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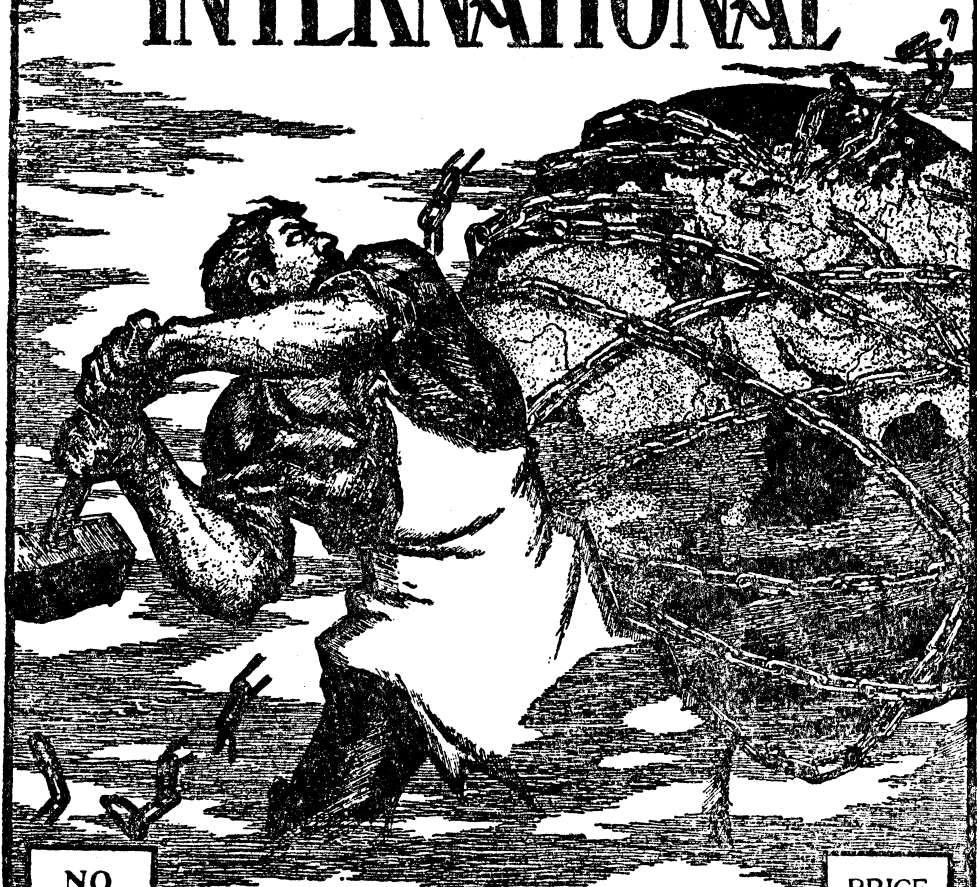
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NUMBER 3 NEW
SERIES

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The Proletarian Struggle for Power in Germany

(Continued from last issue.)

X.—Hamburg.

“**M**AY the Lord spare us such a defeat in Berlin as the 60-hour fight of the Hamburg police with the Communists!” These words were contained in the report by Police-inspector Kaupich of Berlin, on the fights at Hamburg. The whole of this police report was the most splendid tribute that revolutionary fighters could obtain from their adversaries. Here is not the place to dwell at great length on the details of this superb fight, on the military preparations, on the strategic plan and its execution. In connection with our review we have to deal only with the political aspect of the Hamburg fight, and to examine the militant actions only in so far as they are essential to the discussion of the question of the armed struggle. It may be stated at the outset that the Hamburg rising of October 23rd to 25th will remain as one of the most glorious pages in the annals of the German revolution.

As in the rest of the country, the Communists of Hamburg have prepared and organised militant troops for the civil war. The organisation and preparation of fighting troops were carried out so thoroughly and effectively that Police-captain Hense, a noted Social-Democrat, had the following to say in the Hamburg newspapers after the fight: “The worst of these fights was not so much the danger that the police-troops at our disposal were inadequate, but the worst of it was that the Communists had been able this time, contrary to all past experience in similar cases, to carry out their extended and thorough-going preparations in secret, so that we had no inkling of them. On all previous occasions we had the most accurate information of the minutest details of what was going on among the Communists. Not because we had planted any spies in their midst, oh, no! it was the law-abiding public, particularly the working class adherents of Social Democracy, who always furnished us with voluntary information on the doings of

the Communists. Conditions are now quite the reverse, and far from supplying any information to the police, the general public are rather in sympathy with the Communists. This was our worst experience in the Hamburg fights." In this statement, the chief of the Hamburg police bears testimony to the widespread revolutionary sentiment among the population in October last, and to the respect and esteem with which the public viewed the fight at Hamburg.

The Hamburg fight was started in the following manner : already in August and September the shore district was the scene of big wage fights, strikes and general strikes, which compelled even the most hidebound Social-Democratic trade union leaders to make pledges under the pressure of the masses, and even to deliver radical speeches, which was quite significant of the Hamburg Social-Democrats who have the reputation of being the most conservative in all Germany. Hamburg is one of the strongest Social-Democratic citadels in the whole empire. Although the Social-Democrats and the Communists constitute a majority of the citizenry and in parliament, the Social-Democrats are always in a solid bloc with the most reactionary industrial magnates and wharfowners and shipowners of Hamburg. This the Social-Democrats could afford to do for the sole reason that the great masses of the workers followed blindly their Social-Democratic leaders. It was the strength of the Social-Democratic organisation at Hamburg, and its absolutely assured following, which caused the Second and 2½ Internationals to choose this city for the drafting of their covenant. As late as in July the Social-Democrats could still enthuse the largest masses of the workers at Hamburg by the delectable ceremony of the betrothal of the two yellow internationals. But already in August and September, even these most loyal Social-Democratic followers began to rebel.

Early in October the general strike was declared by the wharf and dock workers at all the ports of the coast. The principal demands had to do with the question of wages, but also the political events of the country were duly reflected in these strikes. The October strike went on for many days in great solidarity and was terminated under the slogan : Prepare for the second blow !

On Sunday the 21st of October, a conference of wharf-workers met at Hamburg. In addition to the economic demands, it took a stand also in regard to the political events and decided by an overwhelming majority to proclaim immediately the general strike if the imperial executive should intervene against Saxony. This conference was attended by delegates from all the wharfs of the coast of

Northern Germany, and the majority of the delegates were either Social-Democrats or of no party. All the Communist motions were adopted almost unanimously, in spite of the bitterest opposition of the trade union bureaucrats in attendance. The conference elected a committee of action composed of Communists, Social-Democrats and non-party men.

This conference was a worthy contrast to the conference of Chemnitz. Both of these conferences met at the same time. At Chemnitz it was decided that the moment was inopportune for a general strike, whereas at Hamburg there was unanimous and enthusiastic decision in favour of the general strike in case of an attack against the working class of Saxony. When it became known on the following day, on Monday the 22nd of October, that the reichswehr had marched into Saxony, the workers at the wharves went out unanimously on strike at noon. The dock workers joined in with equal unanimity. Already on Monday afternoon there was a complete stoppage at all the wharves and docks, from Flensburg to Bremerhaven, and from Kiel to Stettin. The workers of the shore district reacted to the stroke of the imperial government against the Saxon workers in the very opposite direction to that of the Saxon workers themselves.

On Saturday, the 20th of October, and on Sunday, the 21st of October, great unemployed demonstrations were held at Hamburg. In various parts of the city it came to the ransacking of food stores and to bloody clashes with the police. For the first time the demonstrators broke through the mile limit to the Rathaus (parliament); the "sanctuary and symbol of governmental majesty" of the bourgeois democracy could no longer be defended by the police-troops. Hunger proved to be much stronger than respect for the majestic rights of democracy. These demonstrations were repeated on Monday, and even on a much larger scale on account of the dock and wharf labourers' strike which broke out in the meantime.

On Tuesday, the 23rd of June, precisely at 5 a.m. all the outlying police-stations in the Hamburg district were stormed by Communist squads, all the police officers were disarmed, and large supplies of arms and munitions were secured by the workers. Altogether 26 police stations were disposed of. The disarmed policemen reported to headquarters, and relief companies were dispatched. However, before the special troops had time to arrive, these places were transformed into armed strongholds. Hundreds of working men and women erected stupendous barricades in the

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streets. The town of Barmbeck in particular was transformed into an invulnerable fortress. Heavy trees which lined the streets were felled to the ground, the pavements were torn up, and all the approaches to the streets were barricaded with a mass of tree-trunks, stones and sand. Police-troops arrived in large numbers, in whole companies and battalions, but had to return with empty hands after sustaining severe losses in storming the streets.

ing squads at Hamburg had no arms at all at the start. It was only by storming the police with their bare hands on Tuesday morning that they secured arms. At the principal battlefield at Barmbeck the fighting workers had hardly a hundred weapons at their disposal. Ammunition had to be used very sparingly, because the requisitioned supplies were extremely meagre. On the other hand, the police were abundantly supplied with ammunition, and throughout the day they fired ceaseless volleys into the districts invested by the workers. Most of the shooting was done by the police haphazard and at random, at those blocks of houses where the presence of fighting workers was suspected. Fresh reserves of police-troops were continuously drawn from other districts, as it soon became evident that the Hamburg police force of over 3,000 strong could not hold its own against a couple of hundred Communist workers fighting in the streets. Police reserves had to be called in even from far-away Luebeck, and also reichswehr from the entire coast of Northern Germany. Firing went on all day until dusk, when the police prudently withdrew to the centre of the city for fear of being isolated and crushed by the masses of the workers.

At the break of dawn on the following morning, the fighting was renewed. Naval troops had been brought in from Kiel during the night, who anchored their ships in the harbour and went to assist in the street fighting. The fight went on again for a whole day, yet the police and naval troops failed to recapture the parts of the city that were defended by the workers. Similar fighting was continued the whole of the next day.

It has since transpired that on Tuesday morning, a few hours after the commencement of the fight, a telegram was received from headquarters in which the Berlin leaders urged the local fighters not to extend the fighting and to discontinue hostilities at the earliest opportunity of doing so without great sacrifices. The local leaders had now to give up their erstwhile plans for the extension of the fight to the other harbours, and to isolate the fight in the Hamburg

district. Orders were promptly sent to the other harbours and to the adjacent districts to avoid a fight at all costs. A special messenger arrived from headquarters on Wednesday to effect a cessation of hostilities, nevertheless the fighting troops could not be withdrawn that night owing to their firm determination to go on. It was only on Thursday afternoon that the preparations could be completed for an order of retreat, after the police had again received large reinforcements and began to bombard the workers' positions with greater force. The forced retreat was carried out by the workers so efficiently and in such perfect discipline that they managed to take to a place of safety not only the participants of the fight, but also all their arms. The positions were given up only on the following day, so that the fighters had time to save themselves from the persecution to come.

About 200 armed workers participated in the fighting at Hamburg. They were opposed by more than 6,000 police and naval troops, who failed until the last moment to capture any of the positions defended by the workers. The losses of the police and naval troops were extraordinarily great. Among the fighting workers the casualties amounted to six dead and several wounded, whose number could not be established because the workers themselves carried off and took care of their wounded. At all events there were many victims among indirect participants and non-combative passers-by in the streets. The casualties among the police and naval troops amounted to 80 dead and a large number of wounded. It was admitted even in police reports that the individual fighters among the workers were perfectly covered, and thus avoided any big losses. The bourgeois press had to report that the Communists had excellent military leadership and training, and that first-rank officers had co-operated with them, as otherwise it were impossible for plain workers to carry out such well-organised and disciplined fights. This kind of foolish talk merely proves how little the bourgeois mind has conceived the substance of the civil war.

The Hamburg fights furnish a superb lesson of the classical revolution, as it will eventually take its course in Germany. The workers will perform veritable miracles of individual service during actual fighting in the civil war. The Hamburg fights have shown that the proletarian street-fighter has to devise for himself the most natural means of defence and cover, and that unlike the police and military troops, he does not attack or defend by orders of superior officers, but merely on his own initiative and individual decisions. On the other hand, the opposing forces of the police and military troops will march in closed formations

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and solely by orders and threats of their superiors they will be driven and goaded into the fight. Yet these close formations, as they appeared at Hamburg, furnish an excellent target for the workers and can therefore be easily disposed of. The police at Hamburg did not venture out in smaller formations than 30 or 50 men at a time. And this is quite natural. The police and military mercenaries have nothing to defend or to conquer; they ply their trade merely for a living. On the other hand, the proletariat fights for and defends the interests and the future of a whole class. In one proletarian street fighter there is a thousand times as much force and devotion, as much pluck and militancy, as in a hundred policemen. The police can muster courage only against unarmed and defenceless workers, and will lower their sails before a body of armed workers, however small their numbers may be.

During and after the Hamburg fight it was often stated in working class circles that the Hamburg fighters were isolated and had no support from the large masses of the local proletariat. Those who are of such opinion have a very poor idea about the armed struggles of the proletariat. The number of armed fighters at Hamburg could not be augmented for the sole reason that the workers had just as many weapons at their disposal as they had previously wrested from the police. On the other hand, in those parts of the city where the fighting went on, the proletariat fighters were supported not only by the workers, but by nearly the whole population. This was clearly demonstrated afterwards, when in spite of the sending of a whole regiment of police spies into the district, scarcely anyone of the fighting workers was denounced. Denunciation would have been very easy under such circumstances as at Hamburg, where the workers fought near their homes, so that everybody knew them. Not only the armed troops took part in the fights, but also the rest of the population, particularly the women. The barricades were erected chiefly by unarmed working men and women. The women supplied the fighters with food, munitions, etc. Hundreds of workers volunteered to fight, but they could not be used because of the lack of weapons.

It is true that the sudden and unannounced outbreak of the fight on the first day, on Tuesday, came as a surprise to the workers. Everyone looked in amazement at the scenes of fighting, wondering what was going on. The vilifying campaign of the bourgeois press, which poured out extra editions into the streets of Hamburg every hour, alleging that the fighters had been crushed and the fight was all

over, contributed materially to the amazement of the workers. But already on the following day, on Wednesday, the amazement was gone, and large numbers of workers' processions marched towards the centre of the city. An unemployed demonstration, which took place on that day, overpowered the police station in the heart of the city emulating the example of the Communist shock-troops. This police station had to be given up when several of the unemployed were killed. On Wednesday and on Thursday, the dock and wharf workers' general strike spread also to the metal industry and to the other factories, affecting also the municipal workers, the gas works and part of the tramways and elevated railways. At all events, the Hamburg fight did not lack the mass movement, as many seem to think.

The Hamburg fight has produced its unmistakable political, moral and psychological effect upon the widest masses of the workers. The Hamburg fight is on the whole the only bright spot in the October defeat of the German proletariat and of the Communist Party. This fight has materially added to the prestige of the Communists throughout the country. The Hamburg fight had the effect of mitigating the spirit of depression and despair which fell upon the German proletariat in consequence of the October defeat. These are facts that are admitted even by our enemies, the Social-Democrats. Even Paul Levi, whose only political stock-in-trade consisted of "putsch" theories and Communist defeats, was so impressed by the profound effect of the Hamburg fight upon the whole of the German working class that in his correspondence he was constrained to describe the Hamburg fight as one of the most heroic and valiant deeds of the German proletariat. Another noted Social-Democrat described the Hamburg fight as "the only bright spot in the gloomy situation of the German proletariat." Anxious about its own existence and circulation, the Social-Democratic press, particularly the *Vorwaerts*, did not dare to repeat its insinuations against the Communist movement, to which it had resorted after the March action of 1921. This time it did not say one word about putsch, or madness, or crime. Even the opponent was compelled to respect and recognise the Hamburg fight as a stepping stone towards the social revolution in Germany.

There is a marked contrast in the effect of the Hamburg fight upon the German working class, as compared with the March fights of 1921. Whereas the March action isolated and separated the Communist Party from the large circles of the working class, the 60-hour fight at Hamburg has effected the closest union between the German working class and the

Communist movement. This is the best proof of the fact that the armed struggle of Communists during the rising tide of the revolutionary wave has the opposite effect to the armed fights undertaken at low ebb. The Hamburg fight, by its scope and swing, by its duration and profound impression on the large masses who participated in it, is beyond all comparison with the large fights of 1921, and the moral and psychological achievement of the former is, therefore, immeasurably higher than that of the latter.

The armed rising of the Communists at Hamburg has effected a wider breach in the Social-Democratic citadel than the preceding five years of propaganda. In the course of the fight, the Social-Democratic chief of police, Hense, issued one appeal after another to his party friends and to the "law-abiding" public of Hamburg, urging them to lend their aid to the police in the fight against the Communists. Whereas in past times such appeals would meet with the response of thousands and tens of thousands of petty-bourgeois, this time the urgent appeals of the famous Social-Democrat were responded to only by 700 persons, including 500 members of the Social-Democratic party who belonged to the military organisation of the "republican union." When this became known among the Social-Democratic workers, there was a storm of indignation in their ranks. The net result of the Hamburg fights to the Social-Democratic party was the loss of 30,000 members in the Hamburg district alone. The membership dropped from 80,000 to 50,000. Social-Democratic workers in the factories and workshops of Hamburg organised collections for the persecuted victims of the street fight. Workers who did police duty during the street fights were expelled from the factories by their own comrades of the Social-Democratic party. The bulk of the Social-Democratic workers refused to work together with the "bloodhounds." These traitors to their own class were ousted from the ranks of their own party.

As soon as the fighting was started at Hamburg, our Party closed its ranks to outsiders. No new members were admitted. Thousands of Social-Democrats who wished to come over to our side were told to wait for some future time. This measure was necessary in order to prevent the admission of police spies. For this reason it cannot be stated what was the nominal gain to the party as a result of the Hamburg fights. In spite of the vigorous persecution of the Communist Party after the fight, it was never so active and full of solidarity and determination as after the heroic October days.

The Hamburg fights teach the lesson that separate armed actions and battles of the proletariat, even if they fail to achieve their object, should by no means be put down as decisive defeats. The fighting trim and fighting spirit of the Hamburg Communists emerged stronger than ever from these fights; the organisation carried out the retreat with perfect tact and in perfect order, so that the defeat did not entail any of the dangers that had been experienced on previous occasions. The lessons and experiences of the Hamburg fights will serve as an important basis for the future decisive fights between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; they will serve as the most reliable guide. They have generated a tremendous force which will pave the way for the victory of the social revolution in Germany.

The successes of the Hamburg fight were possible and attainable only by a perfect system of organisation which went into the minutest details, by a rigid and inflexible discipline, by courageous, determined and clear-sighted leadership, by unstinting self-sacrifice of every comrade, and by the inflexible and indomitable pluck and courage of every individual fighter and of the Communist squads as a whole. The Hamburg heroes furnish a glowing example to the vanguard of the victorious German revolution that is to be.

XI.—Towards New Tasks.

The October defeat was followed by the establishment of the white dictatorship throughout the machinery of the State. All civil authority went over to the white generals who now reign supreme. Civil justice and administration depend on the whims and foibles of the military rulers. The Communists and the Communist Party are deprived of any legal possibility for public activity. Since the October defeat, this unparalleled provocation of the German proletariat has met with no united resistance of the working class. There has been a spirit of general depression.

Nevertheless, from the standpoint of economic interpretation of the forces at work in the revolutionary movement, it was quite clear that the depressed mood of the proletariat was but a passing phenomenon. The factors that had been the driving force of the revolutionary events in September and October continued their underground work upon the economic and social structure of the community. In spite of martial law and imprisonment, in spite of the prohibition of strikes and wholesale repressive measures, the proletariat bravely continues to struggle, and already in January there

was a new wave of gigantic strikes. This indicates that the proletariat is by no means downhearted, that it is still in full possession of its militant strength and spirit. Once again it is the task of the Communist Party to put itself courageously and determinedly at the head of the proletariat, in order to lead it and guide it in new struggles. At the same time the Party must keep a sharp look-out on the possibilities that may be furnished by the situation. It must inquire into the strength of the proletariat and of the enemy, in order to be able to apply the proper methods at all the stages of the struggle and to fix clearly the object of the struggle. The only way for the Communist leadership to be successful in the struggle is to study and to take the proper view of the fighting forces and of the means and possibilities of the struggle as well as of its objective; only in this way can the Communist leadership win the confidence of the masses, which is the preliminary condition to success forces and influences at work in the various classes and to the achievement of the proletarian dictatorship. To this end the Communists must acquire a precise knowledge of the parties, in order to be able to estimate their strength or weakness in regard to the proletarian struggle for power. This study will form the subject of the next two chapters.

XII.—The Role of the Social-Democracy.*

The fascist victory in the October days was the work of the German Social-Democracy. The leading elements of this party are nothing but a variety of German fascism which deals in Socialistic phraseology. On the catch-phrase of "choosing the lesser evil," they have supported all the outrages of the fascist dictatorship and perpetrated most criminal treachery against the proletariat. The Social-Democratic Minister of the Interior, Spellmann, has instituted martial law throughout the country; the Social-Democratic Minister of Justice, Radbrouch, is using the machinery of justice for the most unashamed persecution of Communists and of the revolutionary proletariat. The Social-Democratic President Ebert has put the entire army at the disposal of the white generals with Seeckt at their head; the Social-Democrats as a whole, regardless of their internal differences, have voted for the "laws of authority" which render the white dictatorship "constitutional." Minister of Police Severing organises a tremendous apparatus of sleuths to persecute and to spy upon the Communist movement; the Social-Democratic ministers took part in the raiding and

* The subject-matter of this chapter is taken chiefly from the draft theses by Zinoviev.

plundering of the Communist printing works and of the institutions of the Party. Like Noske they are the hangmen and torturers of many thousands of honest proletarian fighters, whom they have thrown into jails and concentration camps without any formal charge and without the facilities for legal defence. The outrages and abominable acts of the Bulgarian, Polish and Hungarian Social-Democrats, and of their friends in other countries, against the revolutionary proletariat, are put into the shade by the present-day treacheries, deceptions and crimes of the German Social-Democrats against the revolutionary proletariat.

The whole of international Social-Democracy is steadily degenerating into a bastard breed of fascism, which nevertheless does not prevent the majority of the Social-Democratic workers from considering themselves as Socialists and class-fighters. Can anyone doubt but that the Italian Social-Democracy, led by Turati, d'Aragona and Modigliani, is at the present moment nothing but a variety of Italian fascism? Can anyone doubt that Bulgarian Social-Democracy led by Janko Sakisov, which has joined the fascist ministry of Zankov and has undertaken the hangman's job against the workers and peasants, represents nothing else but a variety of Bulgarian fascism? The same is true of German Social-Democracy at the present stage of development. At the head of nearly all the predatory capitalist states are the past or present heroes of the Second International, who are ready at all times to sacrifice millions of workers upon the altar of profit and to the glory of unbridled exploitation. In France, Millerand; in Italy, Mussolini; in Germany, Ebert; in England, MacDonald, and so on.

In the course of the five years that have elapsed since October, 1918, when the power of the first German revolution came into the hands of the so-called "people's representatives" (three Social-Democrats and three independents), the German Social-Democrats and the German Independents consistently crippled the militant spirit and energy of the masses and supported the class domination of the bourgeoisie, systematically handing over power to the fascisti. The legal heir to the first "revolutionary" government of Scheidemann and Haase has turned out to be none other than the fascist General Seeckt. The November republic has been the nurse and foster-mother of fascism.

Social-Democracy in the past, in all situations of revolutionary tension, acted invariably against the proletarian revolution, even before the struggle came to a decision. In

November, 1918, during the bourgeois revolution in Germany which overthrew the monarchy, Ebert and Scheidemann took an unmistakable stand in favour of the monarchy and against the revolution, and when the Kaiser was overthrown in spite of them, they accepted the fact in the same manner as the white monarchists reaped personal benefits from the republic. In the revolutionary fights which occurred after the November of 1918, from the period of the Spartakus revolts to the March rebellion of 1921, they took upon themselves to save the bourgeoisie by organising the white hordes, the forerunners of fascism, in order to administer a thorough defeat to the proletarian revolution. The Social-Democrats in the past were invariably on the bourgeois side of the barricade in every struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and they will decidedly continue to be so in the future. The counter-revolutionary nature of the Social-Democracy is a fact with which we had to reckon at all times, and with which we shall yet have to reckon. During the stability period of the bourgeois democracy, when the antagonism of classes is not so pronounced as in times of revolution, the Social-Democrats may act as intermediaries between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In the period of acute class struggles, in which there can be no compromise between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the Social-Democracy must express itself definitely every day and every hour, either one way or another. In Germany we have already reached the period of decisive fights: we are in the midst of civil war which is the prelude to the final fight between the classes. The role of the Social-Democratic jobbers is played out.

