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Fifth Congress of the Communist International

REPORT

Work of the Executive Committee

of the

Communist International

by

Comrade G. Zinoviev

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CHAPTER I.

Policy of Comintern Until Fifth Congress.

Our Forces.

Comrades, at this Congress we have to outline our future path, but first of all I would like to examine the path which we have hitherto pursued. We must do this, first of all, because, for the first time we have to pursue our work in the International Congress without the leadership and influence of comrade Lenin; secondly, because in many respects the international situation has now almost completely changed; thirdly, because we are, in a way, holding a jubilee Congress.

Recently we have celebrated the Fifth Anniversary of the Communist International. Four world-congresses lie behind us, and they mark four stages in the history of the international revolutionary working-class movement. Permit me therefore, to make a short historical review of the development of the Communist International. I shall examine this history from two points of view.

Firstly: our strength at the beginning of the Communist International and the extent we have grown during these years.

Secondly: the conflict of tendencies inside the Communist International and the review of these conflicts of tendencies at the four world-congresses hitherto held.

From a Propagandist Society into a Party.

First of all, we must compare our present numerical strength with what it has been hitherto. I think it is quite clear by now that the Communist International, in its earliest years, in a number of countries, was only a society for the propaganda of communism without being aware of it itself. At the beginning, we thought we were very strong, but as a matter of fact in a number of countries at that time we did not

have Communist Parties, but only great propaganda societies. Whence came this optical illusion? It arose from the fact that the discontent of the masses, at the end of the imperialist war, was very great, and we took this seething discontent for an organised communist force. But it was not really so. The example of our German brother-party will suffice to illustrate this.

After the First Congress, during the January rising of the Spartacists, we believed that our German Party was a very great force. The discontent of the masses was very great. Their hostility to the bourgeoisie, and partly also to the social democrats, was intense. We communists thought we were the vanguard of this great movement. If we now look back upon these events, we see them quite clearly. The Spartacus rising was one of the most glorious struggles of the working class. But what actually was our Party? It was still very small, it was a great propaganda society of communism which was only at the beginning of the process of winning over the masses. And it was so equally in other countries. In order therefore, to have a clear standard, by which to gauge our present position, we must not overlook the facts which I have mentioned. In spite of all weaknesses, in spite of all the shortcomings of our sections, we are now, in a number of countries, no longer propaganda societies, but we have grown into a Communist Party, and in part, even into a communist mass-Party.

Struggle of Tendencies.

Now let us consider the question of the struggle of tendencies inside the Communist International. Several things have to be cleared up in order to correctly understand the conflict of tendencies which, at this Fifth Congress it will be difficult for us to avoid. As far as the programme side of the question is concerned, I am in agreement with what is said in the instructions of the Communist Party of Germany to its delegation to the Fifth Congress. I believe this document is generally known. This document appears to me, in the main to be acceptable to all of us, and will help us to arrive at the decisions we have to take here.

Bedrock of the Comintern.

The German Communist Party observes six important programme documents in our five years of activity, which, so to speak forms the bedrock of the Communist International. These are: the theses on dictatorship and democracy, which comrade Lenin presented to the First Congress; Lenin's theses on the agrarian and national questions, adopted by the Second Congress; then there are the 21 points; the resolution of the Second Congress on the formation of Soviets: the conditions under which workers' councils may be established, and their historical role.

All these theses were not accepted by the Communist International without a struggle. But there has been far more controversy over questions of a purely tactical nature.

That Bolshevism was born of the struggle against opportunism, against the right wing, against the social democrats, and against the centrists, is generally known, and does not need proving here. The communist very largely came from the Second International. One may palpably feel the existence of two component parts of the Communist International.

Legacy of the Past.

The first part is that section of the Comintern which was born of the II International: former social democrats; the second, is the new generation of workers which have grown up during and after the war. Both sections have their strong and their weak sides. It is generally known that the tactics of the Communist International, the tactics of Bolshevism and Leninism, developed themselves mainly in the struggle against social democracy, against the right wing, and against the centrists. It is clear therefore that Leninism could not but fight, even now, against the survivals of social democracy which naturally were and are present in the Communist International.

It is less known, however, that Bolshevism had to conduct great struggles against other digressions, frequently described as "left" or "ultra-left." It is self evident that they are not "left." There is nothing more "left" than Leninism, than revolutionary Marxism.

It is customary to describe these digressions as "left." Bolshevism fought against these "left" digressions before the revolution; in the Communist International itself, its founder and leader Lenin carried on great struggles against these digressions on an international scale, as the Executive Council has to do now.

CHAPTER II.

Four Congresses of the Comintern.

First Congress.

