party, as we had already noted at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.

If social-democracy in 1918 had been a revolutionary Marxist party, Europe would have been socialist long ago.

If social-democracy in 1933 had been even a democratic party, Germany could not have become fascist.

The present crisis of social-democracy is a crisis arising out of its rapid fascization, out of its capitulation to fascism.

5. The Peculiarities of the Present Crisis of Social-Democracy

The present crisis of social-democracy is radically different from its crisis which began at the time of the imperialist war. Then social-democracy, which had degenerated into a reformist petty-bourgeois party, betrayed the working class and in each individual country went over to the side of its own bourgeoisie, became a party of social-nationalists, social-chauvinists, social-patriots, social-imperialists. Having disrupted the German and Austrian proletariat in 1918, it was reborn as a party of the so-called "democratic path to socialism," "peaceful growing into socialism," as a party basing itself upon democratic-patriotic and pacifist-patriotic illusions of the war-weary masses. The Second International was restored after the foundation of the League of Nations as a "socialist appendage to it." It took as the basis of its external policy the collaboration of the capitalist governments in the League of Nations and a struggle against the U.S.S.R. It took as the basis of its internal policy the splitting of the labor movement, the struggle against communism. It took as the basis of its inner-party policy the utilization of the old formerly Marxist organizations of the work-

ing class as a means of throttling its revolutionary energy.

The present crisis of this post-war Second International began when the growing contrast between the country where socialism is being built and the countries of decaying capitalism was revealed and became clear, when German social-democracy capitulated to Hitler.

The disintegration of the Second International is twofold: on the international scale its disintegration accords with the national antagonisms of the bourgeois states, while in each country it is disintegrating into individual groups which reflect the degree of fascization of the various strata of social-democracy in the given country. It is an expression of the fact that at the present time social-democracy has turned traitor not only as a revolutionary party but also as a reformist party, as a democratic party. It is therefore perfectly correct at the present time to speak *not only of the political defeat but of the ideological catastrophe of social-democracy.*

The ideological catastrophe leads to the fact that the groups into which social-democracy has disintegrated criticize each other, accuse each other, employing isolated scraps of their old ideological equipment.

In Germany there is now no social-democratic organization. German social-democracy comprises the *Prague* group, which puts forward the slogan of "Revolution against Hitler, for the restoration of democracy," the *Berlin* group of Loebe-Kuenstler which has adapted itself to the fascist regime in so far as it was permitted to do so, the *Paris* group which mixes a few radical phrases with its social-democratic ideological mess, and, in addition to these, dozens of small groups and writers who criticize their own ideology but are unable to rise to the level of Marxism, of communism, who have utterly lost their heads and by their ideological confusion seriously hinder the struggle of the working class.

Each of these groups by its methods is holding back the masses from going over to communism.

In France the group of Renaudel-Deat, which is openly going over to the camp of bourgeois nationalism, the group of Blum, which is striving to maintain the old positions, the "*Action Socialiste*" group which expresses the Left swing of the working masses. In England there are the national laborites, the laborites, the I.L.P.; and in Austria and Switzerland there are the beginnings of disintegration, and there are two parties in Holland. In almost every country there are already at least three social-democratic parties and in each social-democratic party there are dozens of different viewpoints which are united only by their common role as main social support of the bourgeoisie and by the struggle against the Comintern.

The Second International is formally attempting to overcome this chaos of nationalist parties, of confused groups and groupings. It advocates reconciliation between Blum and Renaudel (the last session of the bureau of the Second International took a decision on this point), between Wels and Seidewitz. It calmly endures the departure and the return of Wels. It writes resolutions in which all hopes are pinned on the miracle which is supposed to take place in Geneva, where the collapsing League of Nations and the bankrupt "Disarmament Conference" are supposed to unite and disarm all the imperialists. This indeed is tantamount to losing all sense of seriousness! This means losing not only their political line but their heads as well. And this is not only German social-democracy but the whole Second International. And this is because there was not any special policy of German social-democracy, because there was and is one common policy of all international social-democracy, because the fate of German social-democracy is shared by the social-democratic parties of all countries. All of them are rallying to-

gether in the *counter-revolutionary front* together with the whole bourgeoisie for the struggle *against the proletarian united front*; all of them are pursuing the policy of weakening the proletariat; all of them are social-fascist, parties which capitulate to fascism.