In this revolutionary period in Germany, in the throes of the fascist dictatorship, the tactics of the united front assume quite a different nature and aspect. This the German Communists must now fully realise and proclaim in unmistakable terms to the whole of the German proletariat. No negotiations with the hirelings of the white dictatorship, with the hangmen of the revolutionary proletariat, with the political aids of the fascisti, can be entertained at this moment of civil war, when the two opposing fronts are arrayed in battle, one against the other. Ebert, Scheidemann, Hermann Mueller and their like can nowadays deceive only those who wish to be deceived. We need no further offers of negotiations in order to expose the role of Judas Iscariot which they are playing. He who is with these fascist Social-Democrats is with the white dictatorship; there is only one choice; either with us or against us.

This change of line in the tactics of the united front, made necessary and dictated by the new situation in Germany, must be fully brought home to the whole of the German proletariat, with particular reference to the "Left-wing" group of leaders.

The "Left" leaders are the last illusion of the Social-Democratic workers, the last historical masquerade of the fascist Social-Democracy, and consequently they are the most dangerous enemies of the working class. The German Communists should not forget that among the left Social-Democratic leaders, not to say the worst, are to be found such heroes as the Saxon ministers with Zeigner at their head, who magnanimously consented to collaborate with the Communists in parliament, but who would under no circumstances join the Communists in the armed fight against the bourgeoisie. The open traitors of the Noske and Ebert kind are no longer trusted even by the most simple-minded Social-Democratic workers. But the "left" Social-Democrats like Rosenfeld, Crispen, Zeigner, Levi and the rest, who are in reality nothing but a cloak to the dirty counter-revolutionary politics of the right Social-Democrats, are still trusted by a considerable part of the workers.

The C.C. of the K.P.D. acted rightly when at its November conference it announced openly to the whole country that the K.P.D. declined any negotiations or pacts with the executives of the German Social-Democracy, and that negotiations and pacts would be declined also with the central groups of the so-called "left" Social-Democrats as long as these heroes will not muster the courage to break openly with the counter-revolutionary bands who have entrenched themselves behind the executive committee of the German Social-Democratic party.

This rupture with the heads of the German Social-Democracy, however, by no means implies a renunciation of the tactics of the united front, or of the united front in general. On the contrary, the tactics of the united front during the revolutionary epoch must be applied even more rationally, effectively and intensely than during the period of preparation and propaganda. Before and during the October events we have just learned the shortcomings of the application of the tactics of the united front in this respect. Just at the period when the tactics of the united front "from the top," in the shape of negotiations with the heads of the opposing proletarian mass organisations, are both useless and undesirable, is the very time for building up the *unity from the bottom*. Already in the first theses of the Communist

International (December, 1921,) we wrote referring our fraternal parties to the experiences of the Russian Bolsheviks :

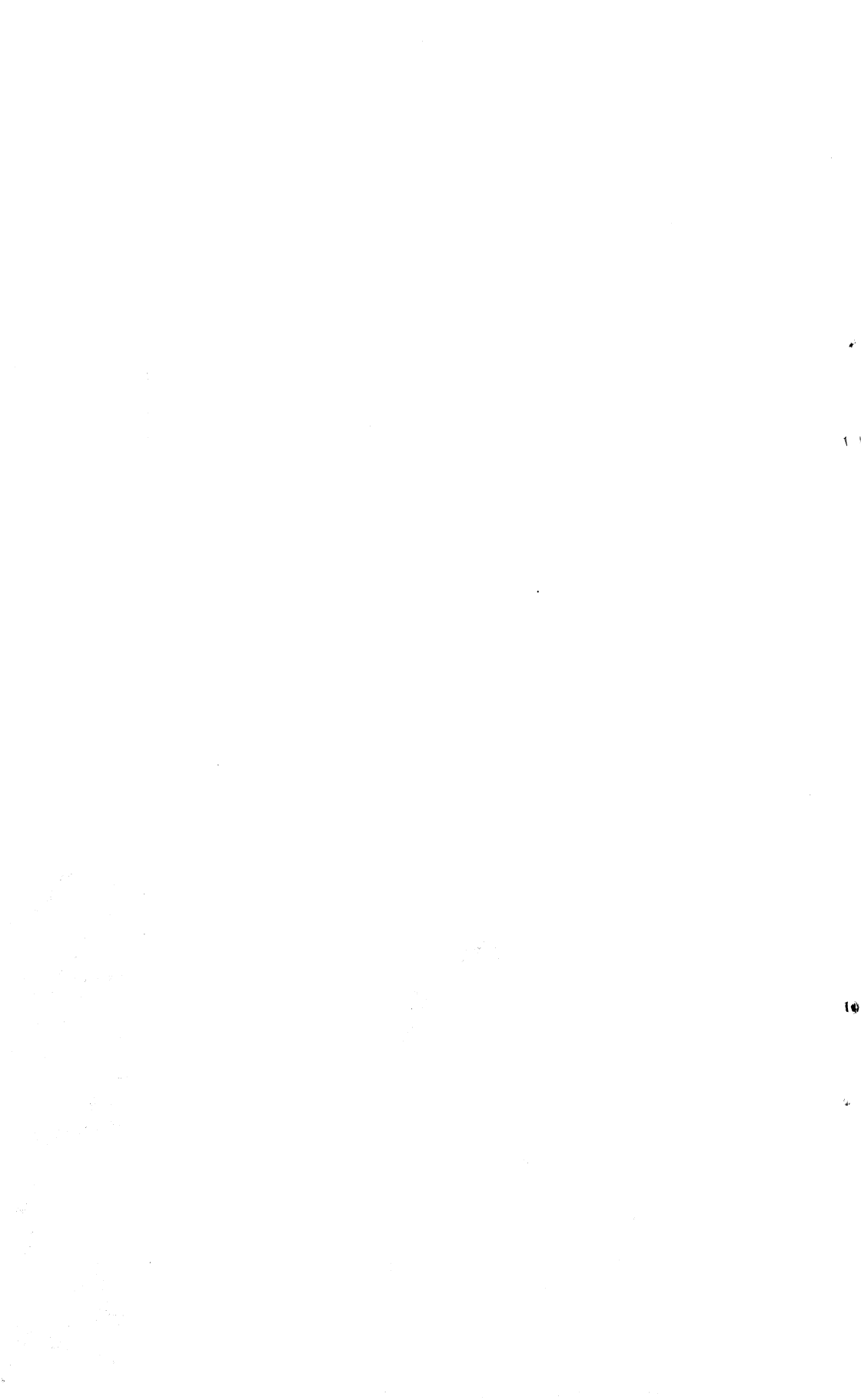
“ As an antidote to the diplomatic game of the Menshevist leaders, the Russian Bolsheviks raised the slogan of unity “ from the bottom,” *i.e.*, unity with the working masses themselves in the practical struggle for the revolutionary demands made by the workers upon the capitalists. This was shown in practice as the only proper rejoinder. It resulted at various times and places in the gaining of large numbers of Menshevist workers to the side of the Bolsheviks.”

Unusual fermentation is now going on among the workers who still belong to the German Social-Democratic Party. The Social-Democratic workers see the bankruptcy of their leaders and look for new ways. While firmly declining any kind of negotiations with the counter-revolutionary leaders, we have no grounds whatever for refraining from local negotiations and pacts with Social-Democratic workers in all those places where we have to deal with honest proletarians who are on the lookout for the proper way, and who are ready to show by their deeds their devotion to the revolutionary cause. It may be stated without exaggeration that the German Social-Democracy to-day is nothing but a loose conglomeration of miscellaneous organisations with the most diversified political leanings, and frequently with opposite tendencies. In reality the role of the official party policy is determined by the parliamentary faction, but it is just the latter that has been most compromised in the eyes of the rank and file of the party. If we wished to be consistent to the end, we would have to insist upon a break with the executive of the S.P.D. before allowing any Social-Democratic organisation to join us in the united front. But these are formalities on which, for reasons of expediency, we must not insist too much. The very fact of the desire of a local Social-Democratic organisation, or of Social-Democrats in the factories or in the trade unions, wishing to join the K.P.D. in the fight against the existing system, constitutes a practical breach with the counter-revolutionary heads of the German social-democracy.

The slogan of unity from the bottom should by no means be taken up in a rigid mechanical way. Also unity from the bottom requires comprehensive organisation and planning, as well as versatility and broad-mindedness. It is not enough to propound this slogan at workers' meetings as merely an instrument of propaganda, but the unity of the proletariat should be organised and brought about systematically in



MAY-DAY IN MOSCOW.
"YOUNG PIONEERS PASSING LENIN'S TOMB."



actual life. It means that the activities and functions of Communists in the trade unions, in the factory councils and in other mass organisations, should be co-ordinated and united with the activities of entire industrial districts and of the country at large. The organs of unity, the revolutionary factory council movement, the control committees, the organisations of the proletarian hundreds and the provisional committees of action must all be welded closer together, and centrally united and guided as the embodiment of the desire of the proletariat for power, and as the decisive all-embracing factor of the social-revolution.

XIII.—Small Peasants, Fascism and the National Question.

The leadership of political struggles, particularly of mass movements during the epoch of social revolution, requires a thorough study of the social groupings of the people, particularly of those elements which are to be taken into consideration either as active or passive factors in the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. Of the sixty million population of Germany, only 55 per cent. are directly engaged in the process of production. Before the war it was only 45 per cent., so that this increase of 10 per cent. indicates a substantial proletarianisation of the German people. This 55 per cent. represents thirty-four million human beings. These comprise ten million industrial workers, two million transport workers (including the railway workers), about four million agricultural workers, two and a half million state and private officials and employees, half-a-million police and reichswehr men, five million small peasants, one and a half million middle peasants, half-a-million big peasants, and the remaining nine or ten million consist of artisans, domestic servants, petty tradesmen, liberal professions and enterprises. This last group of nine or ten millions comprises mostly the lower middle class which is being brought down to the level of the proletariat.

According to these figures, there are in Germany to-day from 18 to 19 million pure proletarians (workers, employees and officials) who are absolutely dispossessed and whose existence depends solely on the earnings of their labour. Among the nine or ten million of the lower middle class there are at least six or seven million who belong to the urban petty-bourgeoisie (artisans, merchants, agents, liberal professions, artists, students, etc.), who earn their living partly from small property income and partly by their labour. In this class of semi-proletarian existence must be reckoned also the small peasantry, who for the most part consist of small

tenants and farmers whose land holdings are scarcely enough to sustain them. These three groups constitute the overwhelming majority, about 90 per cent. of the working people of Germany. The revolutionary struggles of the proletarians in Germany are affected in a large measure by the attitude of the urban and rural middle classes.

It still remains the fundamental problem of the revolution to wean away the working masses from the Social-Democratic leaders and to get them into the ranks of the fighters for the social revolution; for the proletariat alone, as a uniform class with uniform interests and aims, can be the standard-bearer of the social revolution. Nevertheless, the foregoing figures show that the absolutely dispossessed proletariat constitutes barely one-half of the working population. Hence it follows that the proletarian revolution in Germany can be victorious over the bourgeoisie only if it will not have to count on the hostility of the urban and rural middle classes. In the decisive fight between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, these classes must be made at least neutral, or partly even sympathetic to a certain degree towards the fights of the working class.

In the course of social struggles these middle classes do not constitute a solid bloc. They have no strictly defined interests to unite all these groups and elements. At times their economic and social interests conflict with one another. Hence they do not represent a uniform class, and they always waver between the class interests of the bourgeoisie and those of the pure proletariat. Some of them are driven by their interests into temporary, or even into permanent, alliance with the proletariat, and some of them have interests that make them akin to the big bourgeoisie. The latter is particularly the case with the profiteers, while the former refers to the hard working and struggling artisans, petty officials, small peasants and so forth. The respective interests and attitudes of these groups were clearly demonstrated during the last revolutionary fights of the German proletariat, when these middle classes had to show their decisive sympathies one way or the other. Thus the scattered associations of small peasants have joined into one big union of small peasants and farmers, with a membership of one million strong, which has declared itself unreservedly on the side of the Communist movement, and has inaugurated its own newspaper which is published in the spirit of Communism and in agreement with the agrarian programme of the Communist International and of the K.P.D. Similar developments have taken place among many groups of the urban petty-bourgeoisie. On the other hand, some groups of big and middle peasants

have formed an alliance of landowners on a line with the junkers, while some of the urban intellectuals have joined the counter-revolutionary camp and will not fight by the side of the working class.

The process of dissolution and disintegration of the bourgeois society in Germany, which reached its highest pitch in the year 1923, had its strongest effect upon the petty bourgeois and small peasant elements. The class antagonisms within the middle classes of the bourgeoisie became accentuated in the extreme. As we have already seen in the preceding chapters, the economic background of this disintegration was furnished by the relentless expropriation of the middle classes by the big bourgeoisie. Whereas during the revolutionary period of 1918-21 these elements represented one of the principal mainstays of the counter-revolution, they presented quite a different picture during the revolutionary upheavals of 1923. Whereas during the first revolutionary period the possessors of small property were scared out of their wits by the spectre of Communism, they have learned a good deal of wisdom during the second revolutionary period of 1923. Formerly the big bourgeoisie could mobilise the petty bourgeoisie against the revolutionary workers by intimidating them with the allegation that the Communists were going to chase them from hearth and home; now the bourgeois democracy has had time to demonstrate that during its regime the small owners were robbed of their possessions, not by the Communists, but by this very bourgeois democracy. Bitter actual experience has dispelled the former superstitious fears of the petty bourgeoisie in regard to Communism. This has affected particularly those elements that have been so completely dispossessed under the rule of the bourgeois democracy that frequently they eke out even a more miserable existence than some of the working class elements. In this manner the revolutionary epoch of the year 1923 has carried this class struggle into the remotest village and hamlet. The class antagonisms became accentuated not only in the large towns and industrial centres, but also everywhere throughout Germany, to an extent that was unknown before the recent developments in the revolutionary situation.

The masses of the petty bourgeoisie, who during the war were threatened with extinction on a par with the proletariat, whose youth furnished the cannon-fodder for the battlefields of the world war, hailed in November, 1918, the petty bourgeois parties, particularly the social-democracy, and the regime of bourgeois democracy as their saviours from the peril of extinction. The tremendous increase in the member-

ship of the Social-Democratic party was largely due to an influx from these petty-bourgeois middle classes. But the post-war development of capitalism led to such unexampled spoliation and plundering not only of the working class, but also of the petty-bourgeois middle classes, as has never been known in the history of capitalism. The petty-bourgeois middle classes were dispossessed without mercy, millions of impoverished members of the middle classes sank even lower than the level of the distressed and starving working masses. The subservient bourgeois press, which is owned by syndicated capital to the extent of 85 per cent. insidiously propagated the idea that the "November criminals" were to blame for the military defeat and its ruinous consequences and the Treaty of Versailles, and that "Marxism" was responsible for the shameless plunder of the middle classes. The cowardice and treachery of the social-democracy as the ruling party, and its use of the cloak of Socialism over their subservience to the big bourgeoisie, have driven the petty-bourgeois middle classes into the arms of the counter-revolution. The discrediting of Socialism by the nefarious work of the social-democracy, and the demagogy of the propaganda of the capitalist press have created the ideological background for the fascist movement in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie, of the officials and employees and of the backward elements of the working class.

During the struggle in the Ruhr, the industrial magnates made use of the movement for the furtherance of their own interests. They have not only instigated the struggle in the Ruhr, but they have also foreseen its economic and political consequences, taking advantage of the nationalist passions aroused by the Ruhr struggle to create the illegal fascist bands under the leadership of Hitler, Rosbach, Ehrhardt and Ludendorff, as an army for the civil war against the proletariat. The moderate parties, with the social democracy at their head, for fear of the proletarian revolution, surrendered to the fascisti one position after another, until finally the Social-Democratic President Ebert gave over the whole authority of the state to the fascist General Seeckt. Having obtained power, legal fascism had to reveal its real face. General Seeckt started immediately to realise the Stinnes programme by the most brutal means. Yet the Stinnes programme contains nothing that could in any way relieve the desperate situation of the middle classes and the misery of the small peasantry. On the contrary, the fascism of the industrial magnates can assert itself only by the relentless exploitation and robbery of the petty-bourgeois and small peasant elements in addition to the proletariat. Having

started to a strongly pronounced social tune, fascism has now become a mere tool for the power of the industrial magnates and has thus lost its social background.

The national treason of the big bourgeoisie, the dismemberment of Germany and the bartering of the most important sources of raw materials and industrial centres to Entente imperialism, the separation of the Ruhr district and the transformation of the Rhine, Ruhr and Saar state into a French colony, the separatist tendencies of the Bavarian monarchists, have exposed the real face of the fascist dictatorship and of the big capitalist robbers behind it as the real enemies to the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie. Already during the revolutionary wave from May to September last year, large masses of the petty-bourgeoisie dissociated themselves from fascism and showed their sympathy for Communism. The petty-bourgeoisie is becoming ever more alive to the consciousness that the social, economic and political sides of the national problem will not be solved by the big bourgeoisie. It is the task of the Communists in Germany to state clearly and unequivocally in their political propaganda, that the fight for the existence of the proletariat will not be waged against the petty-bourgeoisie, but against the big bourgeoisie. With equal clearness the Communists must demonstrate to the small peasantry that their interests do not clash with those of the proletariat, that the only enemy of the proletariat is at the same time the only enemy of the petty-bourgeoisie and of the small peasantry.

The neutralisation of the middle classes, the winning of their sympathies and the widening of the cleavage between the big bourgeoisie and the industrious middle class must be accomplished by persistent work. This work should consist of educational anti-capitalist propaganda, of common partial actions of the proletarian united front organs and the middle class organisations, and of programmatic elucidation of the role of small producers, small traders and small peasants, particularly of their co-operative organisations, under the proletarian dictatorship. These are the immediate tasks which the K.P.D. should not fail to accomplish.

The big bourgeoisie in the past could retain the allegiance of the middle classes only by the intoxication of nationalism and by the fostering of the lowest human passions. Although the question of nationalities was never a leading question in internal German politics, nevertheless the struggles in the border districts that are rich in raw materials or that represent important avenues of communication, *e.g.*, the Polish corridor question, the division of Upper Silesia, and the

separation of the Rhine, Ruhr and Saar state, were the source of strong nationalist passions during the post-war period. Yet the outcome of all these questions and the identity of interest as between the German industrial kings and the French, Belgian and Luxemburg capitalists have greatly unmasked the big bourgeoisie in the eyes of the petty-bourgeois middle classes. The education of the petty-bourgeoisie in the nationalist spirit for the furtherance of the interests of the big bourgeoisie is now bearing fruit of an opposite nature to that which was intended. The outcry of the capitalist press anent the alleged treason of the Communists, who are charged with forming a pact with the "hereditary enemies" for the destruction of Germany, has now been found out by the petty-bourgeoisie to be an equal swindle to the bogey of Communist robbery that used to be advanced by the big bourgeoisie. Just as the petty-bourgeoisie had to learn on their own bodies that the robbers of the small owners are not in the proletarian class, but elsewhere, so they are finding out now, after the termination of the struggle in the Ruhr, who are the real traitors to the Fatherland, and the destroyers of Germany. These two points, petty-bourgeois property and national unity, constituted the most sacred substance of the ideology of the German petty-bourgeoisie, which they must protect as the apple of their eye. On both these points the economic and political developments of the post-war period have taught the petty-bourgeoisie to trace their deadly enemies to their lair. To these elements the national unity of Germany is of equal importance with the question of their existence, and these two questions are interdependent. From these two sources they draw their ideology and idealism in the fight for their existence, and upon the national question it is the duty of the proletariat and of its vanguard, the Communist movement, to make it as clear as in the domain of economic and social problems, that the petty-bourgeoisie and the proletariat have the same enemies to fight. It is the task of the working class to demonstrate to the petty-bourgeoisie that the traitors to its ideals, to the unity of Germany, the initiators of the dismemberment and dissolution of the empire, are not the working class, but wholly and solely the big bourgeoisie who, for the sake of their sordid profits, have sold the "Fatherland" to the highest bidder a thousand times. At the same time the working class, under the leadership of the Communist movement, must declare in no uncertain voice that the present-day Germany dominated by the white dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is the Fatherland of the big bourgeoisie, the Fatherland of the rich. The working class should let it be known quite distinctly that this Fatherland of the rich, a Germany of capitalism, deserves not the

bones of one single worker. At the same time the Communists should state with equal emphasis that this Germany will be betrayed and sold, dismembered and dissolved, as long as it is swayed by the capitalist domination, that this Germany has only one way of emerging as a united and powerful nation as against the predatory imperialist robbers, and of protecting and saving its existence as such, by becoming a proletarian nation under the dictatorship of the German working class. Hence the German proletariat should, in the first place, overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie and remove the fascist dictatorship by the victory of the proletarian dictatorship. Only with the weapons in its hands can the German proletariat oust the foreign invaders and arrest the dismemberment of the empire caused by the treason of the bourgeoisie. The only security for the unity and independent existence of the German empire is in a victory of the German proletariat over the German bourgeoisie. The national problem in Germany can be solved only by the revolutionary proletariat in international solidarity, in alliance with the proletarian Soviet States of Russia. The unity and security of the German nation are to be obtained over the dead body of German capitalism.

XIV.—The Revolutionary Factory Councils' Movement.

The social revolution in Germany can be accomplished only by the German working class. The revolutionary movement, the K.P.D., in order to accomplish its tasks, in order to gather the revolutionary forces around the existing class-organs of the proletariat, should get into close touch with their old traditional organisations, for this is the only way to gain influence and prestige among the masses of the workers. The proletariat will follow and be influenced only by those organs and leaders that have been created by itself for the conduct of its struggles. Any organs and institutions imposed upon the proletariat from the outside will remain a foreign body to the proletariat. Hence the Communists as a part of the proletariat, should endeavour, to capture those organs created by the proletariat, and to have them dominated by reliable Communists, and thus to ensure the adherence of the whole of the working class.

The Communists should endeavour to use for their own ends the old traditional mass-organisations of the proletariat, the trade unions, the co-operative societies, etc., as well as the organisations on which the workers rely directly at their work, the factory councils. The problem of the social revolution remains the problem of the conquest of the majority of the proletariat for the revolutionary class-struggle, and in order to attain this end, the Communists must make up their

minds once and for all that if the mountain walketh not towards the prophet, the prophet must walk towards the mountain. The proletarian masses will not come to the revolutionary vanguard as long as the latter hold aloof from the masses and merely shout to them: "Your salvation is only in the proletarian dictatorship!" No, the Communists should not stay in isolation, but should work in permanent and close touch with the proletarian masses, in order to gain the personal experience and conviction of every worker that the proletarian dictatorship spells the salvation of every individual worker as well as of the whole class. This collective experience of the wide masses of the proletariat, and the conviction as to the necessity of the revolutionary class struggle and of the social revolution, should be the goal of the activity of Communists within the proletarian mass-organisations and within the organs of the working class on which the workers rely, and which enjoy the confidence of the workers.

This caused the K.P.D. at an early date to realise the great importance of winning the factory councils for their aims. Already after the unsuccessful struggles for power in the years 1918 and 1921, the Communist movement in Germany tried to conquer the existing organs of the working class by means of the tactics of the united front, and to win them for the proletarian struggle for power. Next to capturing and winning the proletarian masses in the trade unions, which have a membership of eight to ten millions, the revolutionary movement had to gain the adherence of the factory councils which had behind them the whole German proletariat, an army of twenty millions in the factories throughout the country. He who is in possession of the factory councils is in possession of the confidence of the industrial proletariat. The factory councils are the direct, and consequently the most trusted leaders of the proletariat, they are more dependent upon the wishes and aspirations of the workers than any other delegates of the working class. The factory councils are, therefore, the best barometer of the revolutionary maturity and of the revolutionary desire for power on the part of the German proletariat. For this reason the German revolutionary movement did not try to create new political workers' councils during the non-revolutionary period, apart from the factory councils, for the purpose of winning political power. It was found far more expedient to permeate the existing factory councils with the revolutionary spirit, and to imbue them with a new content, so that these organs of the desires and aspirations of the working class should be ranged on the side of the proletarian fight for power.

The importance of the factory councils to the revolutionary class struggle and to the social revolution in Germany is due to the position of the factory councils and to their relations with the proletariat as a whole. In Germany there are hardly any factory workers who are not in direct touch with the factory councils. The factory councils are the organs which regulate and influence all their most intimate affairs, their relations with their employers and even their private and family relations. It is this close personal intercourse, this spirit of comradeship between the factory councils and the working class, that renders the former of high importance to the proletarian class struggle.

Of course, the factory councils as they exist to-day are by no means to be considered as outspoken revolutionary organs. On the contrary, the counter-revolutionary legislator of Weimar, who has "incorporated the factory councils in the constitution" in the shape of the Factory Councils' Law, has endeavoured to turn the factory councils into a strong weapon of counter-revolution. It was the aim of the Factory Councils' Law to eliminate the revolutionary idea of the councils and to reduce them to the position of the workers' committees which existed before the war. The factory councils as constituted by law are not the results of the revolution of 1918, and were not created for the revolution. The Factory Councils' Law, which is the foundation of the present factory councils, is far more reactionary and anti-labour than the unwritten rights gained by the workers in the '80's and '90's of the last century within the factories, through the workers' committees created by them in those years.