The First Congress took place at a moment when the rejoicing over the victory of the Russian Revolution was still fresh, and when the defeat and its significance of the Spartacus rising in Germany was still not clear to us. The first inaugural congress passed without any great internal struggle. As far as I remember, we had only one disagreement; it was over the question as to whether the International should be established at that congress. The representative of the German Communist Party was against its immediate establishment. During the Second Congress we already had a clear and definite struggle of tendencies. We began the fight first of all against the right. You will remember the 21 points which were to be the bulwark against centrism. Already at that time Lenin and the comrades who supported him, were obliged to carry on a struggle even against the "left", on the question of parliamentarism. A section of the comrades took sides against making use of parliament, and among them was comrade Bordiga.

Second Congress.

Further, at the Second Congress there was a struggle over the question of the trade unions. Some American, (the late John Reed) and German comrades demanded the withdrawal from the social democratic trade-unions, and comrade Lenin carried on a stern struggle from his side, on this point. There was also a struggle at the Second Congress against the Communist Labour Party of Germany. Several "ultra-left" syndicalists declared: "We do not need a party, at least not until after the revolution."

Thus, already at the Second Congress we had the struggle against the centrists, and struggles no less vigorous against the so-called extreme left; and these struggles were led by comrade Lenin. There were also differences of opinions on the questions as to whether the English comrades should affiliate to the Labour Party. You will remember that many comrades were opposed to this course—not only the English. Thus, for instance, comrade Wynkoop, who is with us to-day, on that occasion fought like a lion against the English communists joining the Labour Party. He regarded it as opportunism. Well, time passes and men change. Nowadays, comrade Wynkoop is accused of other digressions, not towards the left. We shall see later to what extent these changes are justified. All this shows, comrades, that the struggle of tendencies within the Communist International from the beginning has been rather severe.

Third Congress.

The third stage is the Third World-Congress. You will remember the struggle against the so-called theory of the offensive, after the March rising in Germany. That was represented as a fight against revolutionary tendencies. As a matter of fact it was not a fight against the "lefts", but against "left digressions." This struggle was also carried on by Lenin, and represents one of the most important moments in the history of the Communist International. An equally severe struggle was being conducted at that time against Levi (who was expelled at the Third Congress), against the opportunist tendencies in the then Italian movement; but at the same time, there was also a struggle against Terracini, Bordiga, and against several comrades who are now on the so-called extreme left. We may say that, at the Third Congress, comrade Lenin defeated in advance the present political position of comrade Bordiga.

Fourth Congress.

Finally there was the Fourth Congress. The Fourth Congress is still in your memories and I need not dwell on its work in detail. The slogan of the "workers' government" was

adopted, the tactics of the united front were approved, and at the same time the Rome "left" theses of the Italians, with which we shall yet have to deal here, were severely criticised and rejected. You thus see, comrades, that from the beginning, the Communist International, in order to remain Marxist, or Leninist—as we should say,—has carried on the severest struggles against the centrists and opportunists, and at the same time, has fought back the extreme left digressions.

There are, comrades, not bad revolutionaries who often reproach us in the following manner:

"The Executive fights now against the right, now against the left, which indicates an absence of principle; it should be firmly decided once and for all in which direction we are to fight, so that we shall not fight to-day the "right" and tomorrow against the "left." Of course, the best way to fight against the so-called ultra-left digression is by combatting the real opportunist mistakes and errors of the right. (Hear; Hear).

Complete Leninism.

But comrades, the very opposite frequently is true. Therefore, we cannot be said to be lacking in principles because we combat also the ultra-left digressions; it should rather be taken as the very essence of Marxism. What would you say if someone came along and said: "I am a Marxian, I accept Marxism, but I draw the line at the things which Marx wrote against Proudhonism" which, as you know, was also an extremely "left" digression from Marxism. But Marxism without combatting Proudhonism is not Marxism at all.

Now, comrades, this applies also with regard to Leninism. I know some good comrades who say: "Yes, everything that Lenin has written is excellent, but his book on "Infantile Sickness" is not quite correct; it was, perhaps, a slight digression towards the "right" on the part of Lenin; for there are no "infantile sicknesses" in the Communist International to speak of. If we are children at all, then we are prodigies who do not suffer from infantile sickness."

Comrades we must see clearly the things which lie behind such ideas. Leninism, without the idea developed by Lenin in

his "Infantile Sickness" ceases to be Leninism. This should be seen quite clearly, and the comrade who would support Leninism without the ideas developed in his book on "Infantile Sickness" remind me of the French peasant at the time of the French Revolution who is reported to have exclaimed: "Long live the king, but without the salt duty!" (Vive le Roi, sans la gabelle!)

Comrades, we need complete Leninism, without reservations including the "gabelle" (i. e. unsparing criticism even of "left" digressions). We follow the old way which Lenin has taught us, and which is by no means "unprincipled." We must not regard things from the petty bourgeoisie viewpoint and argue that, because to-day we have to combat the "right", and to-morrow the so-called "ultra-left", therefore we have no principle. Imagine for a moment, that we are steering a warship to a definite destination. Our route lies through a mine field, of which we have not the plan. The mines are scattered both to your right and to your left. We have to steer our ship clear of these mines. Would you accuse the captain in charge of not having a principle because he steers now to the right and now to the left in order to reach his destination? I mention this because there are good "left" comrades, like Bordiga, who quite honestly prefer such charges against us, declaring that the Comintern has ceased to have a principle, because it now fights against the "right" and now against the "left." It should be pointed out that the same things are said by our opponents in the Second International.