But what are the causes of this crisis of social-democracy?

The causes of the crisis of social-democracy consist *firstly* in the fact that the world is on the eve of a new round of imperialist war, a round which is going to be a *rabid outbreak* of nationalism. Therefore the Second International is going to disintegrate because the social-democracy of each country is going over to the side of its own bourgeoisie. *Secondly*, present day bourgeois system of government when parliamentarism is in vogue, is not adapted to that extraordinary centralization of state power which I have already spoken of, it has already become necessary in the direct apparatus of government in a number of countries. *Thirdly*, the growth of poverty and want among the masses, the growth of the influence of the Communist Parties has led to social-democracy losing its mass influence. This is compelling it to comply still more quickly with the demands of its bourgeoisie, to become fascised at a still more rapid rate.

Hence the accelerated fascization of social-democracy in each individual country, the disintegration of social-democracy into a number of individual groups and parties, denoting different degrees of its fascization; hence, the disintegration of the Second International into its national component parts in connection with the regroupings of powers for the coming imperialist war; hence the confusion and bankruptcy of social-democratic ideology represented by the bankruptcy of the theory of "democratic socialism," the disappearance of illusions about the peaceful development of capitalism and about the "democratic path to socialism."

Every social-democratic party contains various fractions which reflect the ideological collapse of social-democracy but it is the *Rights who act*. They are openly coming to fascism, openly harnessing themselves to the chariot of nationalism. The "*Lefts*" remain passive and can only chatter, holding back the masses from going over to communism. The "*Rights*" act and organize; the "*Lefts*" write "*Left*" resolutions and talk with their radical phraseology, with their "*Left*" speeches about the dictatorship of the proletariat, plans about the reforms of social-democracy, etc., they try to keep the masses in the counter-revolutionary united front with the bourgeoisie. This is the division of labor, this is the role of the "*Lefts*."

In these circumstances of the disintegration of social-democracy the small groups of Trotsky, Brandler, etc., serve the bourgeoisie for holding back the masses from going over to the Communists, for the purpose of subjecting the working class to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. They try to carry out what is at present the most important and most difficult task for the bourgeoisie—a task which the old social-democracy has already lost the power to fulfil. In addition to this they are the main purveyors of theories and arguments against the U.S.S.R. and the Comintern. And they are carrying out a third task which is also of importance to the fascists—the *pulverizing of the labor movement*, the task of converting it into a conglomeration of sects and groups. This is their role as an advanced detachment of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. The Communist International, which is fighting against social-democracy, *must at the same time carry on a struggle for the destruction of the groups of Trotskyists and Brandlerites who are encouraged by the fascists, against the disintegration of the labor movement into small groups, a struggle to unite it under the leadership of the Communists.*

6. We Are Marching Towards Revolution

The crisis of social-democracy represents one of the most important component parts in the general crisis of the capitalist system. In Germany the masses of the people do not want to live under Hitler's jack-boot, nor do they want to return to Weimar democracy. In Poland, Hungary, Italy, fascist dictatorship is obviously weakening. Austria is in the melting pot. In Latvia and Esthonia a considerable part of the population is looking for a party capable of expelling the governing clique overnight, although these masses are not yet prepared for proletarian revolution. In Japan the will of the masses for revolution is breaking through the system of rabid terror. Mighty revolutionary events may begin with complete unexpectedness. It is therefore our duty, as Comrade Kuusinen said, *to put on the order of the day the question of struggle for Soviet power, of overthrowing the power of the ruling classes by means of an armed uprising*. It is our duty to put forward everywhere the *program of Soviet government* and to mobilize the masses around it, to make them ready so that, knowing our aims, they may be able, given a suitable correlation of forces, when a revolutionary situation is ripe, to take power into their own hands. *There is not yet a revolutionary situation in any one of the decisive imperialist countries*, but such a situation may mature in a very short time. The present stage is no longer a stage of peaceful development. For the majority of countries the present stage is no longer a period in which it is simply necessary to expose social-democracy. The present stage in Germany, in Austria, is no longer simply a period of struggle to win over the majority of the working class, *but a period of the formation of a revolutionary army for decisive class battles for power*, a period of the mobilization of such cadres as are prepared to make any sacrifice in

order to destroy the existing regime, in order to lead the proletariat to victory. What does this mean? *Spontaneous pressure, spontaneous unrest* is to be observed among the masses, although it is not yet breaking out openly to the surface. The Communists do not always make use of this spontaneous unrest, do not always give direction to it. The Communists are not always on the alert when discontent passes beyond the bounds of economic demands, when it is directed *against the state as a whole*.