On the whole, the German factory councils have retained the nature and the significance of the workers' committees of the pre-war period. They bring the workers' grievances before the factory managers, they negotiate with the employers on agreements and disputes, on wage demands and wage scales, in so far as this is compatible with industrial peace and capital-labour co-operation. They enforce the carrying out of sanitary regulations in the factories and assist the employers in the acquisition and distribution of food supplies to the workers, in order to keep the human machines going and save them from death by starvation. These tasks exhaust the entire activity of the factory councils as prescribed by the teachings of the yellow trade union leaders. According to the intent of the legislator, and according to the wishes of the flunkeys of the employers, the factory councils should serve the sole purpose of protecting and safeguarding the capitalist interests and constitute the pillars of bourgeois society.

The factory councils in this counter-revolutionary sense were created as the tools and instruments of the alliance between the trade unions and the employers. The elections to the factory councils were at first organised and carried out by the trade unions. For this reason the yellow trade unions enjoy the strongest influence in the factory councils even today. But the growth of the revolutionary opposition within the trade unions was accompanied by a corresponding growth of the revolutionary opposition in the factory councils. The elections to the factory councils usually take place between the months of January and May of every year. Whereas during the first years the electoral campaigns were waged merely among the various sections of the yellow trade unions, the Amsterdam unions against the Christian and Hirsch-Dunker unions and so on, the elections of recent years were fought between the revolutionary opposition and the counter-revolutionary unions of all shades. It is to be regretted that no statistics are available for the factory council elections which took place in recent years. The trade unions, whose tremendous bureaucratic machine would enable them to keep such statistics, are deliberately suppressing them in order to prevent the workers from knowing about the steady progress of the revolutionary movement in the factories. The revolutionary movement, the Communist Party, could not afford the means to keep track of the progress in the factory council elections, having but a small number of honorary officials. It will be one of the most important tasks of the trade union section of the K.P.D. to carry out exhaustive investigations in this respect, and to acquaint the international movement with the results. The factory council elections of the present year are to be at least just as important to the revolutionary struggle as the workers' council election in Russia, in the summer of 1917, as a direct step to the conquest of political power by the working class. The factory council elections this year will prove to be the most significant barometer of the revolutionary correlation of forces and of the objective revolutionary maturity in the German situation. To take the proper preparations for these elections is the most important task which confronts the German Communists.

The importance of the factory councils to the revolutionary struggle is shown also by the following figures. According to the provisions of the Factory Councils' Law, all factories employing not less than 20 workers must elect a factory council. Factories employing from 20 to 49 workers elect a factory council of three members; those employing from 50 to 99 workers elect one of five members; those from 100 to 199 elect one of 6; those of 200 workers and upwards

increase the membership of the factory council by one member for every 200; those employing about 1,000 workers and until 5,000 increase the membership of the council by one for every 500 workers, and about 5,000 workers by one additional member for every 1,000 workers. Under all circumstances, the membership of a factory council must not be more than 30. All the workers over 18 years of age are entitled to vote, and all those above 24 are eligible for election.

According to reports by the factory council inspectors, there are in Germany, 340,000 factories entitled to elect factory councils. These factories are classed as follows:

170,000	factories	with	20	to	50	workers.
130,000	„	„	50	to	200	„
40,000	„	„	200	to	1,000	„
2,000	„	„	more	than	1,000	workers.

Including factories employing up to 4,000 workers.

According to these figures, there are in Germany 340,000 factory councils, with $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 million councillors. These figures point to the tremendous importance of winning the factory councils for the revolutionary class struggle and for the social revolution. The factory councils constitute the basis and foundation on which the organisation is to be built for the proletarian fight for power and for the proletarian dictatorship. The revolutionary factory councils' movement, with all the successes it has hitherto achieved, is still in the initial stage of organisation. According to latest reports, the revolutionary factory councils' movement does not embrace more than 5,000 factory councils, including not more than 2,000 large factories.

The revolutionary movement had to gather around itself the existing factory councils by means of new revolutionary organs. Contrary to the method adopted in regard to the trade unions, the gathering of the revolutionary forces could not be undertaken within the old organisations. The factory councils which set themselves revolutionary tasks, contrary to the intent of the Law and of the yellow trade union bureaucrats and Social-Democrats, had to create their own revolutionary organs. Thus, by the side of the local factory council offices of the trade unions, revolutionary factory councils committees were created, including the Committee of 15 at Berlin, which united the revolutionary part of the Factory Councils of Berlin, the Waterfront district factory councils' committee, the Committee of 21 of the factory councils of the Rhineland-Westphalia district, the national factory council committees of Thuringia, Saxony, Middle Germany, and so

forth. Similar committees were created in Baden, Pfalz, Württemberg, Silesia, Upper Silesia, Lausitz, Eastern Prussia, Mecklenburg, Hanover and Magdeburg. All these local and provincial factory council committees had to wage a bitter fight against the trade union factory council organisations from the very outset. They fought by might and main to instil into the factory councils a new revolutionary spirit. This revolutionary factory council movement, which developed and unfolded itself under Communist propaganda, has won in a short time great influence among the working class as a whole, thanks to the assistance of a number of other revolutionary organisations and to the great financial and personal sacrifices by the revolutionary vanguard, gaining at times the adherence of entire categories of workers and of the workers of entire provinces.

The successes of this movement caused the Berlin factory councils in October, 1922, to convene the first congress of the revolutionary factory councils of Germany, which took place at Berlin in November, 1922. This congress was attended by 900 delegates representing about 2,000 factory councils. The deliberations lasted for three days and were concerned throughout with the problems and tasks of the factory councils for the conquest of political power by the proletariat. The congress rejected all talk about the control of production and organisation of labour without the concomitant conquest of political power, or without the goal of proletarian rule. All the way through the congress took the Marxian view on the nature of capitalist society, and on the revolutionary tasks and duties of the working class in the fight for the overthrow of the capitalist system of exploitation. It is true that the "workers' programme" adopted by the congress contains quite a number of demands and measures to secure the existence of the working masses, such as the shifting of the burden of the financial bankruptcy and of the economic breakdown and so on, but it is stated in the same programme that these measures cannot be carried out before the conquest of political power and that the fight for these momentary demands must develop into the decisive fight for the proletarian dictatorship. On these grounds the congress advanced also the demand to disarm the bourgeoisie and its counter-revolutionary bands, to arm the working class, to form workers' defence organisations (hundreds) and to create control committees for the control of production and distribution of the commodities produced.

These decisions of the congress indicate clearly that these revolutionary tasks and demands of the proletariat cannot be attained in the factories, but by the whole of the

proletariat backed by the factory workers, by capturing the political power of the state, and of the communities. This programme and the decisions of the factory council congress have given a revolutionary content and nature to the factory council movement as a whole and have turned it into an important organ, into a keen-edged weapon in the fight of the working class for liberty. Thus the substance of the factory councils was transformed into the very opposite of what it was intended to be by the yellow trade union leaders. As a measure of organisation, the factory council congress decided to create a national committee of the revolutionary factory councils of Germany. This national committee was formed with headquarters at Berlin and with representatives from twenty-one provinces and states.

Immediately after the factory council congress, the revolutionary factory council movement was called upon to show its strength and the extent to which it was backed by the proletariat as a whole. The large aniline and soda syndicate of Baden victimised the congress delegates of the Ludwigshafen and Oppau factories. This victimisation led to the great general strike of the chemical workers of Pfalz, which lasted for six weeks, and in which 30,000 workers took part. In this strike, the trade unions were entirely on the side of the employers from the very first moment. The newly-formed national committee of the factory councils, which had only been elected the day before, appealed to the German proletariat for material solidarity, and the thing happened which had never been considered possible for the German working class. To wit, the strike could be financed for six weeks on voluntary contributions, although it involved an army of 30,000 men and their families, which meant some 90,000 people. This financial aid was the cause of bitter strife between the class conscious proletariat and the yellow trade union bureaucratic traitors throughout the country. The trade union bureaucracy resorted to all means, including the most vicious calumnies of the fighting workers to obstruct this financial aid of the class conscious part of the working class. This financial action of the national committee was the best expression and the highest point in the application of the tactics of the united front, which brought the worst discredit upon the yellow trade union bureaucrats, and upon the Social-Democrats in the eyes of the workers.

After this first trial of strength, the revolutionary factory councils steadily enlarged their scope of activity. Thus, the united factory councils committee for the district of Rhineland-Westphalia held two international congresses, in January and in May, against the occupation of the Ruhr.

The revolutionary factory councils were the leading spirit and organising force of the great mass strikes which took place between May and August, 1923, in the Ruhr, in Upper Silesia, in Lausitz, in Middle Germany, in the Waterfront district, in Upper Baden; in each of these fights millions of workers took part, and finally was organised the big political mass strike which led to the downfall of the Cuno Government. All these fights had to be waged in spite of the most savage persecution by the employers and by the authorities, coupled with the opposition of the official leaders of the trade unions and of the Social-Democratic organisations. In all these fights the revolutionary factory councils held the unrestricted leadership of the fighting proletariat, in spite of all the persecution and imprisonment of individual members of the factory councils. The revolutionary factory councils were followed by the masses of unattached and of Social-Democratic workers, who worked in close solidarity with the Communists.

Under the leadership of the revolutionary factory councils, the German proletariat smashed the strong edifice of the bourgeois pacifist policy of co-operation between the yellow trade unions and the employers' associations, lending increased importance and efficiency to the revolutionary class struggle in Germany. Thus the factory council movement became the standard-bearer of the revolutionary struggle, and the paver of the path to the social revolution. This movement is the class organ of the proletariat which gathers all revolutionary forces, in whatever camps they may be found, and puts them in the service of the revolutionary fight for power.

No wonder that this movement has to contend with the bitterest opposition of the German bourgeoisie. Already in March the Social-Democratic Minister of the Interior, Severing, prohibited all the organs of this movement throughout Prussia. The national committee of the factory councils had to move from Berlin to Thuringia. The provincial and local committees were forced into illegality. The governments of the other states, even the purely Social-Democratic ones, followed in Severing's footsteps and indulged everywhere in fanatical persecution of the organs of this movement.

Although under the stress of persecution the revolutionary factory councils had to suspend their activities from time to time, nevertheless, they promptly took the lead in every new movement of the proletariat and quickly rallied the masses to their banner, in spite of illegality. These

revolutionary factory councils will have to play one of the most important and decisive parts in the future struggle of the German proletariat for power. They are the organs from which the proletariat will eventually choose its political instruments of power, the political workers' councils, the committees for the control of production and the leading bodies of the armed forces of the proletariat. In a word, the revolutionary factory councils will be called upon to act as the bearers of the proletarian dictatorship in Germany. And it is the duty of the German Communists to acquaint them with these tasks right now and to imbue them with the unfaltering revolutionary spirit, to prepare them step by step for their historical mission in the fight of the German proletariat for freedom, and to pave the way for the proletarian dictatorship.

XV.—The Proletarian Hundreds and the Control Committees.

In close connection with the revolutionary factory council movement, there developed in Germany also the movement of the proletarian hundreds and of the proletarian control committees. The factory council movement, the movement of the proletarian hundreds and of the control committees are the organs of the united front which sprang out of the revolutionary atmosphere in Germany. All these three movements are the expression of the revolutionary will and activity of the German proletariat.

In their development and organisation the proletarian hundreds kept pace with the counter-revolutionary preparations of the fascist movement. These hundreds depend for support on the factories and they are made up of workers of all parties, of Social-Democrats, Communists and unattached. Proletarian hundreds were formed at all industrial centres and large towns. These organisations became of particular importance in Saxony and Thuringia, and still more so in the Ruhr district. In these three districts the local hundreds were centralised and organised into a united body. Conferences were held for the purpose of creating a central leadership of the movement. At the same time proletarian hundreds were formed also in the rest of the empire, in Württemberg, at Berlin, in the Waterfront district, and so on. At all events no united hundreds could be formed in the Social-Democratic citadels like Hamburg, Berlin city, Hanover and so forth. In those cities the Social-Democrats had their followers so well in hand that

they managed to link up the fighting spirit of the Social-Democratic workers with the counter-revolutionary fascists. Under the title of "republican defence alliances," "republican unity," and so on, the Social-Democrats formed together with the bourgeois parties military organisations which united with the secret fascist bands against the revolutionary proletariat. In a previous chapter ("Hamburg") we have already described the activities of these Social-Democratic counter-revolutionary military organisations. These military organisations of the Social-Democrats, in case of disturbances or demonstrations, are promptly clad in police uniforms and enlisted as auxiliary police.

Nevertheless, the united front tactics of our Party mobilised steadily the workers in the factories for the defence of their interests, in spite of the anti-labour activities of the counter-revolutionary military formations of the Social-Democracy. The creation of the united front organs of the proletariat brought disintegration into the ranks of the Social-Democratic military organisations. As the revolutionary situation in Germany grew in intensity, these organisations continued to disintegrate, and to-day they contain only those elements of the proletariat who are so blinded by fanaticism that they are ready at any moment to throw in their lot with the counter-revolutionaries against the interests of their own class.

It goes without saying that the proletarian hundreds from their very inception had to stand the bitterest persecution on the part of the state authorities. We have already mentioned the prohibition of the proletarian hundreds in Prussia by Severing in January, 1923. The other states followed suit. Nevertheless, in Saxony and Thuringia the proletarian hundreds maintained their ground until the invasion of the imperial force and were only dissolved by the military dictatorship.

The control committees, which worked in close contact with the hundreds, were created for the purpose of controlling the food supply and the prices of commodities needed by the proletariat. The control committees were the most comprehensive organs of the united front movement. Particular importance they attained in those places where the Communists were very strong. The control committees were formed at united conferences of local trade unions, proletarian political organisations and factory councils, with the participation of small merchants and artisans. The control

committees were permanent functioning bodies of the proletariat to whom the whole population addressed their grievances and complaints against all acts of profiteering and inflation of prices, and which delegated their committees to the warehouses and shops to regulate the prices. In many districts there was close co-operation between the tradesmen and the control committees who periodically fixed the prices of commodities. Wherever the control committees met with resistance, the economic boycott was practised and demonstrations were held by housewives supported by the hundreds, and thus the profiteers were forced to curb their appetites. In many places the local authorities were constrained to recognise officially the control committees. They won the right of confiscating commodities that were hoarded for purposes of speculation, or which were intended for shipment out of the country or into other districts. Thus the control committees won the sympathy and confidence of the large masses of the population, regardless of class or social standing.

The control committees became of particular and paramount importance in times of popular revolts against the high cost of living, which took place in many of the large cities and industrial centres. During such times the control committees, backed by the proletarian hundreds, actually took the place of the local authorities. They confiscated or requisitioned large quantities of food supplies, which they distributed to the starving population.

Just like the proletarian hundreds, the control committees were branded and persecuted by the authorities as the "enemies of law and order." Thousands of members of the control committees were tried and imprisoned. The propaganda of the control committees against these persecutions was the best means to undermine the authority of the state, since the population at large, not to speak of the proletariat, took quite a different view from the authorities as regards the activity of the control committees. The population considered the control committees as their rescuers from famine, while the state authorities were considered by them as the promoters of the famine. This vindication of the united front organs, which were supported and encouraged solely by the Communist Party, was of extraordinary importance to the Communist movement. Sympathy for Communism became prevalent among the wide masses of the population.

During intervals of the campaign the proletarian hundreds and the control committees could be temporarily sus-

ended by police and official persecution. But every time that the proletariat won its way into the streets, during all big strikes and demonstrations, the united front organs promptly emerged from among the masses, in the shape of proletarian hundreds, control committees, action committees and so forth, as the standard-bearers of the proletarian fight for power. Although the control committees and the hundreds were prohibited already in January and February, they came to the front in all the big strikes that occurred between May and August, at times overpowering the police and arranging for the food supply of the strikers, thus assisting the factory councils in the successful prosecution of the proletarian struggle. In spite of the thousands of members of the control committees and of the hundreds that have been imprisoned, new fighters emerge continuously from among the huge masses of the German proletariat, who continue the self-sacrificing service to the cause of the German revolutionary proletariat.

Thus, before the revolution has triumphantly accomplished its work, it creates already within the old bourgeois society its own organs and organisations for the overthrow of this social order. The fights waged by the control committees and hundreds have shown more clearly than everything that the social revolution will not be accomplished by the parliamentary and democratic capture of the machinery of government and by its transfer from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, but by the overthrow and destruction of the organs and institutions of the bourgeois democracy and by the most unsparing fight of the proletariat against all the bourgeois institutions and organisations. The revolutionary organs and institutions of the proletariat may for a time be suppressed and driven to illegality, but they will always remain the bearers of the proletarian aspirations for the conquest of political power.

XVI.—The Situation in the K.P.D.

The K.P.D. is one of those young revolutionary parties that were called into being and were developed after the creation of the Communist International. Its roots go back to the Spartakusbund, and to the revolutionary wing of the Independent Socialist Party, both of which were the result of the political bankruptcy of the old Social-Democratic party of Germany during the war and after. The revolutionary experiences of the K.P.D., those elements which go into the make-up of every revolutionary party, are of quite

recent origin and are matters of common knowledge. This lack of extensive revolutionary experience, coupled with the terrible disappointments of the German proletariat in consequence of the Social-Democratic betrayal, turns the K.P.D. into a fighting organisation which must carry out its revolutionary operations and manœuvres ponderously and imperfectly. The iron discipline and firm confidence in the leadership and strength of the organisation, by which the Bolshevik party is distinguished, could but feebly be developed in the K.P.D.

There have been many vicissitudes in the mentality of the masses of the Party during the various political stages which the history of the young K.P.D. had to pass through. During the revolutionary period of 1918-21 large numbers of militant but undisciplined masses came to the foreground, and shrank back again after the first defeats. The period of stability of the bourgeois democracy, during which the revolutionary struggles were suspended, caused large numbers of Social-Democratic workers to join the revolutionary party, not because of pronounced revolutionary convictions, but in sheer disgust at the betrayal of the yellow Social-Democracy and trade unions. Thus the K.P.D., in so far as the large masses of the membership are concerned, is still permeated with the old party spirit which animated the German working class in the past.

The qualities and virtues, which are indispensable to a revolutionary workers' party, could be developed among these party masses but gradually and slowly. For all these reasons, the masses of the Party are still unaware of the particular part to be played by the party within the working class. It was only during the fight of 1923 that the Party conceived its particular tasks as the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. The sanguinary defeat of the Party in the years 1918-21 is the explanation for the slowness and extreme caution with which the Party proceeded in the recent struggles. The mistakes committed, as already described in previous chapters, furnish conclusive evidence of this fact.

Perhaps in no section of the Communist International the views and currents of the wide masses of the membership are so strongly reflected in the central leadership as it is the case in the K.P.D. The Central Committee of 28 men is entirely dominated by the working class element. The responsible political and organisational leadership is wholly and solely in the hands of the workers. This corresponds

thoroughly with the composition of the K.P.D., which consists 98 per cent. purely of industrial workers. Intellectuals and semi-intellectuals could gain a place only at the Party leadership in Berlin, and through the Berlin organisation, which was run by these intellectuals in permanent opposition to the C.C., they could gain their way even into the C.C.

In this C.C. are reflected all the defects and shortcomings which are the result of the youth and inexperience of the K.P.D. as a revolutionary party, down to the minutest details. The K.P.D. has no dominant figure which could command the confidence of the entire membership, as has been the case with the Russian Bolsheviks. Hence the whole of its activity and political guidance must be based on good collective work of the existing mediocre forces. But there was an equal lack of such collective work. The stress of the successive fights in Germany, the numerous crises, the multitude of fighting places throughout industrial Germany, gave little opportunity to the K.P.D. for theoretic training and for thorough study of the complex economic and political circumstances, in order to create the necessary unity and solidarity for action, and the necessary revolutionary discipline. It was during the October days that this lack of theoretic insight was revealed by the lack of revolutionary determination in the course of decisive actions.

The discussion now going on in the Party, and which will yet be aired in future conferences, is centred upon the review of the October events, and of the mistakes committed. The Party majority has expressed its views in its resolutions and decisions, indicating quite clearly its full knowledge of its own mistakes. But there seems to be a lack of unanimity as to the root problems of the mistakes. This makes it necessary for us to re-state clearly the problem upon which the opinions differ. In the previous chapters we stated how the Party was forced to change its tactics after the defeats of the years 1918-21, in order to win the masses of the workers during a period of revolutionary standstill. Such tactics, of course, would do only for the period when no revolutionary fights were in progress. The whole language and the nature of our activity should be different at such a period from those of a period of revolution. Yet it is stated quite clearly that this method of fighting and acting by a revolutionary part can be considered only for a given epoch. As soon as a revolutionary situation should arise again in the bourgeois society, these tactics and this method would have

to be changed accordingly. But this was done rather slowly and feebly, even at decisive moments.

Particularly characteristic in this respect was the attitude taken by the Party at an hour when everything had to be staked. The Saxon experiment was undertaken in order to precipitate the decisive revolutionary fights. We have already criticised the principal mistake that was committed in this connection. In the course of that experiment it was quite clear that the Party was using such language as was not at all calculated to call the masses directly into the fight for power. All the speeches and leaflets of that period were couched in such tones and in such language as though they were used by the Social-Democrats in regard to the bourgeois society in the '80's or '90's of the last century. On examining the Communist speeches and publications of the August-October days, one finds them to be rather similar to the radical propaganda of a Bebel, who appealed to the "sanctity of the constitution," and to "constitutional rights," than to the revolutionary language by the Bolsheviks immediately before the capture of power. The official declaration of the Social-Democratic-Communist government in assuming office contained a statement, that the government considered it as its principal task *to prevent the civil war*. The appeal of the social-democracy and of the trade unions for the general strike, which was signed also by the K.P.D., designates as the object of the fight "the defence of the constitution and of constitutional rights." The declaration of the K.P.D. in the Landtag of the 31st of October, *i.e.*, after their overthrow, demands equally the preservation of the bourgeois constitution. If we read the speeches of an August Bebel of the '80s' of the last century and compare them with those of our Saxon comrades and with the propaganda of the Party during the revolutionary days, we must admit unhesitatingly that the speeches of a Bebel did not sound less radical and determined than those of our Party friends.

Those responsible for this downright opportunist party-policy in a situation when the fight for power should have been started, will tell us that they presented ten demands to the social-democracy before joining the government and that those demands were rejected by the Social-Democrats. The Party leaders knew that as against the 130,000 organised Social-Democrats in Saxony there were only 30,000 organised Communists. They should, therefore, have seen quite clearly that with opportunist speeches they could not carry

the Social-Democrats into the fight after their demands for the common fight had been so decidedly rejected. In such situations there is but one dilemma: either to conclude a pact with the social-democracy upon definite guarantees that the pact would be observed and the fight will be made possible, or to refuse to sign the pact. The notion that the social-democracy could be forced into the fight by means of sly diplomacy, and by speaking in their opportunist language, was thus shown to be a terrible error. If the situation was considered as highly revolutionary, then it was the duty of a revolutionary party to talk revolutionary language and to tell the working class in no uncertain terms who were the ones that would take upon themselves to lead the fight. If on the other hand, the Saxon experiment was undertaken not in order to start a revolutionary movement, but merely to expose the social-democracy, then there was still less reason for trimming the sails.

The opportunistic language of the Party was by no means accidental. It was the logical consequence of the adaptation of Communist ideology to the non-revolutionary part of the proletariat at a time when the struggle for power was not in the foreground. But with such opportunistic ideology no revolutionary fight for the conquest of power can be conducted. It was on this point that the Party committed the gravest mistake, which is fully appreciated throughout the Party. This is the central question which now engages the attention of the membership, and which must be brought to a solution.

There are now in the K.P.D. three groups which emerged from the debates over the October defeat. One of these groups consists of the foremost and responsible leaders of the October events, who represent the extreme right wing and defend the tactics of the October days as fit and proper. This group is the smallest in the C.C., and should have few followers among the membership at large. Out of the October events has arisen the strong middle group, which was formed mostly by the Committee of 28 during the October events, when the political leadership was concentrated to a narrower circle. This group during the whole course of the events, by its activity in the districts and in the industrial centres, appreciated already at the time the mistakes committed and the opportunistic digressions. It was they who mobilised the Party for the fight and carried on propaganda in the districts for the struggle that was imminent. But the fightless retreat of the Party gave the lie to

their orders and messages in the districts, and they had to stand the brunt of the disappointment and bitterness of the masses of the Party. Hence this group is most eager to criticise quickly and unsparingly the whole policy of the Party. This oppositional group of the C.C. embraces the overwhelming majority of the C.C. members as well as the most responsible Party workers in the districts and provinces, who are all finding themselves in the same boat.