I have briefly reviewed the past history of the Communist International, in order that we might all see that Leninism, not only when it is confined to Russia, but when it became international through the Communist International, has always directed its blows principally against the "right", against "centrists", and against the survivals of social-democracy in our own ranks. But, in order to do the work successfully, it has to follow the example set by Marx in his fight against the Proudhonist tendency, by combatting the so-called ultra-left tendencies which we regard as petty-bourgeois. Therefore we will continue our course, whatever may be said about us, and in spite of the outcry about our alleged lack of principle.

This is the application of the tactics of Marxism, and consequently of Leninism, in the present conditions.

What Comrade Lenin Has Taught.

At this juncture I would like to quote a passage from one of the most brilliant articles comrade Lenin ever wrote; from his article "The importance of gold before and after the establishment of socialism", which I consider to be one of the most important revolutionary contributions of Lenin. In this article he says:

"The supreme danger, and perhaps the only danger, to a true revolutionary is to exaggerate the revolutionary situation, as well as to forget about the limits and conditions for the appropriate and successful application of revolutionary methods. True revolutionaries have frequently come to grief by writing the word revolution in large letters, and by making a fetish of "Revolution", thus losing their heads and the ability to weigh the circumstances calmly and soberly, and to discriminate between the moment when one has to act in a revolutionary manner and the moment in which one has to proceed in a reformist fashion.

"True revolutionaries will certainly go under (not as a result of external defeat, but as a result of the internal collapse of their cause) if they lose their sang-froid and imagine that the "great", victorious world-revolution can and must solve all problems in all circumstances of time and place, exclusively in the revolutionary manner."

Comrade Bordiga, I regret to say, has not yet arrived here, but to comrade Rossi, who shares his opinions, I would recommend to read these words twice daily, at least during his stay in Moscow. He would greatly benefit by it (applause).

You will observe, comrades, that Lenin even wrote of the admissibility of reformist action. He must have used the word advisedly in order to bring out his idea in greater relief,

but of course there was no question of a system of reformist action—or of reformist theory as opposed to Marxism: the word “reformist” was employed in order to emphasize the principle idea and even to tease the “ultra-left.”

Thus, in order to wage a correct and successful fight against the right tendencies, which are still prevalent in our movement, we must remember, the things which our great teacher and leader has taught us in the past, both when Bolshevism was yet confined to Russia, and when it became an international movement.

We shall now deal with the period between the Fourth and Fifth World Congresses, which was marked by very heated debates among the various tendencies. I shall try to indicate the more important questions of principle with which we had to deal during this period.

CHAPTER III.

From Fourth Congress to Fifth Congress.

Fight Against Frossard.

Immediately after the Fourth World-Congress, the fight commenced against Frossard in France. This chapter, as you know, has now been closed. We can now render to Frossard our thanks, on behalf of the French Party and of the International, for his conduct. Frossard has acted like a plaster which has withdrawn the puss from the sores on the body of the Communist Party of France, thus healing it.

The second fight, which led to a split, was the fight against the so-called Norwegian Labour Party. The latter was an outspoken semi-reformist, semi right syndicalist party. It is quite that clear Lian, one of the leaders of the Party and the chairman of the Trade Union Federation, is the most vulgar social traitor. This will surely be admitted now, even by comrade Hoeglund.

Fight Against “Right” Errors

In Italy too, we had to fight against the leaders of the “right” Socialist Party.

In Sweden the Executive had to rectify the right tendencies of the Swedish Party. It is as yet early to judge the extent to which this work has been successful.

Next comes the Bulgarian events which also revealed right-wing digressions. I must emphasize the fact that these "right" aberrations, viewed from an international aspect, represent a phenomenon of the most diversified character. They were connected with the traditions and culture of the movement of each given country. In Bulgaria it was quite different than in Sweden, and in Great Britain the situation was utterly different from that in Norway; in Russia (opposition), different to France, etc. Nevertheless, all these tendencies deserve to be called "right" tendencies. You know the decisions of the Executive on the Bulgarian question. We believe that the best leaders of the Bulgarian Party have acknowledged that the Executive was right. The Bulgarian Party has already made good in many ways.

The German Communist Party.

Then comes the German Party. Here too we had to fight the "right." It has been said for instance, in the Czech press, that the Executive Committee has removed all the old heads of the German Party. The Executive Committee cannot claim all the credit for this service for itself. The contrary would be more true. We supported the former Executive Committee for too long, for reasons with which we shall deal later on. Thus, the Executive had to fight in Germany against "right tendencies."

The Discussion in the Russian Party.