We must be more sensitive to this *spontaneous pressure, this spontaneous unrest among the masses*.

In Germany the masses are trying to find in what way, to what extent and in what forms it is possible to combat the fascist dictatorship. All that is needed is the beginning of some large strike or demonstration, and the way will be open for the discontent of the masses to burst forth.

Therefore, in conjunction with the slogan of struggle for power, we ought to put on the order of the day the slogan of the *general strike*, of a general strike organized and carried through by the Communists, and for which it is essential to mobilize the masses by developing economic strikes.

In Austria the slogan of the general political strike was put forward by the social-democrats under mass pressure, but the social-democrats are more afraid of revolution than of fascism. The Communists must exert all their efforts towards giving shape to the spontaneous pressure of the masses, who demand such a strike. The Communists must be the chief agitators for the general strike. This does not apply in the same degree to Latvia. But it applies in just the same degree to all other countries which are under the threat of the setting up of fascist dictatorship.

In Poland, while there has been a large strike movement this year, there have been fewer political strikes, but this ought not by any means to signify, and it does not signify,

that the resolution of the Twelfth Plenum on a general strike in Poland can be forgotten. It cannot be forgotten.

In Czechoslovakia under the social-democratic coalition government there have been a number of good political strikes directed against the state. They can and ought to appear again. The development of events of the last few weeks in Czechoslovakia about which several of our Czech comrades have spoken in their speeches, permits us to hope that there will be a growth in the political strike movement in Czechoslovakia.

America, England and France, of course, still remain countries where the strikes are mainly economic, but here too it is necessary to raise the strike movement from the level of the economic strike to that of the political strike. *America* in particular may soon be confronted with large *political* strikes. The American Party ought now to direct the unrest of the masses in this direction.

What slogans can now be put forward for the mass political strike? These slogans ought to rouse the masses for the struggle for power, to lead the masses *from defense to attack*. In Austria, Latvia, Czechoslovakia, everywhere where fascism is advancing, the political strike sets itself the task of defending the elementary rights of the workers, of struggling against the realization of fascist dictatorship, of fighting against the present government, which is carrying out fascism.

In Germany the following slogans may be put forward for the political strike: freedom to elect factory committees, release of all arrested persons, removal of the storm troops from the working class districts, overthrow of the fascist dictatorship, setting up of Soviet power.

But in the formation of the revolutionary army the most important point is the tactic of the united front. Basing itself on the spontaneous unrest of the masses, the Communist

Party must appeal to the social-democratic and non-party workers, not letting the movement out of its hands for an instant. The Communists must explain that the way to fascism may be barred by victorious joint action of all workers under the leadership of the Communist Party. They must explain that if social-democracy did not fight against fascism in Germany, this has nothing to do with the split in the labor movement. The blame for the fascists coming to power in Germany, as in any other country, lies *solely* on the social-democrats. The split in the labor movement has nothing to do with it. The splitters are the social-democrats, who formed a counter-revolutionary united front with the bourgeoisie. Always, at any moment, a revolutionary united front for struggle against the bourgeoisie, for struggle against fascism, could be formed, if social-democracy were willing to fight against fascism. It will be formed against the will of social-democracy when the workers become convinced that social-democracy is betraying them to the fascists.

There is nothing worse than not to understand this.

One good element in the German tactic of the united front has always been that the German comrades always told the social-democratic workers the truth about their party and always correctly indicated the way which they ought to go. And it is perfectly correct when they now say that the most important thing is not to permit the re-establishment of social-democratic leadership in the labor organizations, above all in the trade unions, not to permit the labor organizations to be utilized for holding back the working masses from struggle.

The bad element in the Gutmann tactics in Czechoslovakia was that Gutmann advocated unity for unity's sake, that he was not guided by the task of forming a revolutionary army to fight for the political aims of our Party, for the struggle for power, but called upon his comrades to adapt

themselves to the backward tendencies and views of the social-democratic workers.

Therefore the *Thaelmann* tactics of the united front were revolutionary while the *Gutmann* tactics of the united front were opportunist, liquidationist.