Next to this opposition is the old Berlin opposition with whom the oppositional elements at Hamburg, in the Ruhr and other districts have long since been identifying themselves. This opposition was represented in the responsible narrow circle of the Party leadership, although in a minority. The criticisms of this opposition are in unison with the criticisms of the wider opposition in the Party as regards sharpness, but not as regards substance. The Berlin opposition bases its criticisms on the proposition that we should have fought in October, even if defeat was to be the result. In regard to the preparations for the October fight, in their views upon the ultimate victory and the decisive defeat, as we described in the foregoing chapters, the Berlin opposition are in thorough accord with the right wing of the Party in all the details. This opposition is also of the opinion that the opportune moment for the conquest of political power was missed by the October defeat. But the Berlin opposition goes even farther. It characterises the October defeat as the logical consequence of the united front tactics, against which the Berlin opposition fought already in the past, and on this basis it tries once again to denounce the united front tactics as false strategy. Our opinion upon this matter we have already stated in the foregoing chapters.

The deductions made by these groups from the October events are equally at variance. The right wing of the Party, which ascribes the October defeat as due to lack of maturity and to the correlation of forces, must needs contemplate the future development in gloomy hues on the basis of this divinely ordained correlation of forces. The right wing must quite naturally deny the subjective faults and mistakes in order to justify themselves, and thus they indulge in excessive over-estimation of the enemy's strength, of the immutable correlation of forces in bourgeois society. Therefore this wing predicts a long period of revolutionary ebb, a stranding of the revolution for a number of years.

It is interesting to observe that the Berlin opposition arrives at a similar view of the revolutionary prospects, and

upon very similar grounds. They must expose the faults and shortcomings of the right wing to the strongest light in order to demonstrate the total bankruptcy of the right wing leaders. But the prospect of new revolutionary fights to come would dictate a postponement of the reckoning with the right leaders, and hence they are constrained to argue that revolutionary opportunities come but accidentally, and if missed they are missed for years. According to the views of this left wing, bourgeois society is in a position to adjust the economic and social circumstances so as to prevent or put off the proletarian revolution.

With this point we shall deal upon another occasion. At all events, the right and the left group arrive at similar conclusions in regard to the prospects of revolutionary development, just as they entertain the same illusions in regard to the civil war and to the preparations for the proletarian fight for political power.

The small right wing group is fairly united on the question of the October defeat and the conclusions to be drawn therefrom. On the other hand, there are all kinds of differences of opinion in the two other groups, in the left wing as well as in the strong opposition of the C.C. majority. In the left wing there are substantial differences between the Hamburg and the Ruhr opposition on the one hand and the Berlin opposition on the other; while the Berlin opposition draws a gloomy picture of the further revolutionary developments as highly dangerous to the development of the Party, the Hamburg and Ruhr opposition urge the necessity of further development of the revolutionary spirit. The Berlin opposition is in danger of digression towards the K.A.P. (Communist Labour Party). They declare themselves against partial actions and against big actions for partial aims, urging that the activities of the Party should consist of watching for the favourable opportunity to deliver the decisive blow. Such a view leads to the most dangerous abstention, to passivity, which is in sharp contradiction to any active revolutionary aggressiveness. There is no need to point out how this K.A.P. conception ignores entirely the strong subjective element of the class-conscious fighting part of the proletariat, of the revolutionary vanguard. The left opposition was not slow to conceive the danger of opportunistic digressions, and it criticised these opportunistic dangers most relentlessly. By this signalling of the opportunistic dangers, the left opposition has certainly won its right to criticise the right wing, although it has many points of

contact with the latter in its judgment of the substance of the civil war, of the subjective influence exercised by the Communist movement, and of the future prospects.

The Berlin opposition, in contradistinction to the Hamburg and Ruhr opposition is influenced quite strongly in its theoretical views by the particular atmosphere of Berlin, which is due to the very passive attitude of the Berlin workers towards the revolutionary fights. The Berlin opposition tries to justify the backwardness of the Berlin workers by the alleged or real faults and mistakes of the policy of the C.C. This backwardness of the working masses of Berlin prompts the Berlin leadership, which is strongly influenced by intellectuals, to seek theoretical justification and to jump to wrong conclusions, as we have already pointed out.

On the other hand, the Hamburg and Ruhr opposition represents the best fighting elements of the proletariat, who have shown the greatest revolutionary valour during the five years of the revolutionary period in Germany. This opposition is based on sound and progressive revolutionary impatience. These groups have tempered the revolutionary impatience of their followers by strong discipline, and thus they avoided the pitfalls of K.A.P. digressions and blunders. In spite of these fundamental differences between the various oppositional camps, the Berlin opposition has succeeded in gaining control of all the diverse oppositional currents and leanings throughout the country.

The Berlin opposition succeeded in gaining the leadership of the various opposition elements because the latter were always in a minority in their respective districts, and this compelled them to unite in spite of their differences, in order to be able to combat the opportunist influences in the Party. The moment that the opposition elements gain the majority of the Party, or have to assume the leadership of the Party without obtaining a majority, then the united opposition will quickly break up into its component parts. The opposition of Hamburg and of the Ruhr will have to take up the cudgels against the Berlin opposition, which represents quite different tendencies and which originated from quite different causes.

The future course of the struggle within the K.P.D. will depend on the extent to which the opposition within the

present Party majority will find the courage and strength to unite with the sound oppositional forces of the left wing, and to make the sound tendencies of this opposition the foundation of a reliable party policy and strategy. The sound tendencies in the Berlin opposition, too, must be separated from the dangerous digressions the Berlin opposition, must find out the causes of these digressions which have a particular effect upon the shaping of the workers' movement of Berlin. After a recognition of these defects, it will not be difficult to find the proper way to revolutionary strategy and tactics.

Only by a union of all the left and middle opposition elements, and by an elimination of all the dangerous tendencies of K.A.P. digressions, will it be possible to liquidate the opportunist currents within the K.A.P., to obviate all the defects and shortcomings which led to the October defeat, to purge the Party of all the sediments of the Social-Democratic past, to turn the K.P.D. into a reliable sharp weapon for the proletarian fight for freedom, and to crystallise the Party into a truly revolutionary vanguard of the German proletariat. If the K.P.D. fails to steer in this direction, the forthcoming revolutionary fights of the German proletariat will lead to further error and confusion to the detriment of the German working class. It is the duty of the Party to set to work immediately to map out a clear-cut revolutionary policy, so that the German proletariat should be fully confident of the leadership of the K.P.D., and so that the future fights should be fought successfully and carried to the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeois domination.

XVII.—The Tasks of the Party.

Just as the K.P.D. ideology and theoretic background do not fully meet the requirements of the revolutionary movements, so is its form of organisation far from adequate to meet the revolutionary requirements. Just as the revolutionary ideology of the K.P.D. still contains strong sediments of the old reformist movement, so the K.P.D. even to-day, is based on the form of organisation bequeathed by the reformist movement. The old social-democracy, which was essentially an electoral machine, was organised as an instrument for the conduct of parliamentary elections. This was the form of organisation adopted by the K.P.D. and maintained during the four years of its existence. This equipped the K.P.D., like the old social-democracy, to take care of preparations and conduct of parliamentary campaigns, but not to discharge its revolutionary tasks as they arise at

decisive moments. The K.P.D. re-acted most strongly to these defects, as they were particularly revealed during the revolutionary period of 1923. In the midst of its many tasks and duties in the preparations for the civil war and the revolutionary fights, the Party saw the necessity of re-modelling its form of organisation. Instead of the previous residential and parliamentary district organisations, nuclei were now to be formed at the factories. The factory nuclei were to become the basis of the organisational structure of the Party.

In the foregoing chapters we described the revolutionary organisations which must be created and developed during the revolutionary period, and in these we see the way for the proper organisation of the Party. The revolutionary fight can be successfully waged only if it is supported by the union of the large masses of the workers engaged in collective work, and by the backing of all the organisations created by the proletariat for the conduct of the fight during the revolutionary period. The factory councils movement, the control committees and hundreds, the action committees, etc., are based exclusively upon the factories which have behind them the striking force of all the workers without distinction of party. If the K.P.D. wants to gain firm control of these revolutionary organs of the proletariat, it must not only be the standard-bearer of the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat, but also organise these proletarian masses and set before them revolutionary tasks and aims. This means that the K.P.D. should transfer its organisational work and propaganda from the residential districts into the factories.

The factories must be transformed into the citadels of the revolutionary struggle. This is the most important and pressing task for the K.P.D. to accomplish in the shortest space of time. Upon the speed with which the K.P.D. will achieve the transfer from the residential districts into the factories, the re-modelling of the electoral machine into a motor of the revolution, will essentially depend the driving force and the reliability of the Party in the leadership of the revolutionary fights. Only by succeeding in capturing at least the large factories and workshops in which the toiling millions are employed will the Party acquire the necessary strength for the decisive fight for power. The experiences of the October defeat have shown the failure of the S.P.D. and of the trade unions at the decisive moments have enabled the bourgeois domination to triumph once more over the proletariat.

Just as during the revolutionary period of 1918-21 the victory of the revolution was prevented by the shortcomings of an old revolutionary party with all the approved revolutionary traditions, which enjoyed the full confidence of the working masses, so the failure of the Communist Party to secure its moorings among the large masses of the workers in the year 1923 was the principal cause which prevented the outbreak of decisive revolutionary fights.

The illegality of the Party is another reason for the Party to pass from residential organisations to factory nuclei. The white dictatorship can prohibit meetings and conferences in residential districts, it can imprison and disperse the workers in meeting assembled, but it cannot stop the meetings of the workers at the factories without shaking the very foundations of society. This very illegality should urge the Communist workers to concentrate their activity at the factories and places of work, where the workers have to meet day by day.

Owing to the lack of revolutionary tradition and of revolutionary experience, the K.P.D. was caught quite unprepared by the prohibition of the white dictatorship. The illegal activity could be started only with difficulty and after the overcoming of strong resistance. The K.P.D. had to pay a heavy price for these defects. It was only by the proletarian fights during the half of January that it became possible to revive the activity of the Party and to make more efficient use of the illegal struggle. The second task of the Party is to organise the ranks of the Party so that they might be able to hold their own against the onslaught of the white dictatorship, that the Party might retain its strong connection with the masses.

When these organisational tasks have been successfully solved, it will be ever so much easier to solve the political, economic and social tasks. While re-modelling itself as the instrument of the working class for the capture of political power, the Party must at the same time take part in all the daily struggles of the proletariat, in order to lead it into these fights on the basis of common interests and to develop these fights into great combats with political aims and ends. The fight against the extension of the working day, against the repeal of the eight-hour day and the cutting of wages, must everywhere be organised by the Party by propaganda and active organisation of the defensive fights. Even if such fights do not end in final victory, the masses will at least

see clearly that the Communist Party has made every attempt to start and lead in the fight.

Next to the all-important tasks just mentioned, the Party should see to it that the workers that are thrown out of the ranks of the industrial proletariat by the economic bankruptcy of the bourgeoisie should not be side-tracked into opposition to the workers who are employed. To this end the Party must endeavour to influence and organise the great masses of the unemployed, to discipline them and to co-ordinate the interests of the unemployed with those of the employed. To this end the Party must always be everywhere at the head of the unemployed, organising and carrying out their battles, imbuing them with the spirit of unity, so that the unemployed may see how the Communist Party cares for their interests. The Party should further utilise its factory nuclei and factions for the co-ordination of the employed and unemployed workers' interests. The fights of the unemployed must be united organically with those of the employed. The factory workers should support the demonstrations of the unemployed, while the latter should show their solidarity during strikes and demonstrations of the former, and thus should the united front of the proletariat be maintained. To secure this the Communist Party must effect the closest union of the unemployed movement with the factory councils movement, with the control committees and hundreds and with all the united front organs of the proletariat. This activity of the K.P.D. requires the unconditional recognition of the tactics of the united front, the recognition of the necessity of partial actions and of big actions for partial aims and ends, the recognition of the necessity to make use of the smallest movement in order to enlarge and extend it, or to join in big movements, and to exert all efforts and make use of all the opportunities offered by the class struggle, in order to develop them into decisive revolutionary fights.

Next to these fights which arise out of the misery and distress of the working class, the K.P.D. must also wage political fights and mass movements for partial aims and partial demands, and partial fights with political objects. The fight against the white dictatorship must be waged by us with the same methods and means as the white hirelings are using against us. The Party must imbue all such fights of the proletariat with a revolutionary content, with the slogan of the proletarian dictatorship in opposition to the bourgeois dictatorship and the white generals and fascist bands. Thus the proletariat will come to see that all their

struggles big and small must inevitably lead into the big stream of the proletarian fight for freedom and for the conquest of political power. To this end the Party should not confine itself to propaganda, but should draw up an emergency programme in the very course of the fights, in which it should be shown that the proletarian dictatorship is the only way for the social and national emancipation of the labouring elements of Germany, and that this emancipation can be accomplished only by the fight of the workers for themselves.

XVIII.—The Prospects of the German Revolution.

It stands to reason that the most important part in clarifying the situation within the Party will be played by a thorough study and analysis of the further course of the revolutionary development in Germany. Upon this analysis of the development and pace of the social revolution in Germany depends the political attitude of the Party in general as well as the organisational and technical measures which the Party has to adopt. All the actions and decisions as well as all the theoretical views are most strongly influenced by the view of the Party upon this development of the revolution, and the pace at which it ripens, upon a thorough analysis of the objective forces which promote the revolution, and of the subjective possibilities which are decidedly influenced by the Communists.

For instance, the Berlin opposition takes the view that the period between July and October last year was the time when the most favourable opportunity for a revolutionary rising of the German proletariat was missed, when a proletarian victory was possible, and opportunity which would not occur again for many years. The right wing maintains the view that it was a period of revolutionary ebb in Germany and that the revolutionary movement is now stranded for years to come. The reasons for the respective views of the two wings of the Party we have already outlined in the preceding chapter. Both these views are based on mental speculation and are determined by political and tactical considerations from the Party standpoint rather than by an analysis of the economic and social driving forces of the revolutionary movement. We decidedly reject the views of both the extreme wings of the Party in regard to this matter. In order to obtain an answer upon the question of the further development of the revolutionary movement, one must endeavour to examine the whole structure of the bourgeois

society, and of the active driving forces which caused the revolutionary wave of 1923.

The question of the further development of the German revolution is most intimately connected with the external political relations among the imperialist powers and states of Europe, and also with the relations and antagonisms among the classes within the bourgeois society of Germany, with their economic structure and inevitable development, and with the relations between the big trusts and syndicates and the petty forms of property as they still exist in Germany in spite of industrialisation. The pace of the development depends on the extent to which the German proletariat can be enslaved, and on the objective forces developing within the proletariat, which should be decidedly influenced by our Party. Deprived of her sources of raw materials, Germany is now more than ever influenced by the international groupings and relations of the capitalist powers, and by the easy or strained condition of these relations.

Notwithstanding the ostensible peaceable trend of the last few weeks on account of the election results in England, of the forthcoming parliamentary elections in France, and of the Entente victory in the Ruhr, one must decidedly expect a substantial strain upon the international relations as a result of this very victory in the Ruhr, which the French bourgeoisie will endeavour to exploit. Neither is there any prospect of any economic consolidation of capitalism, but one must rather expect an aggravation of the crisis and a consequent intensification of the antagonism between the classes. Besides, the situation is extremely acute everywhere in Central Europe, with no immediate prospect of relief. The upward trend of the revolutionary wave in Central Europe is looming big. The pace of this movement is substantially influenced by the subjective forces developed and unfolded by the proletariat, and particularly by its vanguard, the Communist movement.

But even if there should be a relaxation in the international situation, no substantial relaxation of the revolutionary tension in Germany seems in evidence. The white dictatorship, having failed to do anything for the consolidation of German capitalism, will not be able to maintain itself for any length of time. It has neither reduced the international dependence of Germany nor relieved the financial bankruptcy and the industrial dilapidation. The

nationalist dictatorship must give its attention to preparedness, and thus come into collision with France. The destitute proletariat and the impoverished middle classes have long since lost their ability to contribute to the liquidation of the financial bankruptcy, neither does the fascist dictatorship derive any taxes from the possessing classes, or any loans whether at home or abroad. They are already constrained to use the methods of the "November criminals" such as Treasury notes and inflated currency. The stabilisation attempts of last October and November, undertaken to assuage the insurgent masses, have burst like soap-bubbles.

The white dictatorship is resorting to the most brutal measures in an endeavour to consolidate the economy and finances at the expense of the proletariat and of the middle classes by increased exploitation, by reckless prolongation of the working day, by increasing the number of the unemployed by unscrupulous discharge of officials and employees, by further cutting of the starvation wages and of pensions and subsidies, by increased spoliation of the masses, by rack-rents and exorbitant taxes and by soaring prices of commodities. Nevertheless, all these attempts are bound to fail, and will soon lead to spontaneous fights and strikes, to the ransacking of food stores and to hunger demonstrations. There is no doubt but that this development will lead to revolutionary events of far greater magnitude, to struggles which will involve large numbers of those elements of the population who hitherto were hostile to the proletarian fight for freedom. The basis of the revolutionary front will be substantially widened in the coming struggles, while the lessons of the October experiences will have the effect of deepening the understanding of the revolutionary fight for freedom among the proletarian masses.

After the October defeat it looked as though the proletariat was surrendering all its positions without resistance. By one frontal attack the bourgeoisie managed to realise all its old dreams of the 10- and 11-hour day, of the cutting of wages, of the wholesale dismissal of officials and employees, and of shutting down the factories in order to crush the workers. The imperial government and the governments of the various states have discharged in January, in accordance with the Stinnes programme, no less than one-fifth of the officials and employees, namely 500,000 out of 2,500,000. The officials that have been retained must now work from 10 to 11 hours a day, in addition to doing the work of their dismissed colleagues. All this is the cause of tremendous

unrest even among the most loyal elements of petty officialdom. Thus the capitalist development and the total bankruptcy of the bourgeois democracy under the domination of the white dictatorship are working hard to develop and strengthen the objective factors for the coming revolution.

Of course, it cannot be predicted when and in what month the strongest tidal wave of the revolutionary movement will set in. In October there was an over-estimation of the revolutionary conditions, and such a mistake is more frequent than under-estimation in the history of revolutions, because the estimation of the situation is much influenced by subjective wishes. At all events, the situation in Germany, after the five years of struggle and after the failure of the last trump card of the democracy, unmistakably points to the imminence of a decisive solution. Even a temporary revival of capitalism would be unthinkable unless the working class should accept the realisation of the Stinnes programme without any resistance, which seems altogether unlikely, since it means such a terrible measure of enslavement and starvation for the working class.

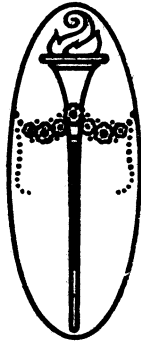
The aspect of the situation remains essentially the same as it was properly adjudged in October. The economic, social and national driving forces, which were at the bottom of the crisis that led to revolution, remain unaltered and have even much become accentuated. The Party must take this fully into consideration during the period of clarification, and base its attitude upon this situation. It must review its theoretical preparation and take stock of the October experiences, in order to overcome and obviate the admitted mistakes. The German Communists must learn once and for all that the revolution in Germany is no spontaneous act. In Germany, in the industrial districts in particular, it will be the outcome of a series of partial and single fights, of strikes and big economic fights, of demonstrations and armed conflicts, of huge mass strikes. The decisive fight for power will be the culmination of these desultory fights, the last gigantic wrestle which will bring about the proletarian dictatorship, as we have already said in the preceding chapters.

The tactics of the K.P.D. and all our attitude and preparations must be based on the assumption that the proletarian revolution in Germany will be a question of the very near future. Any other attitude would be a mistake even more fatal than the October defeat. It is the direct and most important task of the Communists to carry out all the preparations and to transform the K.P.D. into a well-disciplined

and courageous army of fighters. The education and enforcement of all these revolutionary duties and virtues within the revolutionary vanguard of Germany is now the most decisive task for all German Communists. The Communists the world over are watching with profound sympathy the struggle of the K.P.D. which is now wrestling and progressing under the domination of the white terror, under a rain of bullets, under a hail of blows which are showered upon them by the treacherous social-democracy from behind their backs. In this flame of the revolutionary process in Germany, the K.P.D. shall be welded into a mighty host which will lead the German proletariat to the victorious social revolution and carry the banner of the world revolution triumphantly westward.

H. REMMELE.

Translated by M. L. KORTCHMAR.



The Tactical Differences in the K.P.D.

(Continued from last issue.)

WE have already pointed out that "on the question of the workers' government" prominent leaders of the Party majority were "against at first," for they failed to realise that during the crisis of the Wirth Government this slogan was a good rallying cry. When they finally adopted this slogan under an entirely changed situation, the workers' government, at least theoretically, was described by them as something half-way between democracy and the proletarian dictatorship, a sort of missing link between the ape of democracy and the human species of the proletarian dictatorship. The biological notion was stoutly resented by the left, who laid principal stress on the fact that the question of workers' government was intimately connected with the question of power. It would be preposterous to deny the various stages which would have to pass before the final solution of this intricate question. We were backed by the statement of Comrade Zinoviev, who declared at the Fourth World Congress that the workers' government was another name for the proletarian dictatorship. Furthermore, knowing that the Fourth World Congress left the question of workers' government open on account of its intricacy, we can well afford to let pass the famous reproach of the majority theses in perfect calmness of spirit.

"In the question of programme, they were at first opposed to including any transitional demands in the programme; later on they voted for the inclusion of these demands, on condition that the civil war should be advanced to the foreground." The last-cited crime we committed because the civil war was for one reason or another omitted entirely in the draft programme of the C.C. (which was

“ unanimously ” approved in committee before the congress by the great majority of 24 votes against 23, while 13 of the 24 votes were those of the C.C.). Equally omitted were such planks as the role of the Communist Party in the revolution, the characterisation of the social-democracy, and many other things which should have been included in a Communist programme. We were of the opinion that the question of civil war was infinitely more important to our programme during the period of transition from democracy to proletarian dictatorship than the technical description of the war of 1914-18, which was drawn by the author of the draft programme with a lavish display of phantasy and colour, if with little real knowledge of the technical side of the subject. With regard to the charge that the left “ were at first opposed to including any of the transitional demands in the programme,” we find comfort in the fact that this crime was committed not only by the poor stupid left in Germany (of course, the allegation is false in itself), but this standpoint was practically represented at the Fourth Congress by so eminent a theoretician as Comrade Bukharin. If the question were not difficult, the Fourth Congress would have adopted a programme. The authors of the majority theses, and the aforesaid 24 comrades would surely have rushed through such a programme by “ taking a vote ” as they did with their “ theoretical ” theses at Leipsic, without even submitting them to an editing committee. On the other hand, the left-wing thought the question of the programme too important to be treated in such frivolous manner.

“ In the development of the tactical line of the Party they see a source of opportunism, they fear the new economic policy of Russia.”

It is often claimed by spokesmen of the Party majority that the formulæ of the Leipsic theses are “ agitational formulæ for the masses outside of the K.P.D.” One should examine the above-quoted sentence for its agitational defect! All jokes aside, what reproaches are made in this connection? The first reproach is groundless, because Comrade Zinoviev for instance, in his first theses on the tactics of the united front, emphasised the dangers of opportunist deviations in the application of these tactics. These dangers exist not only in our imagination, or “ in consequence ” of our warnings, but they are grounded in the general intricacy of the political situation. It is not a source of “ opportunism,” but of opportunist dangers, which could be obviated if they were known. The ostrich policy, as adopted in the “ criticism ” of the left elements, enhances these dangers. As far as one can see, the authors of these reproaches do not be-

lieve the Party possesses sufficient strength to remove these dangers if they should be openly and clearly stated.

The second reproach may be described as simply foolish. The new economic policy of Russia is considered by some comrades (such we find only among the majority) as a sort of divinity which should be invoked throughout Europe, and even **before the conquest of power**. This is the standpoint that was stoutly resented by the left-wing of the Party. The fact that the new economic policy, *of course*, has its dangers, which should be known, was pointed out by prominent Russian comrades hundreds of times. Our Russian comrades have told us that the new economic policy contains nothing mystical, but is merely a trial of strength between the proletarian class and peasantry of Russia and the remarkable new sprouts of a "capitalism" which is not. We have every reason to feel confident that the proletariat will come out on top. But the authors of the majority theses consider it a crime if one just raises the question.

"The left disguise partly their passivity with phrases, advocating a hazy sort of left-ism and intensifying the feeling against the leadership within the Party, to further their own ends. In this manner these comrades have deliberately and considerably weakened the centralism, the discipline and the confidence of the membership towards the leading instances of the Party."

These doubtful compliments were presumably got up as "effective agitational" watchwords. Let us examine these statements one by one. A while ago this mood of the left was described as "opportunism," now it is softened into "passivity," while on the other hand the erstwhile **political** formulæ of the left were turned into "phrases." This is a transformation trick which no juggler could have carried out with better effect, if it were not so clumsy. The left "advocated a hazy left-ism!" This is the most ridiculous reproach that any majority could charge against a minority, and the authors of the theses seem to forget that the C.C. is located at the strongest left organisation of Berlin, where it had all the opportunities to counteract the "propaganda of hazy left-ism" by presenting a clear statement of the Communist line and of the inspiring Communist deeds of the C.C. Again we are charged with agitation against the leaders. But this charge is not substantiated by any facts. On the contrary, the sentiment against the leaders (in the K.P.D. as in the entire proletarian movement in Germany) is not confined merely to the left elements.