Then comes the Russian Party discussion, which was of great international significance (with which the Congress will deal in detail later on).

The Russian Party has branded these digressions as petty-bourgeois aberrations. These digressions differed considerably from those in other countries. They have a great international significance. I have before me an article published in the Scheidemann "Vorwärts" on the Russian Party Congress, which asks:

"What has become of the opposition, which only six months ago was so much talked about and which gave rise to so many hopes?"

Whose hopes were raised by the opposition? It turns out that it was the German counter-revolutionary social democrats! Most of these hopes were not fulfilled, and I hope they will never be fulfilled. (Applause). It has come to such a pass that this same "Vorwärts" in the same number devotes a whole article to comrade Radek, in which it is said that Radek differs from the other leaders of the Communist International by his clear and sane appreciation of things, etc. (Hear, hear!) I do not mean that in this question comrade Radek has earned the praise of the social democratic "Vorwärts", still to a certain extent he has deserved it. And if hitherto, comrade Radek has not had a clear notion of the whole situation, I believe that this article will make him, as an experienced politician, to think furiously. He will surely want to know why the "Vorwärts" considers him to be a clear headed and sane politician.

The "Right" Digression in the French Communist Party.

Unfortunately, the Executive also had to contend against a new "right" in the French movement. I have already said that Frossard acted like a plaster which drew out of the Party all that was unhealthy in it. It would be perhaps more cautious on my part to say: almost all.

Some aberrations of these "right" tendencies are of a dangerous nature. Loebe recently delivered a speech in the Reichstag in which he said:

"The British Labour Government and the left bloc in France inaugurate a new era in the history of the world, which will bring peace to humanity", etc.

This is an indication that democratic-pacifist views will make their appearance also among the social democratic masses of Germany. This, of course, is not so bad when it comes from Loebe. But when comrade Rosmer writes in almost the same strain on behalf of the French Party, he unfortunately makes himself the mouthpiece of pacifist and democratic illusions. Thus we have a "right" in the French Party.

Fortunately, it is not very numerous, and I hope that it will not be long lived. I believe it will be as short-lived as the Marsal Cabinet, which as you know, was very puny and soon died. The Executive will do its part in preventing the formation of such a "right" which is represented by some comrades, as for instance by comrade Souvarin who, the more he talks, the more he contradicts himself,—generally speaking, comrade Souvarin's worst enemy is Souvarin himself,—and also, by comrade Rosmer and Monat from whom better things were expected. The French Party as a whole has fought strongly and quite properly against this tendency.

Digressions in the American Movement.

We must also combat some digressions to the right in the American movement; these digressions made their appearance in connection with the Third Party, the La Follette Party; the tendency to form a common election platform with this petty-bourgeois movement. This was a difficult problem with American conditions because the movement there is rather backward and even the elementary idea of an independent Labour Party is new. The average worker in America still votes for bourgeois parties, for he still hopes eventually to become an "independent" employer himself. It was not by any means an easy matter to come to a decision. Nevertheless, the Executive Committee decided to oppose these tactics, and as events have shown we were quite right.

There were also tendencies to the "right" in the English Party. I drew up a memorandum two or three months before the Vth. Congress in which we warned the Party that it was making grave mistakes in the way it was carrying out the policy of the United Front. We agree with what the German comrades have said about this in their instructions to their delegation.

Fight Against "Ultra-Lefts" and Theoretic Revisionism.

You see therefore that the Executive has combatted the "right" in all its various forms. At the same time we have had to combat certain tendencies of the "extreme left."

With regard to the German brother party, there have been moments when we have been in a very pessimistic mood. You are already familiar with the two letters of the Executive. We feared that on the trade-union question the German comrades would succumb to the "new tactics." This might have caused much harm. We were right to oppose these digressions to the "left", and we did so with considerable success. At one moment, not only the "left", but even the "centre" and several members of the "right," declared that the exit from the trade unions was inevitable. I cannot speak with certainty of the "right", but I can assert this definitely of the "centre." Two influential comrades from the "centre" came to Moscow and implored us not to oppose the "left" on this question, because, they said, the whole of the German workers were in favour of leaving the trade unions. They said that this movement was almost a "natural force." They begged and implored us not to oppose it. Nevertheless, we did oppose it, and successfully.

We were right, and the German Party itself laid down the right lines at the Frankfurt Congress. This particular danger no longer exists for the German Party, and naturally we are very glad of it.

If the German Party and the Executive had not been sufficiently firm on this question, dangerous consequences might have followed. The German Trade Unions are now reviving. Everyone recognises this. Had the Party been underground, or half-underground, we would have been lost. If we had allowed the Communists to leave the unions, then instead of a mass party, we would have had a sect. We must fight the extreme left. Even granted that numerically this was only a very small stream, but small streams become big rivers.

If we mean to stick to our principles, if we are going to pay more than lip-service to Leninism, then we must remember the words which I have already quoted from Lenin. We must not let this extreme left tendency grow up into theoretical revisionism which is spreading and becoming an international phenomenon.