Inasmuch as *Gutmannism*, if we may so express ourselves, has taken root in certain sections of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, it has, of course, wrought great harm in this Party, but the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is sufficiently strong, has sufficiently strong cadres and sufficiently strong connections with the masses to amend the mistakes under the leadership of Comrade Gottwald and to march forward to new victories.

7. The German Question and the Communist International

Three great questions at present form the touchstone of the revolutionary maturity and class-consciousness of every Communist Party, of every Communist, of every revolutionary. *Firstly*, the question of the U.S.S.R., the understanding of the role and significance of the U.S.S.R. for the international proletarian revolution, the understanding of the policy of the U.S.S.R., the understanding of the fact that the U.S.S.R. is a model for the transformation of all countries. He who does not devote all his strength to the defense of the U.S.S.R. is no revolutionary; he is a counter-revolutionary, an opponent of the dictatorship of the proletariat, an opponent of the socialist revolution. *Secondly*, the question of the attitude to the Chinese revolution and the Chinese Soviet Republic. He who does not devote all his strength and organizational abilities to the defense of the Chinese revolution and the Chinese Soviet Republic is breaking up the international union of Communists, is not fight-

ing for the union of the proletariat of imperialist countries with the toiling people in the colonies and semi-colonies, is not thinking seriously about the dictatorship of the proletariat, about Soviet power in his own country. *Thirdly*, the question of the attitude to the German revolution, the understanding of its problems and of the struggle of the German proletariat. He who does not understand the German question does not understand the paths of development of the proletarian revolution in Europe. He who does not devote all his powers to the support of the German proletariat is not fighting for proletarian revolution in Europe because the victory of the German proletariat would mean the victory of the proletarian revolution throughout the whole of Europe, and the defeat of the German proletariat would retard the development of the proletarian revolution in other European countries.

Germany was and remains the weakest link in the chain of imperialist states. Germany is a country in which class contradictions are most accentuated. Germany is a country in which all the contradictions of the capitalist world are intertwined in the sharpest form. And besides this, Germany is the heart of capitalist Europe, a country which is economically and politically interwoven with all the capitalist countries of Europe. That is why the proletarian revolution is nearer in Germany than in any other country. And the victory of the proletariat in Germany means the victory of the proletarian revolution throughout all Europe, since capitalist Europe cannot exist if it loses its heart. It is therefore clear that German questions are the *fundamental* questions on the eve of the second round of wars and revolutions. And this places upon the Communist Parties, upon all Communists, a supreme responsibility for the fate of the German revolution.

The success of fascism in Germany was a great touchstone,

a test of how each party and each Communist understood the international situation and the course of development of the revolutionary process. This test showed us our strength and also, of course, the rotten elements which still, unfortunately, remain in our ranks.

We must above all note with great pleasure that our young *Spanish* Communist Party and its central organ *Mundo Obrero*, itself in the fire of revolution, has from the very start correctly appraised the situation in Germany, the significance of German events, and has been able to develop a great campaign of international proletarian solidarity with the German proletariat. The *Polish* Communist Party likewise unfolded a vigorous campaign of solidarity while itself fighting under the yoke of fascism. The Communist Party of Poland developed a widespread campaign in the factories, plants and mines. During several months its whole press was devoted to German affairs. It told the masses:

"The German proletariat is not isolated, it will be surrounded by the active solidarity and aid of the revolutionary world proletariat which understands that the victory of the German socialist revolution guarantees the victory of the world revolution. In this active struggle the toiling masses of Poland who are themselves fighting under the fascist yoke will be the first to play their part."

The Austrian, Belgian, Danish, Dutch and a number of other small parties developed a mass movement and carried on work of enlightenment among the masses quite energetically, in proportion to their strength. The Communist parties of the United States, France and Czechoslovakia showed themselves much weaker, that is, in proportion to their strength, on the question of supporting the German proletariat. The *American* comrades for a considerable time did not devote serious attention to this question or explain the

essence of the events in Germany to the masses. The *English* Communist Party, after a certain inertia in the first days when it evidently underestimated the necessity of a struggle against fascism, later on—and here Comrade Gallacher is quite right—was able to develop a serious and uninterrupted campaign and to take up a clear political line. In *Czechoslovakia* the anti-fascist campaign of solidarity, which did not begin badly, was greatly weakened thanks to the opportunism of the Gutmann group which controlled the Party press with the help of the “ultra-Left, historically-Left” Comrade Reumann. (*Laughter.*)