The C.C. is evidently unaware of the dangerous anti-leader sentiment which is widespread in the Party as a whole. They were apparently so preoccupied with denouncing the left agitators in their theses that they failed to see the strong centralism enforced by the left organisation of Berlin, and the energy with which it overcame the anti-leader sentiment and turned it into wholesome political opposition. The reproach of "using this sentiment for their own ends" does not hit the opposition. What are these "ends"? It would be simply scandalous to expose some dark, sinister aims, while refraining from exposing and expelling those who pursued such aims as are detrimental to the Party. On a similar level is the charge of weakening the centralism and the discipline of the Party. The left are quite right in asserting that this statement of the majority theses is nothing but a gross attempt on the part of the leaders of the majority to denounce and discredit at all costs the leaders of the organisations that opposed them. It is a method which the Party and the International must repudiate as a dangerous double-edged weapon for the dissolution of the Party. The passages quoted by us from the majority theses are simply scandalous to the Party and should be eliminated as quickly as possible.

The Saxon Experiment and its Lessons.

(Written in the beginning of November, 1923.)

I.

Facts speak louder than the most bombastic claims and promises. Facts will have the last say in all prolonged and protracted discussions. Facts compel a revision of tactics and strategy. Facts thus compel the raising of old questions which seemed disposed of for the time.

The fiasco of the Saxon Government experiment compels the K.P.D. and the whole Communist International to start a re-examination of all the old questions. This is urged by the facts, not by the good or bad intentions of individual comrades or groups.

What are these facts? They are the following :

(1) The Communist Party of Germany send early in October two representatives (properly speaking, they were three) into the Saxon government, into the government of the same Herr Zeigner whose *whole* policy was played into the hands of the counter-revolution.

(2) Actual authority in Saxony, as in the rest of the empire, is wielded by a military dictator. Such was the state of affairs before, during and after the existence of the Social-Democratic-Communist Government.

(3) The Communists join the Saxon government **unconditionally**; because the "condition of forming a united front against reaction" is not a condition, but a mere figure of speech.

(4) The entry of the Communists into the government does not effect the least change in the economic and political situation of Saxony. The government does not dismiss a single official nor arm a single proletarian organisation, nor arrest a single counter-revolutionary, nor confiscate any bit of property. Actual changes are effected only by the invasion of the Reichswehr, by the imprisonment and shooting of radical workers by the military authorities.

(5) The entry of the Communists into the government does not change the relations of the latter towards the proletariat. For the Zeigner Government had already previously described itself as a "government of the toiling masses." The new "government of proletarian defence" relies **solely on Parliament**, on its ministers, including the Communist members of the cabinet, and consistently emphasises its "constitutionalism," while the language and activity of this government are not in the least different from those of any other Social-Democratic government.

(6) When it becomes clear that the military dictator and the Stresemann Government would attack the Saxon government, the latter undertakes nothing in self-defence. The Communist ministers at the Chemnitz conference go so far as to propose, instead of the general strike, the appointment of a "parity committee to discuss" the question of "proclaiming" the general strike. This proposal was made after a speech by Minister Graupe, who opposed the general strike motion made by Brandler, and was carried by a majority of 11 votes to 10.

(7) The Communist ministers, far from using the proper language of agitation, emphasise merely the weakness and incapacity of the government with whom they share responsibility, and on the other hand they appeal to their **class enemies** in the Landtag in the following words: "Do not play any longer with the patience of the German working class; **otherwise (!!)** the German working class will be **compelled (!!)** to accept the challenge which you have thrown

out to them (speech by Minister Boettcher on the 17th October, published in the *Volksmacht* on October 20th).

(8) At a moment when 60,000 Reichwehr troops are concentrated in Saxony, the Communist ministers take no steps whatever, either with the government or on their own account, (*e.g.*, to arrest the military and civil commissars, to call for a general strike), **nor do they quit the government**, in which case the responsibility would be left entirely to the sabotaging "left" Social-Democratic ministers.

(9) The Reichswehr simply and easily disperses the government and does not even find it necessary to arrest the "dangerous" Communists, making no mistake about the effect of their step.

(10) Neither in Saxony nor elsewhere do the workers react upon the dispersion of the "government of proletarian defence." Even a three-day protest strike could not be carried out in Saxony.

These are ten facts which are **indisputable**. The lessons should **at last** be drawn from these facts, which were already plainly visible to anyone who wished to see. Obviously in this connection one has to point out in the first place the **mistakes** that were committed. It goes without saying that these mistakes must be stated **unreservedly** and **outspokenly**. In order that these mistakes, which were not accidental mistakes, may be avoided in the future, it is necessary to establish the **causes** which originated them.

II.

What could be the sole purpose for Communists joining the government of a state?

It could be a twofold one. First, under the tense revolutionary situation in Germany, amid sharp antagonism and conflicts between the classes, to establish a certain point of concentration, *e.g.*, in Saxony, whence the class war was to spread and to extend to the rest of the country.

Secondly, **militarily**, to fortify this chosen strategical point already before the outbreak of hostilities if possible, or at least in the course of these (by the arming of proletarian hundreds and by the forming of red squads); **politically**, to create a centre for the armed revolutionary movement (by forming a Soviet dictatorship for the defence of "Red Saxony"); **ideologically** and **organisationally**, to mobilise the masses in the rest of Germany from this chosen strategi-

cal point ("All Power to the Soviets!" "as in Saxony," military alliance with Thuringia and Northern Germany).

None of these things happened. On the contrary, it was at this very point that the reaction successfully demonstrated its own slogan: "all power to the generals." How did this come about?

In the first place, it was clearly due to mistakes committed in the estimation of our own forces as well as of the enemy. Secondly, fatal mistakes must also have been committed in the carrying out of the strategical plan. These mistakes are partly tangible. Let us analyse the indisputable facts which we enumerated above.

(1) What was the government of Herr Zeigner? It was **objectively counter-revolutionary** and dangerous, because it was a parliamentary government based on illusions, which, notwithstanding all its figures of speech, served as a cloak for the frankly counter-revolutionary policy of the imperial government, which used its police **solely** against the workers, which failed to secure its bearings among the masses, regardless of all external "successes" (at meetings), successes for which the K.P.D. is essentially to blame (because it **supported** this government instead of overthrowing it after the first murder of workers). This government of empty phrase and counter-revolutionary politics existed by the grace of the K.P.D., maintaining the appearance of an "almost revolutionary" government and forming the mainstay of a clique of party officials of the S.P.D. who turned "leftward" to humour the sentiment of the masses. The fact that the masses were **in reality** entirely out of sympathy with this government was demonstrated by the pitiful end of the Social-Democratic-Communist Zeigner Government. Its end found no echo in the proletarian masses, and the new government continues now to work with the same "right" people (Lipinski, Fleissner) who had presumably been ousted by the S.P.D. workers.

What was the estimate taken by the K.P.D. of this government and of its relations to the masses? There was continuous and insistent propaganda about "Red Saxony," about the "proletarian bulwark," nay even about the "only" proletarian bulwark, and all this Communist praise was not accorded to the Saxon proletariat at large, but to the Zeigner Government, which we were to support on account of its alleged qualities.

It was still worse that the K.P.D. failed to see how by our tactics we were actually creating a bulwark for the counter-revolution in Saxony. Our support has helped the consolidation of the S.P.D. in Saxony. It has strengthened the so-called "left" wing led by a numerous Centrist bureaucracy which has accidentally learned the art of political juggling. It is quite true that a great many S.P.D. workers, and even whole organisations, are in revolutionary mood. But the policy of the K.P.D. in respecting persistently the "left" of the S.P.D. has caused the S.P.D. workers to feel reassured that the state of affairs in the S.P.D. of Saxony was not so bad as elsewhere. The S.P.D. in Saxony has hardly lost any of its membership, while the K.P.D. has hardly made any appreciable gains up to September. On the other hand, certain organisations of the S.P.D. had increased their membership up to September (*e.g.*, at Dresden) while certain organisations of the K.P.D. (Leipic) were marking time, if not decreasing. (In September there were in Saxony about 130,000 Social-Democrats and 30,000 Communists.)

It was still worse that responsible members of the Party deceived themselves, as well as the Party and the Communist International, with the most unfounded illusions about the strength of the revolutionary movement in Saxony. The movement of the hundreds was painted in the most roseate hues. For more than a year there was talk about "ousting the clique of right leaders," whereas it was only in the last weeks of October that the clique of right leaders was ousted from the district committee even at Chemnitz (for how long?) Even Berlin, where the whole apparatus of the S.P.D. is located, proved more progressive.

Little wonder then that the K.P.D. deceived itself and the Communist International about the "anchoring" of the Zeigner Government in the masses. If such deception was the case, and this was demonstrated by the creation of the Fellisch-Lepinski Government, then the whole question must be raised point-blank whether it was at all permissible to support this government or to join it unconditionally.

(2) What was the actual correlation of forces at the moment when the Communists joined the Saxon Government? In the empire, the military dictatorship of Seeckt. In Bavaria, unrestricted fascist dictatorship. In Saxony, dictatorship of the military commissar. Could the force of General Mueller be broken in Saxony? Yes, it could under the following conditions: mass mobilisation of the working

class (general strike), imprisonment of the General by armed workers' guards, **immediate transfer of authority to the workers' councils**, mass mobilisation of the workers throughout the empire.

Under such circumstances there could be only one reason for the Communists to join the government, namely to proceed vigorously with the execution of that strategical plan which alone could justify a "coalition" with the Social-Democrats.

But nothing of the kind happened. Neither were the masses mobilised (whether **before** joining, which was all "engineered" behind the curtain and was not backed by the movement of the masses, or **after** joining) nor were there any armed forces available to arrest the General or to give any possible support to a government by the **class organs** of the proletariat, i.e., by the Soviets and red guards.

Why these things did not happen we shall know presently, when describing the **facts**.

(3) What were the conditions on which the Communists joined the government? **None at all**. Only a year ago the K.P.D. had adopted an extremely moderate programme of ten points, without which there seemed to be no possibility of joining the government. In 1923 it contented itself with the ridiculous and agitationally ineffective phrase about "creating a united front against reaction." But no united front is created by joining a powerless government! **The united front is created by the formation of united armed red guards and by consolidating the revolutionary workers in Soviets**. All other talk is nothing but dangerous, illusory Menshevist phrases.

Furthermore, the excuse that the preparations for the formation or for the arming of the "united front" (can there be such an one without the proper organs and organisation?) had to be kept "secret" from the enemy is essentially a deceptive and dangerous Menshevist figure of speech. At a moment of open civil war the "creation of the united front" takes place through the **open** creation of Soviets and through the arming of the proletariat.

Nothing of the kind was contemplated. The miserable "government of proletarian defence" could not even create the platonic "united front against reaction"; it did not dare to rely on the revolutionary organs of the masses, on

the hundreds and control committees which became "legalised" at the formation of the Zeigner Government, and to protect them against the General.

The "government of proletarian defence" did not even bring a state of **dual government** in Saxony: the "governing" (i.e., the acting) was done by Mueller, the talking was done by the "government."

(4) This government has not accomplished one single act that could be appreciated by the masses.* This is not to be wondered at, since it had no governmental apparatus and did not create one. The old bureaucratic apparatus of the State was naturally at the sole disposal of the General. Hitherto it used to be the sole notion of the Mensheviks that they could "govern" during a period of civil war by substituting the heads without overhauling the whole of the governmental apparatus.

Neither did the government undertake any steps to remove the governmental apparatus in Saxony when it was found uncontrollable. Its "governing" consisted of mere talk.

(5) It could not be any otherwise. In order to make use of the government apparatus (*e.g.*, to arm the proletariat) it was necessary to put proletarian leaders at decisive posts in that apparatus (*e.g.*, arsenal officers, superior customs officials, higher officers in the ministries). But such an operation would have been tantamount to a complete tearing down of the old apparatus, and this could be reasonable only if a new proletarian one was to be put in its place, or at least contemplated.

As things went on, the proletarian masses could not feel any change at all. Radical speeches could not satisfy them, whether delivered by Zeigner and Graupe, or by Brandler, Boettcher and Heckert. Promises of Russian bread might have won the confidence of the masses if the government had confiscated and distributed food supplies in dictatorial fashion. The title of "government of proletarian defence" might have been taken seriously if the government had, at least by palliatives, *e.g.*, confiscation of residences, shown an earnest of its intentions to the masses. Nothing of the kind happened. The government sought no contact with the masses, it did nothing that might have

* With one exception, to wit: the plan to compensate the former royal dynasty with 14 million gold marks and the possession of the best mansions and estates.

caused the masses to say: "Yes, this is our government." In a word, it was the old Zeigner government, with the difference that a few Communist ministers gave a somewhat more radical tone to the old phraseology of Zeigner.

(6) This government proved even less capable of self-defence than the former Zeigner government, and the workers had even less respect for it.

The fact is that the Chemnitz conference called by Graupe, Boettcher and Heckert (which the Communist press advertised as a "workers' congress") has turned out to be one of the most fatal political defeats of the K.P.D. For here it was no longer a question of the government, but of the proletariat of Saxony that was menaced with a white-guard attack. Comrade Brandler made the absolutely proper motion for the preparation of the general strike. Did he make that motion as a representative of the K.P.D. or of the government? His "colleague" Graupe, true to his role as Social-Democratic leader, *i.e.*, as counter-revolutionary, and Social-Democratic minister, *i.e.*, as double counter-revolutionary, opposed this motion. **What was to be done by the Communist leaders, who were "ministers" at the same time?** It was their duty to expose immediately before the "workers' congress" the counter-revolutionary role of the "left" Social-Democratic lackeys of the bourgeoisie and to insist upon their absolutely proper motion for the general strike, without fearing a break with the "left" Social-Democratic leaders, who would at all times range themselves deliberately on the side of the enemy in any decisive situation, and every Communist ought to know this. But our ministers acted differently. They promptly accepted a "compromise" which virtually meant the dropping of the general strike, *i.e.*, objective treason to the working class. They withdrew behind the curtain to do their bargaining and came back with a "proposal," without informing the Communist faction of the conference, which proposal was almost rejected. This shows that **at least one-half of the delegates would have voted for the general strike.** It shows further that at least part of the Communist faction must have voted **against** the proposal made by their "leaders." It shows also that the Communist leaders, by their attitude, **saved** once again the Graupe clique from a desertion by the workers. If it is madness, then there must be madness in the "method," in the method of the tactics of the K.P.D. as practiced in Saxony during the last 18 months.

(7) Furthermore, every worker who accepted the Com-

munist entry into the government without criticism, in view of the great prestige of the K.P.D. as the only revolutionary party in Germany, would have expected surely that the Communist leaders would at least express in speech their opposition and relentless class hatred against the bourgeoisie. Nothing of the kind! Nothing but whining by Communist ministers (at receptions of workers' delegations) about the powerlessness of the Government. This is poor pedagogy. If one wants to mobilise the masses and to tell them that they are the principal actors, not the ministers, then one must not go on lamenting about the powerlessness of the government, which was joined not in order to whine, but to act. The average worker snaps his fingers at powerless ministers. "If you cannot do anything, what do you want to sit in ministerial chairs for?" asks the average worker. And on the strength of his experience with the numerous S.P.D. officials who once worked at the bench with him and to-day are the hired flunkeys of the bourgeoisie, he says to himself: "It seems after all that the Communist ministers are also after the fat "ministerial screws." It is a crude way of putting it, but it would be ostrich policy to overlook what the average worker would think.

And he will be confirmed in his resentment of leaders on listening to speeches like those of Boettcher, who tells the knaves of the bourgeois minority in the Saxon Landtag not to "play any longer with the patience of the working class," because **otherwise** (!!) the working class would be "compelled" to do the very things which it is the duty of the same Boettcher to lead them to, even if the knavish bourgeois deputies in the Landtag should vote with both hands for "confiscation" of all values, six-hour day and universal compulsory labour, hoping in this manner to escape the revolution.

(8) And the same Communist ministers who were so persistent in their protestations of "loyalty to the constitution" (this alone was enough to arouse the anger of every revolutionary worker who cannot see the possibility of achieving the proletarian dictatorship within the bounds of the Weimar Constitution) did not lift a finger when the Reichswehr marched into Saxony "in complete defiance of the constitution" and treated the "government of proletarian defence" as a bunch of lazy flunkeys. But perhaps the Communist ministers were **unable** to do anything? Then at least, if they could not or would not arouse the masses, it was their duty to overthrow the miserable governmental coalition. Instead of which they kept to their

perches and went on twittering their old song, expecting to be seized any moment, not like Communists who fight, but like Tolstoyans who do not resist evil.

But Seeckt and Mueller had no further use for our parrots, and they simply kicked them out of their seats, thus ending a piece of tomfoolery which will yet be the source of many tragic moments and bloody sacrifices to the German working classes.

No government has as yet succeeded in more miserable fashion: even the Kerensky people were *arrested*, even the baker's dozen of German monarchs were *compelled* to sign their abdications from their little thrones in 1918. Our Saxon "representatives of the proletariat" were simply kicked out of office.

(10) Not a single cock crowed to lament the downfall of the government. Not in one of the large cities in Saxony did the workers respond to the call for a three-days' "protest strike" ordered by the Communists to commemorate the end of the folly. The episode is closed, and *all* the consequences are now to be drawn.

III.

The chief mistakes committed by the K.P.D. in the course of the Saxon experiment were precisely the same that had been pointed out by the minority at the Leipsic conference in January, 1923, and also before and after that conference. These mistakes consist chiefly of the following:

(1) Of superficial, partly well-coloured and partly impressionistic, but always unrealistic, analysis of the situation; of the evasion of any attempt at a serious analysis and estimate of the existing correlation of forces.

(2) Of a *wrong* although unavowed *revisionist* attitude upon the question of the conquest of power, of government and of State, and particularly of proletarian government.

(3) Of a *wrong* although unavowed *revisionist* conception of the rôle of the C.P. in the revolution, coupled with a *wrong* view of our attitude towards the Social-Democrats, particularly towards their "left" wing.

These three mistakes are clearly interdependent.

How did the leaders of the K.P.D. view the situation in Germany as late as the end of September, just a few days before the proclamation of the military dictatorship? *No*

clear stand was taken. On the one hand, a great deal was spoken and written about the bankruptcy of the big coalition; on the other hand, little was said about the possible consequences, on the basis of the analysis and views of the K.P.D. The prevailing "view" seemed to be that the "governments" in Germany would succeed each other in mysterious fashion, and that the next stable government (desirable to the K.P.D., save the mark)! would be an imperial government made up of "left Social-Democratic trade unionists."

How this prophecy could be harmonised with the bankruptcy of the S.P.D. that was shouted from the housetops, and with the existing and undisputed acuteness of the food crisis and of class antagonism, is a mystery that might be unravalled by the gods and by our profound analysts. At all events, the proclamation of the military dictatorship was an eloquent repudiation of their evolutionary theory of government.

Nevertheless, the brutal fascist attack did not entirely relieve the leaders of our Party of their pompous self-deception about the strength and fighting ability of the Party, nor of their unfounded assurance of the readiness of the proletariat, particularly in Saxony, to engage in decisive fights. It must be said at the outset that the situation in Germany towards the end of September was such that if the K.P.D. were ready to fight for power, the opportunity was rather unique. But the **K.P.D. was not ready to fight for power, nor is it to-day.**

This is the profound, tragic, contradiction in the German situation, which one must comprehend with perfect clearness to avoid any repetition of past mistakes.

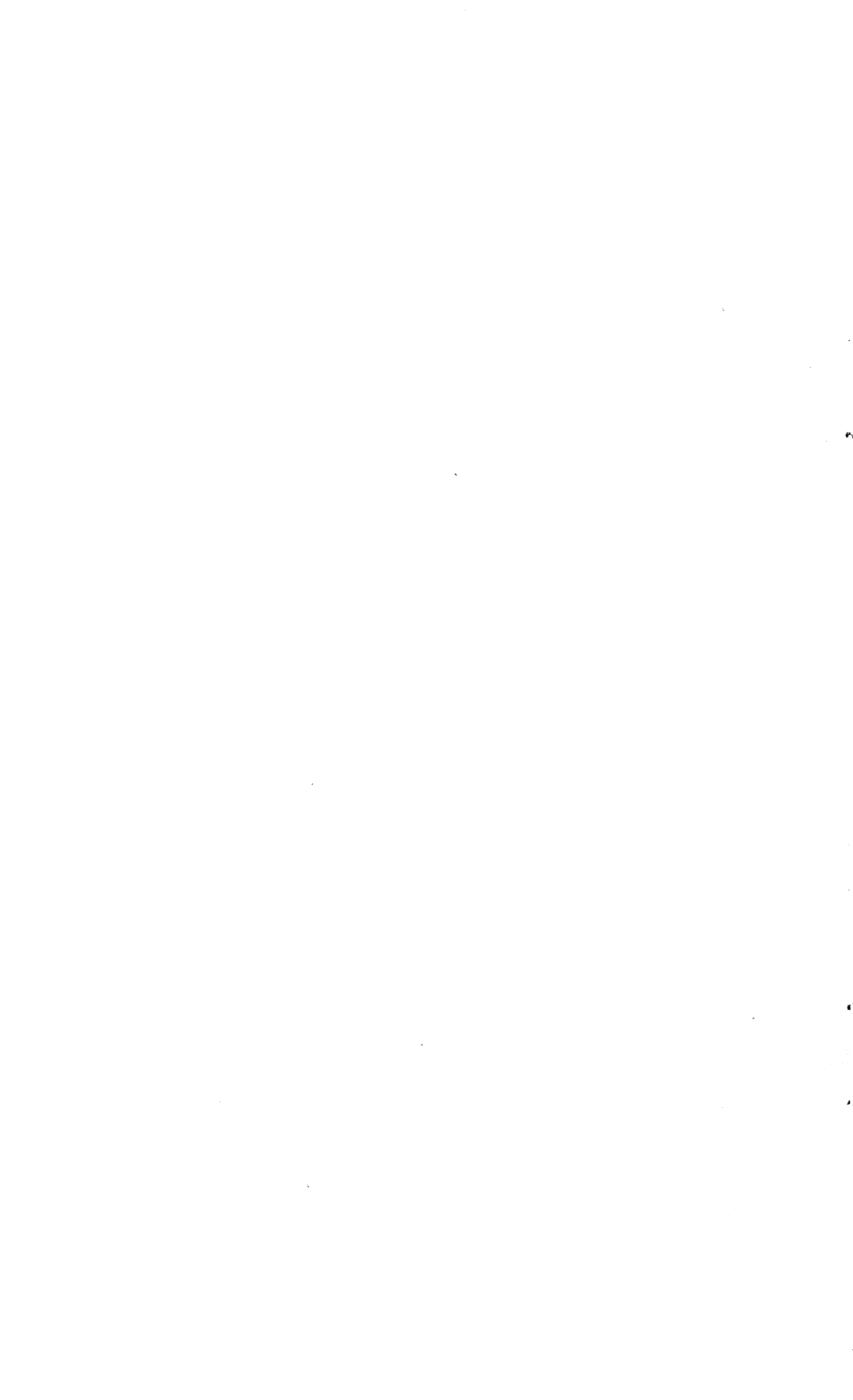
Furthermore, in this judgment about the "preparedness" of the Party and about the Saxon policy of the Party, there exists a **contradiction** which cannot be interpreted otherwise than as a wrong, dangerous, opportunist attitude upon the question of the conquest of power, which will prove fatal to the German revolution in connection with the rough-and-ready "analysis" of the situation, if not checked and discarded in time.

To turn once more to the Saxon example.

For what purpose might Communists join a workers' and peasants' government? Only in order **to inaugurate the fight for the conquest of power throughout the empire**, in the course of which the S.P.D., the right as well as the left, would have to be unmasked and eliminated **in the process**



LENIN AMONGST THE PEASANTS DURING HIS ILLNESS.



of the fight, and the masses would be mobilised entirely under the leadership of the K.P.D. and under the slogan of the "workers' government" (the term of "workers' and peasants' government" would be sheer nonsense in Saxony, which is a typical industrial country).

Nevertheless, the **actual attitude** of the K.P.D. has shown that an entirely different view of things existed in the minds of those who were to carry out this great strategical manoeuvre.

First, as to the correlation of forces. In Saxony, in spite of all assurances to the contrary, the K.P.D. is weak and the S.P.D. is strong. This does not mean to say that the correlation might not change in the course of a big fight. But in the absence of the big fight the C.P. in Saxony would be overwhelmed by the persisting strength of the S.P. This was demonstrated particularly painfully and clearly during the big strike in August, when at Chemnitz, the stronghold of the Communist organisation, a majority could not be obtained in favour of the strike.