Comrade Graziadei, in Italy, published a book containing a reprint of the articles he wrote, when he was a social dem-

ocratic revisionist, attacking Marxism. This theoretical revisionism cannot be allowed to pass with impunity. Neither will we tolerate our Hungarian comrade, Lukacs, doing the same in the domain of philosophy and sociology. I have received a letter from comrade Rudas, one of the leaders of this fraction. He explains that he intended to oppose Lukacs, but the fraction forbade him to do so; thereupon, he left the fraction because he could not see Marxism watered down. Well done Rudas! We have a similar tendency in the German Party. Comrade Graziadei is a professor, Korsch is also a professor— (Interruptions: "Lukacs is also a professor!"). If we get a few more of these professors spinning out their Marxist theories, we shall be lost. We cannot tolerate such theoretical revisionism of this kind in our Communist International.

Criticisms of "Die Internationale".

In the last number of the "Die Internationale" (organ of the German Communist Party) you will see an article by Boris who regards himself as being among the extreme left. (Severing: "He is not a professor!"). For a wonder he is not a professor, but neither is he a communist, or at least not a Marxist! However, I hand him over to comrade Bukharin, who will deal with him in his speech on the Programme. But, comrades, the German workers will not stand having non-Marxist programmes printed in their theoretical journal. For example: this Boris asserts that there is no such thing as super-profit from the colonies. But this is just the song we hear from the Second International. The imperialism of social democracy is founded on this very fact of the super-profit which imperialist countries take from the colonies. Comrade Korsch "defends" comrade Lenin against various digressions from Leninism. I think we may give comrade Korsch the friendly advice immediately to take up the study of Marxism and Leninism. I hear that the German Central Committee has passed a resolution repudiating Boris' article—it is a good thing it has done this, but that alone is not enough.

I don't think I am asking too much of the German Party if I ask them to have their publication "Die Internationale" produced by Marxists and not by those who still have to learn

Marxism. If comrade Graziadei is a confirmed revisionist, I am sorry for it; for in many respects he is a good comrade; but it is impossible to be both a revisionist and a communist at the same time. The Communist International cannot allow a free hand to our comrades in such matters. All of us are so taken up with political affairs that we do not trouble to read this article. Many of us say: "We have no time to read it." This is neither a Leninist nor a Marxist attitude. There is a whole generation of young students and workers who want to educate themselves as communists who will read it. We must clear up this question completely. We cannot allow this state of affairs to continue.

"Right Danger" Should Not Be Under-estimated.

Now comrades, as I have said, 90 per-cent of our battles this year have been against digressions to the right. I think this will also be the case at the present Congress. I admit at once that the more one studies the documents of our brother parties the more one sees that dangers from the "right" cannot be under-estimated, that they are greater than any of us imagined. This is not because our people are bad, but it arises from the features of the present period of world history. Just now we are in the trough of two great waves of revolution and in such a period, dangers of "right" digressions are inevitable. The survivals of social democracy are more prevalent in our camp than we ever realised. We must and we shall eradicate these "right" digressions, but we shall succeed in this only if we make absolutely no concessions to wordy radicalism, and "theoretical" revisionism; and if we immediately suppress deliberate extreme left digressions, the very moment they acquire any importance.

CHAPTER IV.

Situation at Fifth Congress.

Do We Make Slow Progress?

What is the situation, now, at the moment of the opening of the Fifth Congress? Many think events are not moving fast enough. We are all dissatisfied, victory has not come;

everything is proceeding far too slowly. We expected the German Revolution; it failed to come; the difficulties are great. Sometimes one gets the feeling that it is a wretchedly slow process. Subjectively speaking, this is correct. Certainly, from the standpoint of our subjective feelings, it is very slow; for we must wait for the termination of the MacDonald period in England, of the Left Bloc, in France, and of the present events in Germany.

It would really be delightful if we were marching forward at a more rapid pace. But objectively speaking, I believe that the march of events really is not so slow. It is said that when a fly is sitting on a large mill-wheel and the wheel is turning very rapidly, the fly feels as though the wheel is standing still. The same is true with us. The wheel of world history is turning very rapidly.

Results of Five Years.

The results of these five years may be summed up as follows:

1. A half dozen monarchies have been overthrown; one of which is the Russian monarchy. That certainly is something. (Hear, hear!) This overthrow of Russian Czarism is of great significance for the world revolution.

2. We have conquered a sixth of the surface of the globe. Five-sixths remain to be won, it is true, but we have already won and consolidated one-sixth.

3. Development in Asia and in other remote regions was greatly stimulated by the war.

4. Capitalism in the more developed countries has been shaken and partly disorganised.

5. The labour aristocracy, the petty bourgeoisie as represented by the Social Democracy, has become a necessary component part of bourgeois government. This marks an advance. Certainly, they are counter-revolutionary and traitors, but objectively speaking, it is a step in advance because it is a symptom of the decay of the bourgeoisie.