They had some “historical Rights.” I think we may say with equal justice that they have some “historical Lefts” who in reality are “Rights.” (*Laughter.*)

The same applies to *France* where Trotskyist views were rife in the Party during March and April to the effect that the C.P.G. had capitulated, where the *Cahiers de Bolchevisme* busied itself more with hunting out the “mistakes” of the C.P.G. than with exposing the treacherous role played by social-democracy in the victory of fascism in Germany, than in mobilizing the masses against German fascism.

But, comrades, if we may point to a number of successes achieved by our Parties in this sphere, which show the growth of a real internationalism, nevertheless even in those places where our campaign of support of the German revolution and our work of explaining the meaning of the German events was conducted best of all, we must consider it far from satisfactory. In particular, our campaign of support and defense of the German proletariat in connection with the trial of Dimitroff, Torgler, Popoff and Taneff was far from adequate. If we compare this mass campaign which we have just now developed with the campaign which was developed by the international proletariat in connection with Sacco and Venzetti, then we must admit that that campaign

was more widespread than the present one. We have not yet been able to rise to this level, although the political importance of the Leipzig trial is much greater than that of Sacco and Venzetti. At that time we were at the very beginning of the revolutionary upsurge. It was on the basis of the experience of the mass movement for the defense of Sacco and Vanzetti that we first came to the conclusion that there was a growth of the revolutionary upsurge, a new revolutionary upsurge. Now we are on the eve of the second round of revolutions and wars. If at that time it was the beginning of a mighty new movement now this widespread campaign of solidarity with our German comrades, with the Leipzig prisoners, our international struggle for the German revolution, our support of the German revolution, our mass movement against fascist terror can become the starting point for mighty political actions and movements of the working class.

8. The Struggle Against "Left" Social-Democracy and the Right Deviations in the Communist Parties

And here, comrades, I must ask what were the grounds for, what was the meaning of the stand taken by Comrade Gutmann, who directly sabotaged the printing and popularization of the resolution of the E.C.C.I. on the situation in Germany, and also what were the grounds for the theses of Comrade Reumann's opportunist colleagues from the editorial staff of the *Cahiers de Bolchevisme*?

These comrades lost the revolutionary perspective, succumbed to the influence of social-democracy, in particular to the influence of the Brandlerites and Trotskyites, who are waging a furious campaign against the Comintern and the C.P.G.

At the time when the capitulation of Social-Democracy to Hitler in Germany was evoking indignation among the working masses of other countries, when the workers who were indignant at the conduct of the German social-democrats were threatening to go over to the Communists, Social-democracy attempted a big maneuver against the U.S.S.R. and the Comintern so as to discredit them in the eyes of the toiling masses. The Czechoslovakian social-democrats declared that the U.S.S.R. had deceived the hopes of German proletarians by not starting a war against fascism. This glaring provocation campaign however did not have much success.

Then a campaign was started to the effect that the U.S. S.R. was betraying the cause of the working class by maintaining normal diplomatic relations with Germany. But that language of power in which the U.S.S.R. talked to Germany compelled this campaign to cease.

For us Communists it is no dishonor if the largest and most arrogant capitalist country, the United States, recognizes the U.S.S.R. after sixteen years in order to strengthen the cause of peace and its own position. For us Communists it is no dishonor if Mussolini invites Litvinoff to come to Rome. The U.S.S.R. speaks to all of them in a language of power. For us Communists it is a supreme acknowledgement when our bitterest enemies are compelled to talk with the U.S.S.R. For us Communists it is a supreme acknowledgement when all the bourgeois states are compelled to reckon with the power of the U.S.S.R., with the power of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is now no longer fitting to talk simply of a contrast, it now behooves us to talk of the preponderance of the U.S.S.R. over any imperialist state individually and over whole groups of imperialist countries. When the campaign against the U.S.S.R. collapsed, the social-democrats put forward the

slogan of boycotting German goods. Several papers at that time reported incorrectly that the Communists were not taking part in the boycott because, they alleged, the boycott was in conflict with the economic interests of the U.S.S.R. The U.S.S.R. has no interests which are at variance with the interests of the world revolution, and the international proletariat naturally has no interests which are at variance with those of the Soviet Union.