Furthermore, in order to bring about a change in the correlation in the course of a revolutionary situation, the sabotaging phrase-mongers of the left S.P.D. must be **relentlessly** exposed by the K.P.D. As a matter of fact, the K.P.D. persistently supported the latter, even at **decisive moments** (at the Chemnitz conference).

Secondly, as to the question of government. It is nothing but **reformism** to maintain that a bourgeois democratic state machine could be overcome (or "made use of," to use a more prudent expression) by merely changing its heads. This brand of reformism was formulated by Comrade Brandler at a noted meeting of the C.C. (on the utilisation of the bourgeois state by the proletariat), and it is entirely identical with the view propounded by the same Comrade Brandler in full earnest, that the proletarian dictatorship might be attained "within the bounds of the Weimar Constitution." This view was "tested" in Saxony with the results which we know already.

Thirdly, as to the question of the conquest of power. The Saxon example has shown that this question was wrongly treated by the Party in many respects. Apart from the fatal short-sightedness of the analysis of the actual correlation of forces, it was entirely wrong to assume that a mass movement would be started by the formation of a "government" (which is really **no** government, since it does not govern). Besides, it was shown by experience that the industrial workers would

never consider a government (even if ever so loudly advertised as a workers' government) as their very own unless it was **won** by themselves and unless it was responsible to them. Finally, the old truth was demonstrated afresh that the masses would decidedly hold aloof and remain indifferent towards a government that did not distinguish itself from its predecessors by **actual accomplishments** (one should not be deceived by the vast amount of paper resolutions: not a single factory engaged in earnest fighting on behalf of this government in spite of all the resolution).

Fourthly, as to the question of coalition with the S.P.D. It was demonstrated by facts, as against all the ideas propounded in numerous theses, that a government of the parliamentary type, even if formed exclusively by representatives of "left" labour parties ("left" S.P.D. and K.P.D.) under a revolutionary situation, does not constitute the capture of power, and is merely a house of cards which can only compromise the K.P.D., if it will not come out into the open with its expression of the greatest mistrust and assurance of the betrayal of their colleagues in the coalition. The documents to prove this betrayal should be carefully gathered, and the K.P.D. should create its organs **outside of parliament** and thus be able, after unmasking the partners of the coalition, to oust the latter and to take the power as the K.P.D.

IV.

We now turn to the lessons to be drawn from the mistakes which have been but briefly outlined here, and which were more exhaustively dealt with in the minority theses of the Leipsic conference, in the theses submitted by the Berlin organisation to the C.C. in August this year and in the September theses of the Berlin Committee which we reproduce below.

These lessons may be summarised under three heads:

(1) The K.P.D. alone can, must and will conduct revolutionary fights in Germany. No group of the S.P.D. will do this. No one disputes that S.P.D. workers will fight for the revolution. But he who still clings to the illusion that any of the wings or groups of the S.P.D. would fight "in a united revolutionary front" with the K.P.D., **cripples the desire of the Party for power and retards the development of the revolution.**

(2) There is no longer any objective possibility for intermediate forms of government in Germany. The

strategy and tactics, the propaganda and agitation of the K.P.D. must be centred on the establishment of the **proletarian dictatorship** as the **immediate** aim. This means that the Party must make good its tremendous delay in transforming the factory councils' movement into a **conscious Soviet movement**, arousing the masses of the proletariat, and first of all the workers in our own Party, awakening the class-consciousness of the proletariat in every word that is spoken and written by the K.P.D. The K.P.D. must feel, and imbue others with the same feeling, that it is strong enough and must be strong enough to take power **alone** and to exercise it through the **dictatorship**, that the K.P.D. is the only party which will lead the workers to power.

(3) But the K.P.D. will never lead the masses into the fight for power if it should fail to agitate day by day and popularise among the masses the **rescue programme of the Communists**, *i.e.*, the outline of simple measures that can and must be carried out immediately after the capture of power. These measures should be stated in terms understandable to the widest masses (nationalisation of the industries, of banking and foreign trade, expropriation of the large landowners, confiscation of food stores, luxurious residences, etc., a proletarian reparations programme, an alliance with Russia, aid to the perishing middle-class by means of co-operative societies, state credits, and so on) and in opposition to the slogans of confiscation of real values to the extent of "so many per cent." or of "workers' and peasants' government," which is not a dictatorship.

These are substantially the lessons furnished by the Saxon experiment.

This experiment has undoubtedly given a **set-back to the Party**. It has undoubtedly **discredited** the K.P.D. It has undoubtedly contributed to a great victory of fascism.

Our memory turns back to the campaign of the International after the March action. But the mistake of the March action consisted of the fact that a young and zealous revolutionary party took a wrong estimate of the situation and of its own forces.

The mistake of the Saxon bankruptcy consisted of the fact that a party, which was no longer young, **has underestimated** the revolutionary situation, has failed to apply its own force, has considered the S.P.D. as a revolutionary or revolutionising party, and has committed an error in its view upon the question of the capture of power, and a double error upon the solution thereof.

By these mistakes we must learn, and it is the duty of the Communist International to help the K.P.D. to learn **as quickly as possible**. For the situation in Germany is such that the K.P.D. may be called upon to-morrow to lead in the final fight for power. If it should fail again, then woe betide the German revolution.

Concluding Remarks.

The facts have shown, and precisely in the places **predicted** by the minority, through the eruption of the Party's defeat in the politics of Saxony, that the criticisms and warnings of the opposition were **fully** justified. The "governmental politics" as carried on in Saxony might have spelt the death of the K.P.D. The main thing is not that Communist ministers indulged exclusively in reformist speeches, in a weak-kneed and almost comical attitude. The main trouble is that they were guided entirely by the theses of the Leipzig conference which still **hold good** to-day, and that the disease is so deeply seated in the Party that even now, after the fiasco of the whole policy, even after Saxony, we are still afraid to come out into the open and admit the detrimental nature of these policies.

If the K.P.D. wants to remain a revolutionary party, it should be impressed upon every member of the Party that even to-day the Party, such as it is, must be prepared to assume full power. The Party has been so trained, at least during the last two years, that this very idea will scare numerous comrades ("how we 'alone' should assume power? But we are far too weak for that!"). This consciousness of the Party can be made vital by a clear definition of our attitude towards the Social-Democrats, the left as well as the right. The deadly enemy of the proletariat is the social-democracy. This enemy must be crushed. Judging by the past performances of the present leadership of the K.P.D., one is justified in doubting whether they would be able now to carry out these tasks, however loudly they may protest their willingness to do so. This fight against the S.P.D. will tax all our strength, because it is not to be a fight on the long-suffering paper (mostly prohibited) of our party press, but it must be waged through the real **fighting class organs** of the proletariat, the Soviets, which the Party is still slow in organising, because it is still incapable of instilling the breath of life into the factory council movement. It cannot lead in the present fights, because no one in Germany knows to-day what the Communists are precisely fighting for. As long as the Party has announced no clear, simple

and popular programme of action that could be understood by the wide masses of the population as the **rescue programme**, the Communist Party may call itself such without being one. The next task of the Communist Party would be to organise and lead the masses into the fight for this programme.

Along with modification of **ideology**, there must be also a quick readjustment of the methods of organisation within and without the Party.

The Leipsic Conference must be liquidated. It was a misfortune for the K.P.D.

This liquidation can be effected only by a new conference of the Party, but such a conference would be useless, and even harmful and dangerous, if not convened for the purpose of **consolidation and concentration**. In order to arrange for such a conference, **every** organisation must thoroughly and frankly discuss the mistakes that have been committed, and the new tasks which are to constitute the common programme of action.

Much must be changed by way of organisation. The Party is fairly young, but it is *already* contaminated with bureaucratism. The C.C. is far too large and unwieldy. The Central Committee is a body which in no way reflects the Party. The practice of centralism was a mere *caricature* of centralism: a weak, wavering and confused leadership, in its fear of criticism, marked its "strong man" and allowed **no discussion upon any question**, regardless of any existing differences of opinion.

This policy must be done away with. This will happen when the C.C. learns to gain the confidence of the membership by carrying out a clear policy. The Central Committee will be worthy of the name of its members, will endeavour to find out the wishes of the membership of their respective districts (after the clearing) *before* every conference, and report to the membership of their districts on their doings *after* the conference. Bureaucratism will cease when the leadership is less afraid of the voice of the membership and less confident about the wonderful effect of their all too numerous richly embellished and persistently contradictory circulars, and when branch secretaries will be dismissed if they persist in their stereotyped reports: "All instructions splendidly carried out; everything in best shape." In order to maintain close contact with the Executive, the C.C. must have proper representation in accordance with the importance of the Party (from the personal standpoint), and it should get rid of the habit, just like the district secretaries, of turning

out such reports that are based rather on imagination than on analysis or on faithful description.

If these indispensable measures are not carried out *quickly*, the K.P.D. will go under. We shall carry out these measures, because we do not wish to go under, but to come out victorious.

Berlin, 12th Sept., 1923.

RESOLUTION.

(1) The German proletariat is confronted with decisive fights. The German bourgeoisie is on the eve of surrender. This confronts the German revolution with the gigantic peril of the dismemberment of Germany, of the suppression of every revolution movement by the united forces of the German and Entente bourgeoisie, and of the *Austrianisation* of Germany.

(2) This peril can only be removed by the German revolution, which will give to the proletariat **the full power in Germany.**

(3) If the revolutionary proletariat of Germany should not be strong enough to frustrate the plans of the bourgeoisie, European reaction will take aggressive action also against **Soviet Russia.**

(4) **The K.P.D. is the only party in Germany that is capable of leading in the revolutionary fight.**

(5) Therefore, the idea must be brought home to every member of the Party that :

(a) the Party must work *directly* for the capture of power ;

(b) the K.P.D. shall be the *bearer of the dictatorship* of the proletariat ;

(c) the K.P.D., as a proletarian organisation, is *strong enough* to carry out the task entrusted to it by history.

(6) In accordance with the present situation, the tactics must be such as to bring home to the consciousness of the widest masses :

(a) the necessity of overthrowing the bourgeoisie ;

(b) the necessity of establishing the proletarian dictatorship;

(c) the necessity for the *sole leadership* of the K.P.D.

(7) The conquest of power in Germany depends to a deciding degree upon the closest possible union of the revolutionary proletariat with :

(a) the toiling rural population, and

(b) the middle classes of the cities.

(8) In order to win the aforesaid elements, the Party must use its definite slogans for the daily struggle (control of production, control of prices, workers' and peasants' government).

(9) At the same time the Party must not stay upon these transitional slogans, but must **right now engage in popular propaganda for its programme for the day after the conquest of power.**

(10) This programme must include the necessary economic, political and military measures, and so on. It must :

(a) take a concrete view of the international situation as created by the accomplished revolution (alliance with Russia, defence against reaction, proletarian reparations policy);

(b) outline clearly the necessary measures of nationalisation (banks, leading industries);

(c) demonstrate to the middle classes, employees, technicians, physicians, small peasants, small traders, etc., that only after the revolution they will stand a chance of a tolerable existence;

(d) contain the social measures that are to be carried out immediately (distribution of dwellings, care of children, and so on);

(e) outline the measures of defence against counter-revolution.

(11) To the petty-bourgeois elements who entertain nationalist ideas the national role of the German revolution must be pointed out.

(12) For the purpose of ideological as well as organisational preparation for the conquest of power, the Party must promote the factory councils movement **with far greater rigour than heretofore** and systematically accelerate the

transformation of the factory councils into workers' councils (Soviets). Factory councils and control committees must be organised through the length and breadth of the empire.

(13) It must be brought home to the consciousness of the largest masses that the organs for the liberation of the labouring population are the councils, and that the councils are **the organs of the coming proletarian state. This is the principal propagandist task for the Party until the conquest of power.** The fighting means of the revolutionary proletariat are: demonstrations, political mass strikes, armed rebellion.

(14) The hundreds movement and the question of arming should be pushed to the foreground even more than heretofore.

(15) In connection with the transitional slogans as well as with the programme of the revolutionary government of the victorious proletariat, a beginning must be made right now, even before the conquest of power, to carry out in practice the programme of the victorious revolution. Therefore, in connection with lockouts and sabotage, the idea must be cultivated: we stay in the factories, we continue production, we regulate production. This idea should be spread among the masses of the workers in town and country.

(16) The greatest obstacle to the speedy consummation of the revolution are the reformist trade union bureaucracy and the S.P.D.

(17) The fight against the S.P.D. must be waged with increased vigour:

(a) against the right S.P.D., as a fight against the big coalition and the barefaced betrayal of the workers, and

(b) against the so-called *left* S.P.D., who mislead by their radical phrases and are therefore **more dangerous than the right.** This should be done by means of concrete questions to workers as well as to leaders: (You are against the big coalition; **Why?** You do not want a bourgeois government, but a proletarian one; **How** shall this be brought about? You want proletarian organs outside of parliament to back the workers' government; **What** shall be these organs? You want to fight the bourgeoisie, how do you propose to do it? What is your attitude towards the hundreds? Towards the council movement? Are you prepared to join us in forming

armed hundreds and a government which will crush any counter-revolutionary attempt without mercy, and which will carry out the necessary economic and political measures? What is your attitude towards the persecution of the factory councils and of the K.P.D., and so on).

(18) On the basis of concrete questions, concrete understandings and concrete aims, it will be tactically **possible to march together with groups of Social-Democratic workers under certain situations** (economic and political strikes, for instance), providing that :

(a) the K.P.D. *as a whole*, and every individual member, shall be conscious that **the Social-Democratic Party as a party cannot lead in revolutionary fights**;

(b) the fight must contribute to the liquidation of the left groups as **Social-Democratic groups**;

(c) even while marching tactically together, we **must maintain perfect freedom of criticism, particularly in regard to the left Social-Democratic groups, whose consolidation would greatly retard the German revolution, and which could only be achieved as a result of our mistakes (e.g., by wrong application of the tactics of the united front).**

(19) The prospect of an intermediate form of government is highly improbable in Germany, according to objective indications. Even if a re-grouping is possible within the coalition, nevertheless any government that is not either a proletarian dictatorship or a bourgeois dictatorship dependent on the Entente will not be a stable government and will be bound to fall soon. The fight should be started right now by the most vigorous campaign against the big coalition, which should hasten the break-up of the S.P.D.

(20) The actual question of the state governments, particularly in Saxony and Thuringia, should be so put that they might be extended over the empire. The low vitality of Social-Democratic governments compels the K.P.D. ever and again to raise concretely the question of state workers' governments, and this should always be made dependent upon the **immediate calling of a state workers' congress**. The K.P.D. may send representatives to such governments that are **responsible to Soviet congresses** and elected by them, and the formation of such governments upon an empire-wide scale should not only be encouraged, but also utilised ideologically (propaganda of the Soviet dictatorship) as well as organisationally and politically (playing off one S.P.D.

against the other). Therefore, it is necessary to demonstrate clearly the objective counter-revolutionary role of the Social-Democratic workers' government, particularly of the Zeigner Government.

(21) The calling of a **Soviet Congress of the Empire** must be the prelude to the launching of the slogan: **All Power to the Soviets!**

(22) Militant groups of the Party must be formed in addition to the factory hundreds.

(23) All these measures can be carried out only if the whole of the Party will work in united and close ranks along this line.

(24) The Central Committee of Berlin-Brandenburg asserts that :

(a) this line has not yet been clearly worked out, and

(b) in an editorial article in *Rote Fahne* of the 30th August, 1923, still unretracted, quite the opposite policy was outlined, which aims at co-operation with the leaders of the "left" S.P.D.

The Central Committee is of the opinion that the idea that our Party could not manage "alone," *i.e.*, without the S.P.D., to lead the proletariat, constitutes a grave danger to the K.P.D.

A. MASLOV.



To the Congress of the German Communist Party

DEAR COMRADES,

I had greatly wished to come to our Party Congress and to take part in its work. Unfortunately the state of my health prevents me from satisfying my wish. I am greatly pained at this, for I realise the enormous national and international significance of the present Congress. Will you permit me, therefore, to express to you my views in writing.

We are all agreed that our Congress will be of service for the immediate future only if it investigates and throws light on the "October events." If it is to fulfil this task then it must destroy the legend which has become as rigid as a dogma, and in which many believe, namely, that the "October retreat" was not in the least inevitable, and was not caused by concrete circumstances. According to this theory the fight for the capture of power can be taken up at any time under all circumstances, and in this instance it was hindered by bad leadership, embodied in Comrade Brandler's fostering of the policy of the United Front. This not only led to great mistakes, but is in itself a great mistake which, if not forestalled, will lead to the liquidation, not only of the German Communist Party, but of the Communist International itself. The German "October events" have made this perfectly clear.

Comrades, without the least fear of contradiction, I declare that this theory is more than false, it is dangerous. It beclouds the view of the great and absorbing problems

that confront us, and also the weaknesses and the defects of the Party which were revealed in the "October retreat."

The critical investigation of the "October events" implies something more than the estimation of the tactics of the united front. It is the question of the organisation, the preparation and the carrying out of the armed revolt. In this, the tactics of the united front are important details, but it is not the most important and decisive point. By its attitude the Communist Party of Germany failed to carry out the task that confronted it. The October retreat was not a result of the united front tactics, but more decidedly the result of the political incapacity, the organisational weaknesses, the course of the history, the state of development, and the inexperience of the Party in leading the revolutionary struggle. Above and below, right and left, all in the Party share in the mistakes and weaknesses that were revealed.

Since May, as a consequence of the occupation of the Ruhr, the revolutionary situation became increasingly acute, and we witnessed the growing consciousness of increasing numbers of exploited proletarians and expropriated petty and middle bourgeois. Wage movements, strikes, unemployment, hunger demonstrations, the plundering of shops and fields, all indicated the revolutionary temper of the masses, in the same way as the small and large geysers in volcanic regions indicate the raging fires burning beneath the surface. The revolutionary mass mood as yet had no political content, no political aim. It remained elementary, instinctive and was not clear revolutionary consciousness, convinced will or bold readiness to fight. The task of the Communist Party was to give it what it lacked.

The Party lacked ability to take advantage of the situation. It was incapable of conducting a policy which would place it in the position of leader in a planned campaign in close contact with the rebel masses, its consciousness and its will, for the capture of power. It did not understand how to convert every cry of pain wrung from the exploited masses into the cry "*Carthago delenda est*"—the class domination of the bourgeoisie must be overthrown by the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was dominated by the conviction that the "final struggle" must set in with an immediate violent and decisive battle. For it the beginning was, what is really the

culminating point in a chain of partial struggles; and for this brilliant beginning it desired to reserve all its revolutionary mass force. It did not behave as a bold, political leader, sure of its aim and direction. It delayed in forming and bringing under its leadership powerful, organised centres outside of its own ranks for revolutionary mass action. Instead of extending and concentrating the factory committee movement, and giving it a definite political aim in the struggle, it allowed the movement to fizzle out. In other words, the situation demanded that the factory councils be given the functions of political workers' councils, *i.e.*, to set up revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Councils. In a phrase, the attitude of the Party during this period of rising revolutionary temper of the masses, was anything but politics.

For the Party the lesson of Clausewitz that—"War is the continuation of politics conducted by other means," was completely lost. This lesson applies with even greater force in civil war than in ordinary war. In civil war mass action, mass struggle, revolutionary will and determination, inspiration and self-sacrifice must frequently take the place of military technique. The Party, however, as a result of its policy, failed to prepare the masses for an armed uprising. The *hundreds* were no substitute for this. This organ of the united front in the main remained but a military parade of the revolutionary temper of the masses. The Party did nothing to link up the *hundreds* with the mass struggle of the proletariat. It remained up to its ears in the superstition that eager and strenuous military preparation at the last moment of the revolution will guarantee to the proletariat victory in the struggle and the possibility of attaining power.

Comrades, the greatest mistake committed by the Party was that it did not make use of the valuable revolutionary mood of the masses. The anti-Cuno strike clearly shows this, and also that the Party had not yet become the leading class party of the proletariat. Cuno fell without the pressure from the masses, without the establishment of a Workers' Government; of course, the dictatorship of the proletariat was not to be thought of. The masses swallowed the Stressemann-Hilferding-Sollman Cabinet. The Hilferding

finance tricks even brought about an easing of the situation. Unhindered by any powerful protests, the Social-Democratic Reichstag poodle brought the two Emergency Laws to the business managers of the bourgeoisie. The Social-Democrat Ebert sends his General Mueller with his Reichswehr to Saxony, and his transport facilities were not in the least interfered with. This is evidence of another act of omission of our Party in not having conducted any work among the railwaymen for mobilising a political force for the armed uprising and in not having organised an auxiliary post among them.

In spite of all, the Party imagined that under its leadership the majority of the proletariat would rise up to the revolutionary struggle. The Party majority imagined that by a clever utilisation of the antagonisms and tendencies towards a split among the social-democracy, at least to win over the "left-wing" Social-Democratic workers and non-party workers who sympathised with them, for the "final battle." Our Communist "left," looking at the thing with eyes of hatred for the united front, saw the position much more clearly and correctly. As against this, however, they were deceived by the illusions of the March action, namely, the Party can, without the masses, successfully enter into defensive and offensive conflicts. They believed that their bold uprising for the proletarian dictatorship must, like Merlin's magic horn, serve as the irresistible signal for the revolutionary revolt of the masses. In the sacred belief that the great historical hour had come, the Party put forward feverish organising and military efforts. It is natural that in this it should commit a number of serious errors, but far more serious than all this, was the fact that the Party had forgotten the fundamentals of the revolutionary fight for power, namely, an extensive political activity to imbue the widest possible masses of the workers with the urgency of such a struggle and to rally them round the banner of Communism. As the battle became imminent, the Party found itself alone, isolated from the masses.

In view of the fascist plan to surround Berlin from the North and South, it would appear that the geographical position and social structure of Saxony and Thuringia would make it possible for the revolutionary proletariat in those places successfully to break up the resistance of the counter-

revolution. But a "red Middle Germany" as the cornerstone of a "Revolutionary Germany,"—the political significance of Berlin as the centre of the bourgeois machinery of government, and the economic significance of the large towns along the water routes, in the industrial centres in Silesia and South Germany, including North Bavaria and particularly the Rhine-Ruhr district, was very much overlooked. It was a mistake on the part of the Party to stake so much on Saxony and Thuringia. The cause of this was undoubtedly the exaggerated estimation of the extent and firmness of the proletarian united front, and connected with this was the other mistake—the so-called "Saxon Experiment," for which the Executive Committee of the Communist International is partly to blame.

Under the circumstances then prevailing, this experiment should not have been made. It was the result of an arrangement between the Party leaders of two tendencies, and not the culminating point of a unified revolutionary mass movement. It regarded as accomplished what had yet to be accomplished—to bring about unification of the revolutionary mass will and readiness for battle under the leadership of the Communist Party. As the situation was in Saxony, this "road to power" clearly must have been the wrong one. It was clear beforehand that the whole of the bourgeoisie would regard the entry of the Communists into the government of Saxony as an act of provocation. It would not be merely the question of constitution for Saxony, but a real question of power for the whole of Germany, as a question affecting its own class domination. Its obedient Stattholter Ebert knew only one reply to this provocation, viz.: the Reichswehr. The German proletariat was very far from regarding the "Saxon Experiment" as its own class affair. Even the class consciousness of the masses of the workers in Saxony was not sufficiently developed for this.

Our Party did far too little, almost nothing, to link up in the minds of the proletarian masses of Germany the political significance of the "Saxon Experiment" with the armed rising. Its best forces were passionately absorbed in technical preparations. The Party had ceased to stand openly before the masses as its political leader, and to conduct a Communistic Reichs policy. It saw nothing else but

the Saxon experiment, and that only locally, and did not regard it as a policy for mobilising the masses. Thus, the Saxon experiment remained nothing but a parliamentary *entracte*, and ended with the Communist minister being thrown out of the government by the Reichswehr over the torn-up constitution, to the accompaniment of fascist parade music. It was not a victorious stage in the capture of power by the advancing proletariat.