6. The communist parties have grown. We are no longer a mere propagandist society; we are developing into communist world parties.

This balance is rather meagre, it is true. We expected more: but it is not quite as bad as one is inclined to imagine.

During the past year the movement flared up in Bulgaria, in Germany, and in Poland. It is perfectly clear that it was no mere accident, but a symptom that we were between two waves of the revolution. In general, during this year, many events occurred in International politics and in the International labour movement; a Labour Government in Great Britain; elections in Germany, France, and Italy; a Labour Government in Denmark; vigorous development of the petty-bourgeois movement in America; a strike in Norway lasting half a year; dissolution of the Two and a Half International; the International Conference of Transport Workers; a strike wave in Great Britain; a railway strike in China; a strike of 150,000 textile workers in India, etc. Thus important events took place. We have not yet obtained a complete victory, but we are moving forwards.

CHAPTER V.

Economic World-situation.

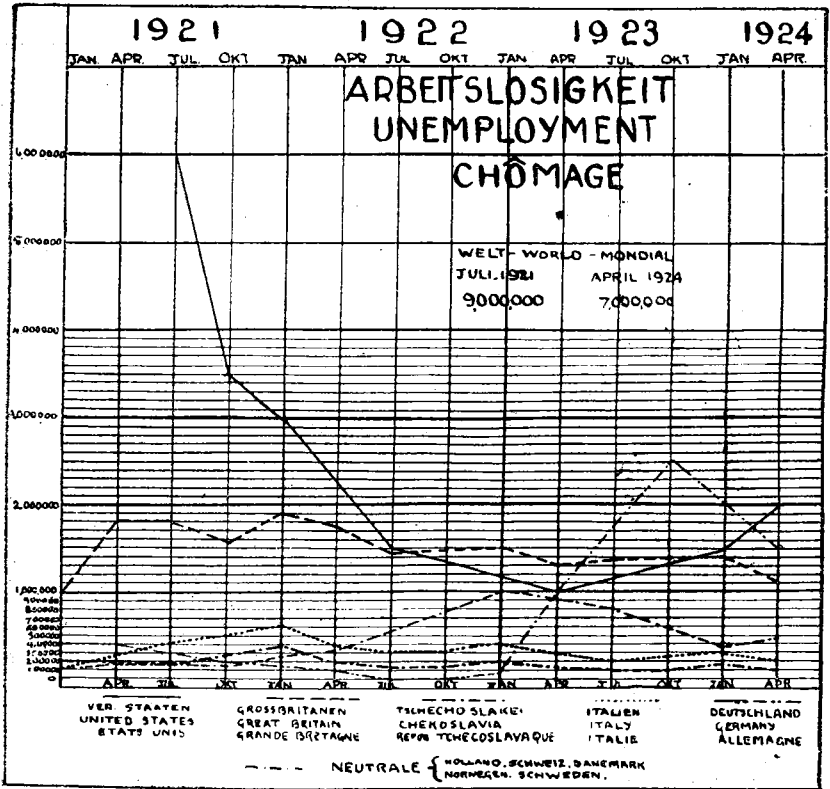
Decay of Capitalism Continues.

I now come to the World economic situation. We will hear a special report on this subject by Comrade Varga. As far as I can see, I believe that Comrade Varga's estimate is correct.

No one has proved that there is anything wrong in his theses. The estimate is correct, and what is this estimate? The Third and Fourth Congresses discussed the matter. Very little need be changed therein. Capitalism is still in the period of decline. A new economic crisis is beginning in America; there is a world agrarian crisis. In some countries there is a partial revival mainly at the expense of other countries. The social democrats consider that the situation is becoming normal. Hilferding is triumphant. He says that we are now approaching a new period of stability. In the magazine, "Die Gesellschaft" he claims that things will become normal as soon as stability has been restored in

Central Europe. Only this "petty detail" is missing—this stability cannot be obtained. This stability exists only in Soviet Russia, in the very country in which, he says, the situation is not normal.

If this is "normalcy"—that the currency in Germany, in



Austria, and in Poland has collapsed, recovered, but must undoubtedly collapse again—if that is normal—you may have your normalcy with pleasure. If what is happening to the French franc is normal, we hope such "normalcy" will continue. If it is normal that an agrarian crisis has gripped the whole world, that 40% of the farmers in America are facing poverty, if it is normal to have now about 7 millions of unemployed—if that is normal, then this "normalcy" merely con-

firmly the extent of the crisis now prevailing in the bourgeois world.

We know very well that the class struggle is growing more acute; that the standard of wages for the working class is continually falling — in Germany 20% to 40% lower than in 1923, — that the working week far exceeds 48 hours, that even in England the real wages often amount only to 75% of pre-war wages; that in France, where there is no unemployment, where there is a great amount of immigration, the cost of living has risen much more than the increase in wages; that in Germany, Austria, Hungary, and a number of other countries, the real wages amount to only 50%—75% of the pre-war wages. Thus, not only relatively, but absolutely speaking, the condition of the working class is continually getting worse.