But what could the boycott bring to the proletariat of Germany and the German revolution? An accentuation of economic war in the interests of competing groups of capitalism. Can a boycott undermine the existence of a capitalist country? Obviously not. Why should we take part in such a boycott for the conduct of which the social-democrats themselves undertake nothing, which the social-democrats wanted to foist upon the Communists, which was aimless and doomed to failure?

The most coherent argument produced by the Austrian social-democrats in their reports about the boycott was that Austrian social-democracy ought to boycott Germany because the Germany of Hitler was preventing tourists from coming to Austria. What significance has this for the interests of the international labor movement? For the patrons of Austrian hotels—yes, but for the international labor movement, hardly.

If it is a question of the real interests of the German revolution, if the boycott will constitute a real support for the revolutionary movement in Germany, for the struggle to overthrow Hitler, if there will be a real mass movement for the boycott, if there will be a mass movement in Germany itself, then it is the Communists who will organize such a boycott.

Powerless in their bankruptcy and in their malice against the Communist International and against the U.S.S.R., the

Brandlerites and Trotskyists have begun to say that it is not only the German Social-Democratic Party that has gone bankrupt, that the German Communist Party is bankrupt too. In order to conceal the bankruptcy of the S.P.G., they are trying to show that both parties are bankrupt. These cowards and scoundrels have begun to demand that the C.P.G. should have commenced an uprising at the moment when Hitler came to power. The aim of this maneuver was obvious—to discredit the only party which is capable of organizing the masses for revolution, of leading the masses to revolution. The most "Left" of them, for example, Brockway, at the time when the C.P.G. was already evoking the admiration of everybody by its heroism, introduced their own formula at the "international" conference of the renegade groups to the effect that "not only has the policy of social-democracy proved bankrupt in Germany, but the C.P.G. is also responsible for the German catastrophe; although it has proved revolutionary and sound in the main, yet its collapse is to be explained by incorrect tactics."

It may well be asked if Gutmann did not accept this "Left" thesis when he declared that "certain weaknesses of the C.P.G. in adopting the united front facilitated the victory of Hitler," that "if we do not acknowledge the mistakes of the C.P.G., then we must necessarily take the view that fascist dictatorship is inevitable." Did not these "Lefts" present a list of the "mistakes" of the C.P.G. to the editors of the *Cahiers de Bolchevisme*? Did not these "Lefts" give the arch-sphinx Comrade Humbert Broz his argument that by its answer to the appeal of the Second International the Comintern began a new tactic on the question of the united front?

These people, together with the Remmele-Neumann group made common cause with "Left" social-democracy. They lost their heads at the decisive moment and became parrots

who repeated the arguments of the social-democrats, became liquidators in regard to their own party.

It is therefore necessary above all *to take a clear stand in regard to social-democracy and first and foremost in regard to "Left" social-democracy, this most dangerous foe of communism.*

In the elections at *Geneva* after the great political events of last year the social-democrats win a great victory and the Communists suffer defeat. The workers say truly: how can we vote for the Communists when we cannot see the difference between Communists and social-democrats? At Geneva the social-democrats are the "Lefts" and the Communists the "Rights." But the "Left" social-democrat Nicole at Geneva formed a *bloc* with the bourgeois parties, formed a coalition government and got into power. In the name of this coalition government he is now proclaiming "workers' and peasants' democracy" in Geneva, proclaiming Geneva to be a socialist republic. It is said that several Communists are attracted by this and welcome the government of Nicole. But Nicole has more than once used "Left" phrases and then more than once "gone to Canossa," to capitulate to the "Rights." We have no grounds whatever for trusting the "ultra-left" Nicole. We must present him with demands, expose him, say even now that Nicole is in alliance with the bourgeoisie, that he will not go against the bourgeoisie, but will go together with the bourgeoisie against the workers. We must imbue the masses with the consciousness that the proletariat cannot come to power otherwise than by overthrowing the bourgeoisie and smashing its state machine.

Geneva is a typical example and that is why I choose to speak of Geneva. We must say that there is no essential difference between the "Left" social-democrats and the "right" bourgeois parties. If the "Rights" shoot down hundreds and thousands of workers and boast of it, the "Left"

social-democrats of the type of Nicole shoot down scores of them and will weep: "This is what I, a democrat and pacifist, have been brought to by the Communists." This is the only difference, comrades.