We see, therefore, comrades, that the collapse of the "Saxon Experiment" was not the logical outcome of the tactics of the united front, but was caused by the circumstances indicated. Who among us will deny that mistakes, and very serious mistakes, have been committed? I have dealt separately with the attitude of the Communist minister towards the Socialist arrangement with the House of Wettin. And yet our comrades in the Saxon government were neither idiots full up with illusions nor cowardly traitors to the class struggle, as they have been described by the growing Communist "left." To my mind, they did right in taking advantage of the bargaining for an important post to secure a weapon by staging melodramatic discussions with the Zeigner people about the arming of the proletariat. It is true they emphasised the "constitutional" character of the government. By this they helped the masses to see the true value of democracy and to understand the paper character of the constitution, helped them to free themselves from democratic superstitions, and to find the way out of the Social-Democratic sheepfold into the camp of the revolutionary Communist fighter. The error committed by our comrades, in my opinion, is that in their activity in the government they did not lay sufficient emphasis upon the socio-economic aspect. It was, precisely from this aspect, that the Communist proletarian character of the "experiment" was not a fanfare heralding the opening of the battle for the conquest of power necessarily converted into a *Chamade*. Comrades, there is certainly not one among you who did not regard the "October retreat" with the most profound inward bitterness. Too grey and cold did this event fall upon us in the spring-time of our hopes for a victorious revolutionary struggle for the proletarian vanguard of Germany. But instead of the hope for decisive advance we had a retreat without fighting, a retreat without rearguard action. So

greatly had the Party erred in its estimation of its influence on the non-Communist masses, and consequently in the relation of the forces between the revolution and the counter-revolution, that it did not foresee the retreat, and made no preparations for any covering action. Let us, however, investigate the event with sober judgment and not in the heat of passion. We must then admit that this retreat was an absolute necessity, and its carrying out was the deliberate policy of the Party. In its attempt to capture political power, the Communist Party stood in "splendid isolation," not understood, not supported, and abandoned by the broad masses of the workers. Its entry into the fight for power was not the signal for the armed mass uprising, but merely for a few isolated local military conflicts between the Communists and the Reichswehr. How did it end? By the break-up of the Party, squad after squad, and the suppression of the revolutionary proletariat in Saxony and Thuringia.

In the face of the unrealised dream of the Party of the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship, there is really more courage shown in the "October retreat" than in the all or nothing theory of the Party itself taking up the struggle. Comrade Brandler revealed this greater courage, and has thus rendered a service to our Party and to the German proletariat. It was a piece of unpardonable frivolity and stupidity to believe that the Communist Party, isolated from the masses, could, by mere example in plunging into the battle, rouse the revolutionary will to struggle among the greater part of the proletariat.

While the Party was preparing for the armed revolt, and while the Reichswehr in Saxony, and later on in Thuringia, were, with Hunnish rage, destroying with proletarian bodies the clay idol of democracy, there was not a single spontaneous proletarian uprising, not even a weak demonstration of solidarity. The toleration of the military dictatorship of Seeckt and the triumphant advance of fascism showed that the workers were no longer willing to fight for bourgeois democracy, but it also showed that they were not prepared to rise in arms to establish the proletarian dictatorship. The famous three hundred Spartans could not have been more brave or self-sacrificing than the handful of Communists and sympathisers in Hamburg. Ten thousand workers were

on strike there. Many thousands during the days of fighting were imbued with the spirit of fighting and sympathy, so we are assured, but they kept their hands in their trousers pockets. In Berlin "the factories were ablaze with enthusiasm" for the Hamburg fight, but not a single factory came out into the streets to demonstrate its sympathy. Neither is there any justification for the whinings that the "October retreat" is responsible for the "right moment" for the armed rising—and this indefinitely postponed the revolution. The victory of revolution does not depend on some favourable "right" moment, and certainly not on one single moment. In July, 1917, the Bolsheviks and Petersburg workers suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of "pure democracy." In November, the proletarian revolution triumphed.

Comrades, I do not think that I need waste many words about the blame which attaches to the Social-Democrats of the right, as well as of the left, for our "October retreat," which was a defeat of the German proletariat. We are all agreed on this point, just as we are agreed that this is only a part of the enormous historic blame which attaches to this Party. We are also agreed on the political and practical deductions which we can draw from this fact. To-day many Social-democratic leaders do not even belong to the left wing of bourgeois democracy. Their stand is much more to the right than the stand of many honest and steadfast bourgeois Democrats. The "left" rebels of the Social-Democratic would-be leaders perpetuate the role of the former U.S.P. (Independent Socialist Party) leaders. Their accompaniment of the bourgeois policy of the right wing is the old Social-Democratic music of empty phrases. For the time being they are again the obedient servants of the Party Managing Committee, and of the Reichstag's majority, because the disagreeable pressure of the workers' hob-nailed boots on the portion of their anatomy which is not mentioned in polite society has somewhat relaxed. As a result of the "October events" a section of the left Social-Democratic workers certainly finds itself in our ranks. Another section has once more allowed itself to be lulled into inaction by the dulcet tones of the leaders. The "October retreat" has certainly convinced even the most optimistic Communists that the necessary pre-requisite for the overthrow of bourgeois class domination and for the establishment of prole-

tarian dictatorship is : the overthrow of social democracy, of the crafty, political defence force of the bourgeoisie within the working class itself.

Comrades, the German Communist Party would not be worthy of its name if it were to rest content with this one obvious lesson of the "October retreat," which by-the-by is not by any means a new wisdom, but only the confirmation of an old truth. The depression, nay the despair, which took possession of the Party gave rise to the belief that there was only one way out of the defeat : an ordered retreat with a minimum of casualties, energetic preparations for renewed struggle. The inevitable pre-requisite for this was—calm and collected objective examination of the situation and open, ruthless and relentless criticism of the shortcomings and weaknesses of the Party, which made the retreat inevitable.

This aim could not be achieved merely by the conferences of the Central Committee held in the beginning of November, and by the theses which it adopted. They had to serve the need of the moment ; an ordered and not too protracted retreat and the keeping together and preparation of the Party for a new advance. With the enemy at its heels, the Session could not indulge in a searching criticism of the Party, especially as the latter itself, neither the leaders nor the rank and file, could not explain the causes and consequences. It was only just beginning to see the situation clearly. The "left opposition" alone was fortunate enough to have a clear view of these events. With rigid dogmatism it was ready with its explanation for the shortcomings of the Party : united front tactics. Thus the theses had to be limited only to what was most necessary. They marked the field of the coming struggles, indicated the ferment and clash of interests in the camp of the bourgeoisie, which we must put to the best possible use, and declared themselves for the united front from below, in strong opposition to the left, as well as to the right Social-Democrats. Not too much significance must be attached to the very contentious phrase about "the victory of fascism over the November Republic." Neither should an "opportunist tendency" be ascribed to it. It is certainly not quite to the point, for there are various forms of fascism. But in the situation then prevailing it had a political meaning. It could be used in our agitation to dispel the petty-bourgeois illusions about fascism.

The theses of the Central Committee helped the Party to realise the meaning of the "October retreat." The various theses in the special issue of the *International* and the numerous heated discussions in the Party organisations brought it home to the Party still more forcibly. The endeavour to realise that the lessons of the past should serve as an indication of what should be in the future was diverted by the "left" into the domain of fractional strife. Fractional strife has obscured the issue. The Party has not yet got over the process of coming to a clear and definite conclusion about the "October events." I am of the opinion that even the theses of the Executive of our International are not sufficiently definite on this question. Comrades, one of the main tasks of the Party Conference and, therefore, one of your main tasks will be—to give, regardless of any tendencies, a clear and well defined exposition of the most important features of the situation which led to the October retreat, and of the lessons to be drawn from it. The conclusion of the Party discussion on this matter should release all the forces of the Party for the great historic tasks which are before it. In connection with this, you must not forget for a single moment that the question of the "October events" is not only the concern of German Communists, but also of all Communists adhering to the Communist International. The present situation in Germany shows clearly what kind of work and activities will make the Party strong and active. At present the bourgeois economic system and the bourgeois State are disintegrating, in spite of sporadic attempts to steady the finances of the Reich and to consolidate the capitalist social order. I believe that even foreign credits on a large scale will be unable to bring about a thorough and permanent improvement of conditions in Germany. It seems to me that things will be just kept going by means of a still greater exploitation and enslavement of the proletariat and by the complete expropriation of ever-growing sections of the small and middle bourgeoisie, as well of the small and middle peasantry. Objectively, the situation in Germany is as revolutionary as before.

But we must admit that on this disintegrating and shaky basis the German bourgeoisie has succeeded in consolidating its economic and political power. The proletariat has been

compelled to retreat beyond the positions it had captured during the last decades. Of course, this is largely due to the treacherous attitude of the Social-Democrats and trade union bureaucrats. The further development, and especially the tempo, of the revolution greatly depends on our success or non-success in overcoming the discrepancy between the objective forces of the history of mankind, which drive towards revolution, and the weak will to revolution of the German proletariat. Will the proletariat submit to increased exploitation and oppression without putting up a fight which must culminate in an armed rising and in the establishment of proletarian dictatorship? This is the fateful question that confronts us more than ever before. We have learned by bitter experience that a proletariat of over twenty millions, whose self-confidence and revolutionary spirit and determination have been weakened by fifty years of reformist theory and practice and whose traditions are proverbially "peaceful," cannot be easily moved to take up a revolutionary attitude.

It is true that the starvation policy of the great industrial magnates of the Junkers has awakened the proletarian masses and even the petty-bourgeoisie and small peasantry from their fatal apathy. In the long run, distress and misery speak more eloquently than the batons and Brownings of the special police and the rifles of the Reichswehr. All over the country and throughout the entire economic system exploited workers by hand and brain are rebelling by a series of small and big strikes against capitalist domination, against longer working hours, reduction of wages, etc. The heroic struggles of the Rhenish metal workers for the 8-hour day, the mighty fight put up by the workers in the chemical industry, the dockers, etc., are promising signs of the times. But these partial struggles are pre-eminently of an economic nature and must not blind us to other facts. The overwhelming majority of the German proletariat is either still under the spell of old and deep-rooted illusions and also of new ones (the Labour Government in Great Britain, stabilisation of the mark, etc.), or maintains an attitude of passive hatred of revolution. Moreover, disillusioned by the persistent and shameful treachery of the Social-Democrats, intimidated by the Communist defeat, many an active proletarian has gone over to fascism—the hope of the petty-bourgeoisie.

Comrades, to be able to bring large masses of workers into the decisive revolutionary struggles, the Communist Party must awaken and strengthen the confidence of the masses in their own power, for reformism has systematically lulled to sleep and paralysed the self-confidence of the proletariat. At the same time it must gain and strengthen their confidence in the Communist Party. The Party must win recognition and acknowledgment as the only rightful leader of the exploited and enslaved, as the only true and determined representative of working class interests. One cannot separate proletarian self-confidence from proletarian confidence in the Communist Party. It goes without saying that both have been seriously impaired by the "October retreat." The precious possession which was lost must not only be regained, but added to. Words will not do it, deeds are required.

With this object in view, our Party must identify itself most intimately with the partial struggles of the working class. It must extend and co-ordinate these struggles and must make them more profound. It must give them political meaning and leadership, and it must practice the art of manœuvring so as to be able to break off any partial struggle before it is defeated. The every-day demands and struggle must at the same time serve as revolutionary training for the masses. The Party must instil our great revolutionary slogans in the masses, so as to spread them rapidly throughout the country and make them in the very near future the object of the proletarian struggle. The Communist Party must teach the wage slaves of the bourgeoisie, who are being shaken out of their apathy, that these partial struggles will lead them to something greater which will have tangible results. We must instil into the workers the knowledge that capitalism is their arch enemy, the need for class solidarity and the proud knowledge that they can fight—for this is an indispensable pre-requisite of future victories. We must not forget that defeats will teach the workers, that we would have been victorious to-day if the Social-Democratic and trade union leaders had not shamefully left us in the lurch and had not delivered us to our capitalist masters and tormentors. This is the great political advantage of partial struggles, which lead to the establishment of the united front "from below." The object lesson, most likely to restore self-confidence in the ranks of the timorous German workers and

to educate them in a revolutionary spirit—is the Russian revolution, which was the work of the masses under the leadership of a revolutionary proletarian class Party. The matchless revolutionary virtues of these masses and of the Party are a proof of the strength of a united proletariat, and are an incentive for the workers of Germany to go and do likewise.

Comrades, it is, of course, only natural, as well as advantageous for our Party to show in the occasional partial struggles its solidarity with those whom dire misery drives into revolt against the economic and political domination of the bourgeoisie. But this is not enough. Our Party must (to use bourgeois jargon) “incite” the masses to a class-conscious initiation and systematic conduct of partial struggles. It must qualify for its mission—representation of the interests of the oppressed and exploited—by a programme of action which must show an intimate knowledge of the needs and grievances of those it represents, and a capacity to find right ways and means for their mitigation. This programme must not be confined to specifically proletarian demands. It must concern itself with the grievances of all sections of society whose interests clash with the interests and class domination of big capital.

It must draw practical conclusions from a thorough and comprehensive investigation of the so-called middle class question (including the question of the civil servants and intellectuals, as well as the agrarian question). These conclusions are of twofold significance, for during the revolutionary struggle, we must convert these now hostile sections of society into allies or at least into benevolent neutrals, who after victory, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, will prove to be willing helpers in the work of reconstruction instead of disgruntled saboteurs. All economic and social demands of the much needed programme of action must be directed towards the economic and social expropriation of the bourgeoisie, and all political demands towards depriving it of its present political power. We must state clearly and emphatically that the innovations which we demand are not reforms intended to prop up the bourgeois social order, but rather means to maintain and increase the fitness of the workers for the overthrow of the present social order.

Our Conference has before it the great and important task of drawing up a programme which will lay down definite and uniform lines for the policy and action of the Party. This means that it must give a logical and firm lead to the masses in the struggle for their daily bread, against the enslavement of the proletariat, for adequate wages, the right to strike for government officials, for the right to work and to cultural development for the intellectuals, as well as in the historic struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Our programme of action must not remain a mere paper programme. Its demands must become objects to fight for. This simply means that the Party must acquire the strength and the ability to lead the masses. Comrades, in all sincerity, how does it stand with the Party in this respect? The reply to this is promising. The "October retreat" has strengthened the radical spirit among the Party masses: this partly due to the fact that the non-Communist masses have become more radical. But this by itself is not enough, this new radical temper must be imbued with the spirit of Communism. This decisive factor, however, has not yet gained prominence within the Party.

There is no doubt whatever that the Party masses desire greater Party activity, that more prominence be given to the Communist character and features of the Party. This spirit among the Party masses must be encouraged and supported. But it is precisely this task which must make us alive to the condition of the Party at the top, as well as at the bottom. The radicalised Party masses are to a great extent under the sway of revolutionary feelings and moods. They are deficient in training and they lack clarity of ideas and firmness. The "left" Party majority includes, in a truly brotherly fashion K.A.P.'ists (Communist Workers' Party), syndicalists, anti-parliamentarians and—*horrible dictu*—even reformists, and latterly fascist anti-semites. Hitherto the spokesmen of the "left" were not in reality political leaders. It is true that they voiced the moods and ideas of their followers, but they were unable to rally them and to lead them forward under a well-defined, logical and comprehensive slogan. They allow themselves to be pushed along instead of leading themselves. There is nothing to show that they would act differently as Party leaders. There are, of course, splendid proletarian elements among the "left" upper strata who understand the situation and will learn to lead. But just as

wearing a cowl does not make one a monk, taking office does not give one at once the necessary moral training, clarity, firmness and practical experience.

Of course, being a composite mixture, the managing body which is an outcome of the "radicalisation" of the Party, comprises also the "left centre" of the old Central Committee. It was to regulate and train the raw revolutionary eagerness in the upper and lower strata of the Party by Communist steadfastness. There is a fatal obstacle in the way of the fulfilment of this task. This obstacle is the weakness of the most prominent men of the "left centre," and their lack of firm principle. If the "left" leaders allow themselves to be pushed along by the "left" masses, these "left centrists" allow themselves to be driven by the "left" leaders and masses. Their political leadership amounts to nothing more than meek and contrite self-accusations of not having gone far enough to the "left" and "submission to any punishment" for having allowed the wicked fellow Brandler to convert their "leftism" into "rightism." "Unwittingly, they deride themselves."

And what is the result? Comrades, the thought of it alone is maddening. Since the "October events" all the strength of the Party is being wasted in factional quarrelling, instead of being used and increased in the struggle with the arch enemies of the proletariat. Never before, not even after the crashing defeat of the March action, has such a chaos reigned in the Party, and never before has the Party been so passive. The demonstrations against the prohibition of our Party were miserable affairs. There was no determined struggle on a large scale against Seeckt's dictatorship, and no big campaign for the defence of the eight-hour day, for higher wages and salaries, for the preservation of the right to strike and for the right to have factory councils. The Lenin memorial meetings were a complete fiasco. The breakdown of the Party allowed the Social-Democratic leaders to parade as the sturdy defenders of the proletariat against humiliating conditions, for which they are, in fact, responsible. The illegal position of the Communist Party is not an excuse for its passivity. On the contrary, it is one more reason for blaming it. Instead of action there was the artificially fomented campaign against "Brandler and Co." an epidemic of expulsions against

“suspects” and a hunt for “right tendencies.” No matter how hard it is to have to struggle against opportunist tendencies within the Party, we must admit that what is going on now under the pretence of such a struggle is unhealthy and demoralising.

Comrades, allow me to express my sincere personal opinion on this matter. My respect for you, my solidarity with you and my Party duty make it incumbent on me to be quite frank with you. It makes me only smile when, following the latest fashion, I am labelled “opportunist,” or what is still more fashionable, “Social-Democrat.” I know that my life’s work and not the verdict of fractional narrow-mindedness is the test of my political character. I do not know for what sins of commission or omission I am to be associated with Brandler. I confess that I have committed the offence of not considering every “left” leader a paragon of theoretical knowledge and clarity, and of not looking upon every member of the “left centre” as a model of heroic manhood. And I make this confession, if not before the throne of royalty, yet before the thunder and lightning of the Communist Olympians—Maslov, Scholem and Ruth Fischer. I deem it my duty to make this statement in spite of the fever against all tendencies, which is at present raging within the Party. I would not appreciate it at all if I were to be amnestied because of my long service in the workers’ movement by a party, in the leading organs of which there is no room for men like Brandler, Thalheimer, Walcher and Pieck, who founded the Party under very difficult circumstances under the fire of the enemy, who were always faithful and trustworthy fighters for Communism and for revolution, which is the path to Communism, and who, from the very beginning carried the hammer and sickle, the banner of the Communist International before the German proletariat. I, together with them, will remain in the ranks of our Party as a “soldier of the revolution” who honours national and international discipline and who struggles and works with the Party and with the Communist International for a speedy victory of the social revolution.

It behoves us more than ever before to be inseparably united with the Party and with the Communist International. Through an open and honest exchange of opinions, which

eliminates all disintegrating fractional strife, we shall all of us do our utmost to help the Party to get over its "infantile sickness." If these sicknesses were allowed to develop unhindered, the Party would be reduced to the status of a sect. I have already spoken of one of these "infantile sicknesses." Unfortunately, it is not the only one of its kind. In the historical development which the "left" leaders anticipate for Germany we can clearly see their hereditary failing: that rigid and dogmatic attitude which made them see the imminence of revolution before the "October events," and which makes them now assume that revolution is further away than ever. Comrade Maslov prophesies a period of stagnation of ten to fifteen years. But, does not the capitalist economic system and the bourgeois State contain strong revolutionary explosive forces, as well as stagnation, and are there not many opportunities for these explosive forces in the revolutionary will of the masses? I will admit that the situation is such that we shall have to wait some time before the revolution will be able to say: "I am! In spite of all!" The foundations of the capitalist world are so thoroughly shaken that revolution can come upon us unexpectedly "like a thief in the night."

This situation demands the utmost elasticity of tactics. The German Communist Party must be prepared for steady advance, as well as for stubborn holding out and cautious manœuvring. The main feature of its tactics must be a combination of daring and caution. But whether our tactics be adapted to an early or late advent of the revolution, the success of our caution and daring depends on the development of the Communist Party into a mass party, into a leading revolutionary class party of the proletariat. As the conquest of power by the proletariat and the establishment of its dictatorship are still our historic aims, the winning over of the majority of the working class for proletarian dictatorship and proletarian revolution must be our main concern.

This is impossible without the united front tactics of the Party and without the Party's participation in the partial struggles of the majority of the working class for partial demands and transition slogans. While Comrade Maslov

foresees a long period of stagnation, influential "left" leaders protest, not without justification, against mistakes made in the application of united front tactics, against a misleading estimation of partial demands and transition slogans. But they demand "on principle" that there shall be an end to united front tactics, partial demands and transition slogans. Do they in all earnest believe that the slogans of "civil war" and "dictatorship of the proletariat" are sufficient to rally the masses and to lead them into the revolutionary struggle? I am sufficiently "un-Marxian" and "un-Bolshevik" to think that this is impossible.

Comrades, not less contradictory and vague is the attitude of the "left" leaders towards the questions of trade unionism and organisation. Especially in connection with the trade union question, it is clear that these leaders allow themselves to be guided by the vague moods of the masses, instead of guiding these masses on to the right path. The trade union question can become a life and death question for our Party. It is a political and not an organisational question. It is in the interests of the Party that the trade unions remain accessible to it as a recruiting and rallying ground of non-Communist workers for revolutionary struggles under Communist leadership. But "left" leaders talk, write and act as if the time had come for the slogan "get out of the trade unions"! And this, in a period of utmost economic depression and organisational slackness, when material and financial obstacles are in the way of organisational work and when there are political reasons for making a systematic use of trade unions which have steered clear of splits. I have only to remind you of the necessity to develop the factory councils movement, and of the Party's attitude towards the organisation of factory nuclei.

Comrades, I draw your attention to the fact that the "left" leaders go to the masses with the war cry "Down with united front tactics, with partial demands and with the transitional slogans—organise factory nuclei! Get out of the trade unions!"—all of which is contrary to the attitude of the Communist International and tends to a breach of the latter's discipline. Is not this a recantation of the decisions

of the Executive of our World Organisation, of decisions which they helped to make and with which they agreed? And this while they swear allegiance to the policy of Lenin which demands the development of the Communist Parties into mass parties and the winning over of the majority of the working class through united front tactics, which this policy considered to be one of the strongest weapons in the struggle for the conquest of power; this, while they cannot find enough praises for the Bolshevik party, one of the main features of which is strict and binding discipline. With such facts before us, who could deny the magnitude of the coming peril? To meet this peril, in all consciousness and with all our might, is a duty which we owe to the Party and to the Communist International.

Owing to the length of my letter, I must abstain from dealing, even imperfectly, with the discussions in the Russian Communist Party, although the hotspurs of left Communism, like the dulcet flautists of the "left centre," endeavour to take shelter behind them. There is no doubt whatever that struggle against any form and any tendency of opportunism is the imperative national, as well as international, task of all Communists. Opportunism must not be allowed to gain a footing anywhere. It is an enemy between whom and us there can be no *rapprochement*. But in all this we must not forget a precept left to us by the wise revolutionary: "Realpolitiker"—Lenin. To overcome opportunism we must also overcome revolutionary romanticism, as well as avert attempt at putschism. Opportunism engenders putschism and *vice versa*. They are closely related and have their origin in the wish to get the exploited and oppressed as quickly as possible out of the misery of this transition period, and in confused notions about the nature and conditions of the revolution which is to save humanity. The ship of Communism must not be wrecked on the rocks of revolutionary romanticism and putschism, and it must not be allowed to founder on the shoals of opportunism. Our ship must steer a straight course, full steam ahead over the stormy waves of revolutionary mass actions and mass struggles. To the masses! Win over the masses! Let us therefore, while not neglecting the struggles for the every-day needs of the masses, reveal to them the ideal of Communism. "Man does not live by

bread alone," the world, as far as it is not poisoned by the capitalist system, longs for ideals of a noble existence. Let us show that this longing can only be stilled by Communism, which is the strongest and most extensive cultural movement that aims at the realisation of the highest ideal for all. In view of the dissolution and rottenness of bourgeois society and culture, the lofty ideals of Communism gain recruits for the revolution. These fighters of the revolution will be in the foremost ranks at the time of the final struggle. Mass struggle, as a material necessity, and pure and lofty idealism will ensure their victory.

CLARA ZETKIN.



The British Labour Government

I.

WHEN the October Revolution broke out in Russia, and under its heroic influence Communist parties began to spring up in the west, and when later the thrones of the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs followed the house of the Romanoffs into the rubbish heap into which history had consigned them, the centrists of Western Europe, headed by Otto Bauer, declined to call upon the revolutionary workers to follow the lead of the workers of Russia, arguing that in world affairs the decisive factor was not agricultural Russia, but the industrial west; that it was the revolution in England or America which would decide.

This "Marxism" either implied the profound truth that it was easier to bring about Socialism in an industrial country, but that the old lady history had capriciously chosen the most difficult course and was not starting from the mark, or it was a call to the revolutionary workers of Continental Europe not to move until the revolution had broken out in England. The latter, of course, it was. Herr Bauer and his colleagues used Marxism as an argument for not making a revolution. The great teachings of Marx served them as a pretext for betraying the interests of the proletariat of their own country and the cause of the workers of the world.