Therefore, we must declare that events are not moving as rapidly as we thought they would. But the period of crisis, the period of decline and fall, is continuing. In the political field this is more evident than in the economic field, because the political field is a more sensitive barometer than the economic field. A stabilisation of the world economic situation is out of the question. The bourgeoisie takes a gloomier view of the situation than the social democrats — these lackeys of the bourgeoisie — because the bourgeoisie is much closer to economic realities. There is no occasion for us to revise our opinion in this matter, as expressed in the resolution of the Third and Fourth Congresses.

CHAPTER VI.

International Political Situation.

New Pacifist Phase.

The world political situation. Here, comrades, we are facing a somewhat new situation. A new phase has set in. We foretold this phase in the resolution of the Fourth Congress — the so-called “democratic-pacifist” phase. In the resolution of the Fourth Congress we said:

“The characteristics of the international political situation

at this moment are fascism, martial law, and the growing wave of white terror against the working class. But that does not exclude the possibility that in the near future, in very important countries, open bourgeois reaction will be replaced by a "democratic-pacifist" era."

That was written in 1922. Thus, a year and a half ago the C.I. directly prophesied this democratic pacifist era.

Period of New Illusions.

Hence, when martial law prevailed, we foretold the coming of the democratic-pacifist era. I believe we must now do exactly the reverse; during the "democratic-pacifist" era we must foresee the return of the period of martial law and of fascism, and raging bourgeois counter-revolution. The "democratic-pacifist" era will hardly last much longer. We foresaw that. We said:

"In Great Britain (strengthening of the Labour Party at the recent elections), and in France (the inevitably approaching crisis in the so-called "left bloc") such a "democratic-pacifist" transition period is probable and may cause a revival of the pacifist hopes in bourgeois and social-democratic Germany. Between the present period of the rule of open bourgeois reaction and the complete victory of the revolutionary proletariat, various stages, and various transitional episodes are possible."

The Communist International foresaw these very important events. Well, now they have come to pass. We actually have an entirely new situation before us, a sort of democratic-pacifist period in the most important countries of Europe: in Great Britain—the Labour Government; in France—the Left Bloc, with the Social-Democrats forming a de facto, but not a de jure part of the government; in Denmark—a Labour Government; in Austria—a great victory of the Social-Democrats; in Belgium—Vandervelde will probably enter the Government soon; a new government in Japan; in Czecho-Slovakia and in Poland—new phenomena, or at least new nuances will arise in connection with the victory of the Left Bloc in France, for Czecho-Slovakia is nothing but a vassal of this bourgeois State. In America we have the acceptance

of the so-called opportunist "Experts' Report" of the bourgeoisie, and the beginning of the movement for the so-called "Third Party." There is also the recognition of Soviet Russia by various countries.

All this taken together represents this democratic-pacifist era: This will undoubtedly awaken new illusions not only among the Social-Democratic workers but also among the less hardened comrades among us, and encourage the semi-conscious "right wingers." We must see this clearly.

Therapeutics Instead of Surgery.

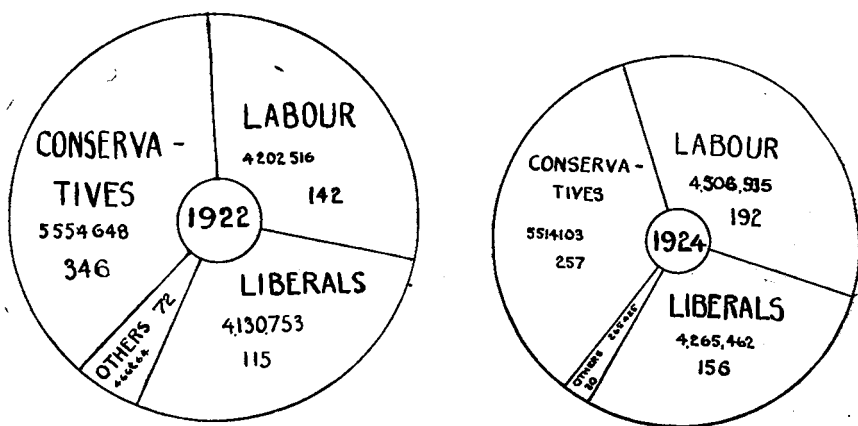
The bourgeoisie has now started to substitute "therapeutics" for "surgery." They know the Experts' Report. I have already said in my opinion this is a noose round the neck of the German working class. But it is a silken noose, and it will be gradually tightened—with pauses for breath—and this is what the Social-Democrats call pacifism and the triumph of democracy! Of course, we will fight this "Experts' Report." We should not have too many illusions; the application of the "Experts' Report" is a huge Utopia. The greater the attempts of these people to conceal the differences among the imperialist bourgeoisie, of the various countries, the more rapidly will this patch-work collapse. It is like a torn sock—the more it is darned with bad wool, the more it tears. The more patches these people make and the more they say "We are in complete harmony now, we have only one programme"—the sooner will it become obvious that this "Experts' Report" is nothing but a scrap of paper. Of course, we will fight this "Experts' Report" with all our might and expose the treacherous part played by the Social-Democrats.