There are not and cannot be any Lefts except our Party. We are the only Lefts. We ought to say this quite clearly today. In the present situation, in order to become a real revolutionary, it is necessary to come out openly against counter-revolutionary social-democracy. What sort of revolutionary is Nicole in Switzerland and Fischer in Austria, if they submit to the commands of the social-democratic leadership?

Either join us, or we fight you—there is no other way. Moreover, our fight against the "Lefts" will be the fiercest of all because they represent the bourgeoisie's last line of trenches.

In order that our line in regard to social-democracy may be clear, a determined struggle is necessary against *opportunism in our own ranks*.

The Remmele-Neumann group came forward under a "Left" disguise; Gutmann under a Right. But both the one and the other are parrot-like imitators of social-democracy. The fact that social-democracy is going through a profound crisis only shows that a still sharper struggle is necessary against it, against all its groups and at the same time a struggle on two fronts in our own ranks.

Only in this way will we be able to carry out those supreme tasks which confront us.

It is only we who are conveying Communist consciousness into the spontaneously growing labor movement. Without stubborn work on our part we cannot win over the majority of the working class for the revolutionary struggle. Only where the spontaneous movement is united with the con-

scious work of the Communists does revolutionary action result.

The most important task, for all Parties now, but especially for the German, Czechoslovakian and Austrian Parties, is to ensure political leadership over the masses, to react in good time to events, to give out political slogans at the right time.

This alone will ensure our leadership over the masses. The second most important task is to be able to combine illegal work with a truly mass character in this work.

The third task is to ensure real continuity in the work of each Party organization, beginning with the nucleus and ending with the Central Committee, so that we may not permit events to slip by us, so that we may react to all events.

The fourth most important task is proletarian internationalism, not in words but in deeds.

And in the combination of all these tasks the best living example for the moment was and remains out of all illegal parties the Communist Party of Poland, this oldest mass illegal party.

Our tasks are hard but our aims are great and clear, our path is true. We can say this today with more grounds than at any other time. Only think what would have happened if the Bolsheviks had not combatted opportunism in the Second International for thirty years, if the Communist International had not been founded fifteen years ago, if the Soviet Union did not exist. Then the European labor movement would have been smashed, torn to pieces by nationalism. Fascism would have celebrated its victory. The working class, betrayed by social-democracy, would have been without prospects for the future, without leadership.

Now there is no power which can smash us. The fate of the world labor movement in the last analysis lies in our

hands. Social-democracy is trying to make the masses believe in the epoch of fascism; we are proving that a new round of revolutions and wars lies ahead. Whether revolution will forestall war or war revolution, we do not know. But war, too, is unable to terrify us, for after it comes revolution. The U.S.S.R. has grown into the mightiest power in world politics. Socialism has been made a reality on one-sixth part of the earth's surface. The Chinese Soviet Republic is growing. We will leave this Plenum with the slogan of struggle for Soviet power throughout the whole world.

But what is demanded now of each one of us?

What is now demanded above all of every Communist is one thing—*the will for the struggle for power.*

The will to power means a stubborn, hard, self-sacrificing struggle to win over the majority of the working class, to form a revolutionary army of utterly devoted fighters for Communism.

The will to power means stubborn work in defending the daily interests of the working class in the factories, the plants, the trade unions, the labor exchanges.

The will to power means a hard stubborn struggle to win allies of the proletariat in the revolution, to win over the peasant masses, the masses of the petty-bourgeoisie in the towns who have been ruined by the crisis, for he who does not think of allies is not facing the question of power seriously, is not thinking seriously about the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The will to power means a struggle against war and fascism, for the defense of the U.S.S.R. and of the Chinese Soviets, for the defense of the German proletariat.

I recall the ancient Russian saga about Mikula Selyaninovich, who possessed tremendous strength but could not find a pulley.

"If I could find a pulley," he said, "I would lift up the whole earth."

We have found this pulley.

This pulley is work among the masses.

Our strength is tremendous, and if we apply this strength to mass work, if we overcome our weaknesses, really get to work in the factories and plants and trade unions, then despite the whole world bourgeoisie, despite fascism, we will overturn the whole world and assure the complete victory of the proletariat. (*Prolonged applause.*)

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