The only conclusion which a true Marxist could draw from the fact that it was harder to bring about Socialism in agricultural Russia than in industrial England should have been the slogan: "Proletarians of industrial Germany, Austria and Czecho-Slovakia, unite with the proletarians of

Russia, create a mighty agrarian and industrial combination stretching from Vladivostok to the Rhine, and from the Finnish Gulf to the blue waters of the Danube, capable of feeding itself and clothing itself and of confronting reactionary capitalist Britain with a revolutionary giant, who with one hand would disturb the secular tranquility of the East and with the other beat back the pirate capitalism of the Anglo-Saxon countries." If there were anything that could compel the English whale to dance, it would have been a union of revolutionary Russia with a revolutionary Central Europe. But the bourgeoisie, with the help of the Social-Democrats, stifled the Central European revolution. The development of the world proceeded at a more moderate pace, but nevertheless the British whale knew no peace.

England, in spite of its powerful expansion during the seventies, is moving down an inclined plane. This mighty power, which holds more than four hundred million people in its grip, could live peacefully only as long as it remained the greatest of the industrial powers, and only as long as the rest of the world was its market for raw materials and food. But this dream of Bright and Cobden was shattered by the industrial development of Germany, the United States and Japan. The last two decades before the war practically revolutionised the conditions for the development of England. World capitalism has entered into its imperialist phase, the fight for world markets, not only with the aid of cheap goods, but also with the aid of mighty land forces and of floating iron machines capable of flinging thousands of tons of explosive materials. The British lion tried to save itself by a leap. It adopted the system of the great sea monsters, the "dreadnoughts." But its example was followed by all the other imperialist powers. It was easier for them than for old England to adopt dreadnoughts, as it is easier for a backward country to adopt the most up-to-date machinery, because it has not accumulated capital in the form of obsolete machinery. England could not wait until financial difficulties would hold up the expansion of foreign fleets. She was compelled to make a second leap, to prepare for an armed catastrophe, to enter into war. But alas, the leap was a fatal one. She emerged from the war a member of the syndicate of victors. She had annihilated the German navy, which is now lying

at the bottom of the Scapa Flow. In Africa and Asia she pilfered all that she required; she seized the German colonies of East Africa and thus made possible the union of Cairo and the Cape by railway. She seized Mesopotamia, and set up a vassal kingdom in Arabia and thus created the conditions for the union of Cairo and Calcutta by railway. But alas, she was so damaged economically that she was unable to export sufficient capital to the annexed portions of the earth to guarantee her control of them.

Moreover, the war, which it was prophesied would be a war of dreadnoughts, saw the development of the small sea pirates, the illusive submarines. If the English gave the submarines a name which expressed the feelings they inspired they would call them *memento mori*. The British Empire is a complicated organism distributed over the whole globe, and united by fine nerves of communication, along which move vessels bearing cotton from India, Egypt and America, grain from Canada and Argentine, timber from Russia and oil from the Dutch Indies. Every submarine is a menace to the vital nerves of Britain. And the submarines are so easily built, the enemies of England have so many harbours from which these pirates may sally forth at night to fall upon British vessels, and submit the British island to a blockade ten times more severe than that to which Britain subjected Germany. And indeed is England still an island? No. Even this defence has vanished. The fellow of the submarine fleet is the air fleet, the development of which has been one of the great achievements of the world war. Even during the war, London concealed herself in a cloak of darkness from the hovering Zeppelins which flung visiting cards of dynamite into old Albion. British imperialism is surrounded by enemies. It is feeling the earth trembling beneath its feet and a cancer eating into its vitals.

More than 300 millions live beneath the yoke of British domination in India, the chief prey of British imperialism. In his book on the Expansion of England, the preacher of the gospel of British imperialism, Professor Seeley, asks: How did we conquer this continent? How do we govern it? He gives the explanation of the miracle as to how some ten thousand foreigners rule over 300 million Hindoos. There are several hundred nations living in India, each

speaking a language unknown to the others. The English defeated one nation by the help of the others, and ruled over the lot. But time passed and presently India was united by a network of iron roads. The language of the enemy, the excellent British language, became a bond which united the Indian intelligentsia. The necessity for a native bureaucracy made it necessary to set up schools in which the Indian intelligentsia came under the influence of British ideas of democracy and freedom. John Stuart Mill began to enflame the Hindoos, worthy John Stuart Mill, whose works can be found in any English library. The British bourgeoisie, with its habitual shrewdness, decided to buy over the ruling class of India. It had at one time, with the aid of honours, bought the various Indian princes, leaving them the appearance of power and sparing their interests. It now decided to buy over the young Indian bourgeoisie. but the scheme was spoilt by the cunning mechanism of capitalist development. The Indian bourgeoisie is already beginning to fear its own workers and its own peasants, who timidly, but surely, are moving to the front of the historical stage. It would not be loathe to come to terms with British imperialism for the joint exploitation of the Indian workers and peasants. But the essential condition for the development and strengthening of the Indian bourgeoisie is a customs tariff to protect the cotton mills of Calcutta and Bombay from the cheap products of Lancashire. Moreover, there is growing up a class of lower Indian intellectuals who are being mercilessly exploited by the British bureaucratic system, which demands of them extremely difficult work for very low pay. Thousands of them are unable to find employment at all, and there is nothing more dangerous than a man who reads much and eats little. An army staff and an officer corps for an Indian national revolution is thus being created. They are still ignorant of the right path the struggle must take, they are still full of Utopian ideas regarding the independence of India, but the joy of England will be no greater if the workers and peasant masses of India enter the movement with absurd ideas. They will learn the right way to fight in the course of the struggle.

While an uprising of the colonial slaves of Britain is fermenting, within her own stronghold unemployment is gnawing at the organism of British capitalism. Everybody

who has carefully studied the problems of Britain has emphasised that there is no greater danger for British imperialism than unemployment. Unemployment means death for a country which depends exclusively upon industrial labour. Moreover, in England, owing to the defence the sea offers to its borders, militarism has been only feebly developed. This fact has always compelled the ruling class of England to lighten the financial burden falling upon the ruling class of England and to think of their stomachs in its customs policy. Unemployment, however, demands either that the financial burden should be increased, or that the dam against the revolutionary wave should be strengthened. The unemployment from which Britain is now suffering is the result of causes which will not rapidly disappear; namely, the destructive effects of the war upon world trade and the purchasing power of the country, the growth of American competition, and so on. It may be said that the whole home and foreign policy of England is bound up with the problem of overcoming unemployment. When in 1922 Lloyd George and Briand met at Cannes in the South of France, and the French representative said that France was suffering from the devastation of her northern provinces, Lloyd George asked whether the English factories which were not working, although they had not been destroyed by the enemy's artillery, were more cheerful to contemplate for England.

The British bourgeoisie is faced with the problem of either bringing peace to Europe and creating the conditions for the development of British trade, or else perishing. But what hinders the solution of this problem? It demands the removal of the consequences of war in the continent of Europe. If the reparations policy laid down at Versailles, by British and French imperialism, is carried through, Germany will have to force her workers to work for beggarly wages, increase the production of cheap goods and fling them on the markets; in other words, become a competitor. If, however, Germany refuses, and France begins to exploit the Ruhr Basin, this will not only not decrease the menace of competition for England, but will even lay an iron foundation for French hegemony in Europe. France, with her foot upon the breast of Europe, will find means for increasing the military menace to England tenfold. A competition of

armaments will still further increase Britain's financial burden. But how is France to be made to abandon this policy? The necessary conditions for the solution of the reparations problem is that England should forego the repayment of the French debt. This would mean the perpetuation of the tremendous burden England has to bear in the form of payments on the national debt. The British ruling class cannot make up their mind to this. They are paying millions of pounds for the maintenance of the unemployed, thirty million pounds in payment of the debt to America, 270 million pounds in payments on the National Debt. They are not in a position to make presents to the French bourgeoisie. The development of trade with the East and the South-East of Europe, and the problem of Russia and the Near East demand not renunciation of old debts, but investments of new capital. Agricultural countries develop rapidly only by being colonised, *i.e.*, by the import of men and capital. Left to themselves, they can develop only very slowly. British capital demands the stimulus of rapidly developing new markets. But where is the necessary capital for this purpose to be obtained? Private capital flows to places where it can earn the maximum of profit in the shortest possible time and with the least possible risk. It does not work for profit to be derived decades ahead. The financial situation of England does not permit her to adopt a more far-seeing policy than private capital. The Eastern and South-Eastern problems are bristling with difficulties for British capitalism. With the help of the Conservative Party it set out on a new path, to unite the colonies more securely and to feed on their blood. But it is meeting opposition not only from colonies such as India, which are striving for independent economic existence, not only from colonies such as Canada and Australia, which are developing their own industry and turning towards the United States, which is better able than Britain to defend them from Japan, but also from its own bourgeoisie, which is aware that the British colonies will make concessions to the British industrial bourgeoisie only if the latter is prepared for the benefit of their agriculture to increase the cost of living of the English masses.

The coalition of the right wing English Liberals and the Conservatives collapsed in the search for an issue from

the unprecedented home and external crisis. The united Liberal Party has proved itself too feeble and too discredited to take power. And so out of the simmering cauldron there rose the soap bubble of the British Labour Government. When in 1908 the Turkish revolution triumphed without bloodshed, it was welcomed by the Austrian opportunist, Leitner, as an example of how a revolution should be made, while, in his opinion, the Russian revolution of 1905 was an example of how a revolution should not be made. The Mensheviks of all countries are to-day encircling the curly head of Ramsay MacDonald and the bald pate of Sydney Webb, with a crown of laurels and exclaiming "Behold, how the working class comes into power in a democratic country! The march of its iron columns does not terrify the delicate nerves of the English ladies. Its representative is received by the king, who voluntarily sacrifices an old traditional ceremonial and permits him to appear in ordinary evening dress instead of in white silk breaches. Behold a revolution which, far from terrifying and startling the wives of the British lords, has persuaded many of them to enter the service of the leader of the Second International, Ramsay MacDonald, and not make the least attempt at sabotage!"

II.

This is not the place for recalling the history of the British Labour Party, with which our readers are no doubt well enough acquainted. We shall only examine briefly the ideas and the point of view of the Labour Party and its leaders. Let us begin with the latter. The leaders of the Labour Party can be divided into four groups. The first group consists of trade union leaders whose outlook is purely Liberal. Men like Thomas, Henderson, Clynes and Tom Shaw might easily find a place within the Liberal Party, where they would act as the advocates of the workers, or rather, as Liberal agents within the working class, compelled to a certain extent to recognise its will and its interests. Some of them, such as Henderson, are Liberals working among the workers, others, such as Tom Shaw, are workers sincerely convinced that the proletarian revolution is impossible, and that it is necessary, within the capitalist society and by democratic methods, to maintain a certain standard of living and a certain minimum of human requirements for the working class. The second group consists of Labour poli-

ticians adhering to varying reformist tendencies. Here we find Fabians who believe that it is necessary to permeate Liberalism by Socialism, by extending municipal enterprise, nationalising those industries which are ripe for it (of course, by purchase) and improving the democratic bureaucratic machine. Here we find guild Socialists, a mélange of syndicalist criticism and contemporary democracy, proud-honest co-operativism and reformist beliefs in the possibility of avoiding revolution. Here also belong Parliamentary reformists of the usual European cut, and people who will prove the impossibility and uselessness of revolution from a half-baked biological and even zoological point of view. The third group consists of revolutionary-minded Labour politicians; but they are innocent of all theory and therefore get themselves hopelessly entangled in the legs of the opportunists. When the English bourgeois press attempted to frighten MacDonald by references to the wild men from the Clyde, the *Daily Herald* replied with the query: "Can you find a Lenin or a Trotsky among them?" No, there is no Lenin or Trotsky among them. There is not a man among them whose baggage contains more than the goodwill to defend the interests of the working class by every possible method, including revolution. But they are incapable of working for revolution; they have never learnt how to.

The fourth group are Labour Party leaders who did not arise out of the Labour movement, but passed into it from Liberalism, having convinced themselves of its ability to fight imperialism and to carry through those social reforms without which it is impossible to save Germany from revolution. Some of them, like Trevelyan, are pure pacifists. Others, like Brailsford, the former foreign editor of the *Liberal Nation*, attempt to understand the nature of Socialism and honestly to defend the interests of the working class, believing that it is the sole representative of peace and progress. This numerically small group is of very great importance, since behind it stands the growing mass of intellectuals who are passing into the Labour Party.

And what of the ideas and views of the working class masses belonging to the Labour Party? Here we find a nucleus consisting of members of the Independent Labour Party, pupils of Socialist Sunday Schools, representatives of religious and sectarian Socialism. They are the Socialist

leaven of the English Labour movement. These few thousand workers represent the loyal guard of the Socialist fight and are the soul of the Labour Party. They spare no efforts in distributing the meagre Labour papers and Socialist pamphlets; they carry on Socialist propaganda at street corner meetings and trade union meetings, to which they sacrifice their Sundays and holidays. But they lack a complete knowledge of Marxism, they lack revolutionary self-confidence. The history of England is the best illustration of the theory of the class struggle, the best illustration of the capitalist methods of exploiting the masses, from colonial plundering and the merciless shooting down of workers, to the opening of drawing rooms to the talented representatives of the working class and shameless bribery and corruption. This stream of blood and sweat, concealed by the hypocritical phrases of history, the reformists have used in their propagandist literature as an example of the harm that is done by the class struggle, and to illustrate the possibility of bringing Socialism about by gradual democratic means. The fatuous tracts of the MacDonalds and Snowdens are supported by concrete and known facts from the history of England, whereas the Communist publications preach revolutionary ideas in the abstract, or are illustrated by examples from ancient history or from the history of Soviet Russia. Honest working class members of the Independent Labour Party, who, during the war, proved their revolutionary outlook, are distributing Quaker reformist pamphlets, believing that thereby they are propagating Socialism.

The mass of the workers are in a state of profound ferment. It is necessary only to remember the waves of strikes that passed over the country during and after the war, and the fact that the Labour Party, which in opposition to the huge newspaper trusts of Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook, has been able to put out one feeble little daily, and at the elections in 1919 secured two million votes and at the elections in 1922 four million votes, in order to see clearly that a process of class definition is going on among the working masses of England. The four million workers who voted with the Labour Party were not Communists, and not even Socialists. How could they become Socialists when there was no Socialist agitation or propaganda to formulate their feelings and to explain to them the meaning of events? But after the sufferings which the Moloch of war had brought

upon the workers of England, and in spite of the hopes that the bourgeoisie would, in compensation for their sufferings, make concessions which would permit them to live like human beings, their wages since 1921 have decreased by £10,000,000 per week, and their standard of living has declined in comparison with the pre-war period. This was accompanied by tremendous unemployment. The lesson of experience taught them to feel that the interests of the working class were not compatible with the interests of the bourgeoisie, and that a special Labour Party was necessary, capable of fighting for their interests.

And how did the Labour Party propose to fight for the interests of the working class? It expounded to the English proletariat the programme of reformist democratic Socialism, *i.e.*, that a majority of the British electors must be won over by propaganda. This is possible because the majority consists of workers. The British working class is not alone in its democratic views, since, according to the leaders of the Labour Party, the British capitalists will submit themselves to the decision of the majority. Of course, they attempted with the aid of bombs flung from aeroplanes, to obtain for themselves the democratic consent of the Mesopotamians and the Hindoos, but in civilised England such things are impossible. The fact that in 1848 the old wolf Wellington kept sufficient troops under arms in London in order to drown in blood a mere demonstration of Chartists has been struck out of the history books of the British Labour Party. It is prepared rationally and humanely to assist British capitalism to reconcile itself with Socialism. This Socialism must come about very slowly; as everybody knows, when a sheep is roasted on a small slow fire, it gets used to it. Will not British capitalists recognise the right of the State to impose taxation? Of course they will; they have always recognised it. And therefore, taxes can be increased until the workers will be relieved of paying the war debt and will not be obliged to live in kennels. And if four railway companies can combine into one and issue new shares in place of old ones, then why cannot the State combine them and itself pay the dividends to the capitalists and improve the situation of the workers by means of the saving effected by a centralised administration and technical perfection? The English capitalists are not expected to renounce the possession of the

colonies. The Labour Party, of course, is against exploitation of the colonies which is accompanied by bloodshed, but supposing it refuses to exploit India, will not some other power seize upon her? India, of course, cannot govern herself. She is not sufficiently civilised. If the English troops are recalled from India, then the Hindoos will immediately start cutting each others' throats. Of course, it was a bad thing when General Dwyer shot down the Indians at Amritsar; the colonial regime must be humanised. But this will not affect profits. As early as the 18th century, it was proved by the economists and philosophers that Labour carried on under the menace of the lash was the least productive. A human regime in the colonies will only serve to increase the productive capacity of the population, and that, of course, will increase profits.

The British Labour Party has still not the majority of the English electorate on its side. At least a half of the workers vote for the bourgeois parties. The Labour Party came into power thanks to the fact that the Conservatives, although in the elections of 1923 they obtained 700,000 more votes than the Labour Party, were nevertheless defeated. Only 30 per cent. of the electorate voted for their programme. The Liberals refused to support the Conservative Party. They themselves received 220,000 less votes than the Labour Party. The king was therefore obliged to request the leaders of the Labour Party to form a Cabinet. As one of them truly remarked, they have managed to become the government, but they are not in power.

Three courses were open to the Labour Party. One was, when coming into power, to lay their fundamental demands before Parliament, in a simple form, which would be understood by the workers, at the same time carrying on an energetic campaign in the country for the reformist programme of the Labour Party in the event that if the two bourgeois parties united against the Labour Party, they would dissolve Parliament and attempt to secure a majority. The second course was to form a coalition with the Liberals and come to an arrangement with them as to the reforms which they would have to introduce under the pressure of the petty-bourgeois masses of the electorate. The third course

was to attempt to remain in power without an open coalition with the Liberals, to tread safely and not to attempt to carry through radical reforms. The Labour Party leaders chose the third course. The first was repugnant to their nature. To adopt a demonstrative policy in Parliament, to make a stormy attack in order to win a majority of the electors, would mean an appeal to Acheron. But to bring the working masses into motion might have the result that they would entirely go beyond the bounds of democracy and legalism. They could only be aroused by a passionate preaching of their class interests. Demands would have to be put forward which would stir the working class to the depths. Men, who, throughout the war and since the war have been extinguishing the revolutionary movement of England, are not now in a position to rekindle it. The section in the Labour Party which advocated this policy was defeated. Neither could the Labour Party leaders form an open coalition with the Liberals, in spite of the fact that last year when the Labour Party conference voted against a coalition with the Liberals, one of the London weeklies, which supports the Labour Party, *The New Statesman*, declared that when the time comes to form a government, this resolution would disappear like the snows of last year. The primitive class consciousness of the working masses had become considerably strengthened. Not only Asquith, the Liberal lemonade seller, but also the cunning fox, Lloyd George, who, in a moment of need, can adopt a more plebian tone than any British Communist, had become completely bankrupt in the eyes of the workers. Ramsay MacDonald followed a known path, he followed the example which had first been given to the Second International by Scheidemann and Haase in 1918. They were cunning enough to form a coalition government with the bourgeoisie even while a Soviet Government existed. On the first floor sat the Social-Democratic Council of Peoples' Commissaries, and on the second floor the bourgeois ministers, the War Minister, General Gruener, who called the strikers filthy curs, the Colonial Governor, Solf, who, when Foreign Minister for Kaiser Wilhelm, brought about the break with Soviet Russia and had the police expel Comrade Joffe, etc., etc. Ramsay MacDonald included in his government Lord Haldane, the former Liberal secretary, who prepared the British army for war, Sir Sidney Olivier, former governor of Jamaica, whose conduct in this capacity

called for only one criticism, namely, that he did not go to church on Sundays, General Thompson, and finally, Lord Chelmsford, former Viceroy of India. These Liberal and Conservative grandees in the Labour Government were intended to prove to the British bourgeoisie that Ramsay MacDonald did not intend to shatter the foundations of British imperialism. Thus, in actual fact, we have a coalition government of representatives of the Labour Party and representatives of the imperialist bureaucracy, standing for the interests of finance capital.

Correspondingly, the policy of the government is a policy of marking time. In spite of the hubbub it raised about the capital levy for the purpose of wiping off the national debt, the Labour Party is going to use the Conservative Budget for the next year. More, it declares that it has no intention of raising the question of the capital levy, since this question was not a decisive factor at the elections and on it the Labour Party has not a majority of the electors behind it. The question of unemployment is entirely ignored, the outcries against war have ceased, the pacifist tears are dried. The whole world is now expecting a bold step on the road to disarmament. Both the working classes and the bourgeois governments of all countries know perfectly well that a new war is brewing. General Hamilton, author of a book on the Russo-Japanese War, says that in the next war aeroplanes will hover over towns like vultures. Civilians have no idea of the destructive power of the modern bombs. He, as a man who understood war, was in favour of peace and reconciliation between nations. If resort is made to arms, England and Europe will suffer a catastrophe a hundred times greater than the Japanese earthquake. This is the opinion of the best known representative of the bourgeoisie not only in England, but everywhere. The bourgeois world has arrived at an impasse. It knows very well that it is going headlong to ruin, but has not the determination to pull itself up. Mutual mistrust and the interests of small capitalist groups are driving it into a fresh war. If the British Labour Government, courageously brought forward the question of disarmament, in which it would have the full support of the Soviet Government, it would not only bring the workers of the whole world into the struggle, but would also kindle a powerful movement among the petty bourgeoisie. The

Liberals would not dare to oppose such an initiative, since they are supported by a large section of the petty bourgeois voters. But the MacDonald Government will never decide to take this step from fear of its revolutionary consequences. It will continue to arm, deceiving the workers by rejecting for the time being the construction of the naval base at Singapore, although everybody who is following world politics knows that the project has been renounced only because it is now unnecessary to British imperialism : Japan has been so enfeebled by the earthquake that the construction of a Singapore base at the present time is unnecessary.

The policy of the Labour Government will permit it to remain in power only as long as the Conservatives and Liberals find it suits their own purposes. They need a breathing space in order to restore order in their ranks and to give the workers time to become disillusioned with their Labour Government. By depending upon their complaisance the Labour Government is losing the chance of winning a majority of the electors by a courageous, although reformist, policy.

III.

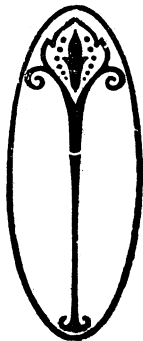
The coming to power of the British Labour Party has aroused the hopes of the reformists throughout Europe. Hungarian Social-Democrats, who at one time helped Vice-Admiral Horthy to come to power, and who now complain of the inhumanity of the Hungarian counter-revolution, are being drawn to London. The eyes of the German Social-Democrats are turned towards London ; having lost all hope in Uncle Sam, having pledged all their cards, they are now sitting on their haunches or waiting for the consolation of the uncle from London. Even the Polish Social-Democrats come to London to assure MacDonald, the friend of peace, that when they welcomed the march of Marshal Pilsudsky upon Kiev, it was solely from love of peace and hatred for the dictatorship of the proletariat, which Ramsay MacDonald had himself denounced in many books and speeches. But the Labour Party will deceive its Second International friends as they deceived it. When the German Social-Democrats came into power, the Social-Democrats of all countries hoped that they would put an end to nationalist

counter-revolution in Germany, that they would inspire the German people with the democratic pacifist spirit and root out the spirit of nationalism and militarism. But as we know, they, on the contrary, became the foster parents of German counter-revolution.

The reformist epidemic affected even certain Communist parties and Communist writers. The Communist Party of Great Britain sent an address of welcome to the British Labour Government. Comrade Ravenstein, a very good Communist, went so far as to declare in the Dutch *Tribune* that the coming to power of the Labour Party was in a certain sense an event of no less importance than the October Revolution in Russia. The October Revolution in Russia was the conquest of power by the working class. The actual coming into power of the English working class would be more significant than the coming to power of the Russian working class was, since British capitalism is ten times more powerful than Russian capitalism was in pre-war days. But alas, the so-called Labour Government of England by no means signified that the English working class has come into power; it is not even the beginning of the fight for power. It is simply indicative of the great crisis which has overtaken British capitalism, in face of which the leaders of the Labour Party are no less helpless than the British bourgeoisie. At the very best the Labour Government is only a faint hint of a great fact, namely, that the working class, and the working class alone, is destined to put an end to the crisis. The task of world Communism is to take advantage of the impending bankruptcy of the British Labour Government in order to render the workers of the world more class conscious, to use this great historical opportunity to prove to them that there is no salvation except in a determined class struggle. The British Communists, of course, can perform this task only by criticising the Labour Government at every step, at the same time supporting every movement of the working class or section of the working class directed towards compelling the Labour Government to fight. Not false congratulations (we do not think for a moment that our British comrades believed that Henderson and MacDonald were capable of conducting the class struggle)—but cold, calm and pensive criticism, the organisation of the forces of

the Labour class, in order to bring pressure to bear upon the Labour Government—that is the task of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Only to the extent that the Party is capable of carrying out this task will it be able to take advantage of the bankruptcy of the Labour Government in order to win over the masses to its side. For the first time in history the British Communists have been given the opportunity of transforming themselves from a sect into a mass party of the proletariat. Every step they therefore take with regard to the Labour Government must be cautiously and carefully considered.

K. RADEK.



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