What else will happen during this democratic pacifist era? I believe, for instance, that the government of the French Left Bloc will very soon contribute to the clarification of the situation. The Herriot Government has already exposed its real character in the declaration with which you are all familiar. The French socialists voted for the occupation of the Ruhr and they will have to vote for Herriot's budget. The time is not far off when the Herriot Government will probably shoot down the French workers. Thus, I do not

believe that these illusions will have a foothold in France for any length of time.

Participation of Labour Party in Government Not a Passing Phase.

It is clear now that in Great Britain the MacDonald Government will not be merely a passing phase. On the contrary, I believe that the so-called "Labour Party" will belong to government combinations in one form or another for many years to come. The Labour Party has become too strong, and the power of the bourgeoisie has been too much shaken for it not to be a governmental factor. One can say



Elections in Great Britain.

definitely the international Social Democracy has become the "Third Party" of the bourgeoisie: the Third Party, as the part of "democracy" is spoken of in America. But the European Social Democracy, as we know it, is really, objectively speaking, nothing but a Third Party of the world bourgeoisie at the present time.

Therefore I believe that the British Labour Party will probably appear in still other government combinations. Its participation in governments will not be a passing phase; but the longer it governs, the more will the illusions prevailing among the British workers diminish.

Thus, for us, the new international situation was not unexpected. Illusions will arise among many Social Democratic

workers. Loebe probably expressed what was in the minds of many social democratic workers. Moreover, it is possible, that the British Labour Government will come to the rescue of the German Social Democrats by putting them back into the saddle for a time. Thus illusions will unavoidably rise. The task of the Fifth World Congress is to decide how to combat these illusions, how to approach the social democratic and non-party workers—particularly in two most important countries, Great Britain and France,—to make them see clearly what is taking place in Europe, that the “pacifists” are like a “soporific” to put them to sleep. The Experts’ Report contains a number of concealed, cruel demands, but the German working class has not yet spoken, and the international working class also will have its say. Though they may not have the strength, in the immediate future, to frustrate these demands, it is nevertheless our duty to make it clear to the workers, right now, how this matter will end and that we, the communists, will emphasise our standpoint more clearly than we have done hitherto. We must change our methods of agitation because we are facing a new situation; for instance, the question of disarmament.

The War Menace.

Has not the moment arrived when we communists must bring up Friedrich Engel’s question: “Can Europe disarm?” Must we not say: “In Great Britain a Labour Government, a Government of the Second International, is at the helm; in Russia a Soviet Government, a Government of the Third International, is in power, the Cossacks are no longer there, Russian Czarism has disappeared. There is the Labour Government in Great Britain; a Left bloc in France, where the socialists are making part of the Government. A pacifist-democratic era has begun in America; in Austria and in Belgium you are very strong. You do not wish for war. Therefore please tell us—why do you not disarm?”

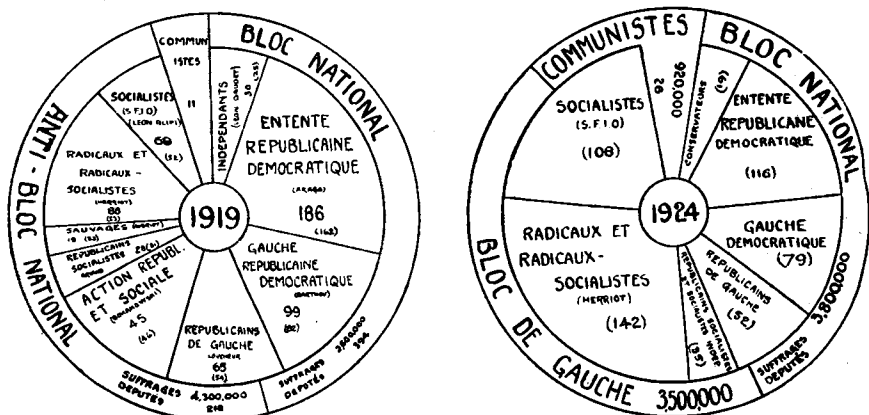
We know very well that they will not only evade this question, but that in Great Britain and in France and everywhere they support armaments.

I have taken this as an example in order to prove that

we have reached a situation in which we must expect the outbreak of a new series of wars, and we must take proper measures.

Problem of Power on the Order of the Day.

That, roughly speaking, is the international situation. I believe, nevertheless, that in spite of the "normal", "pacifist" period, that in the most important countries of bourgeois Europe the problem of power has now arisen. I will soon explain what I mean by that.



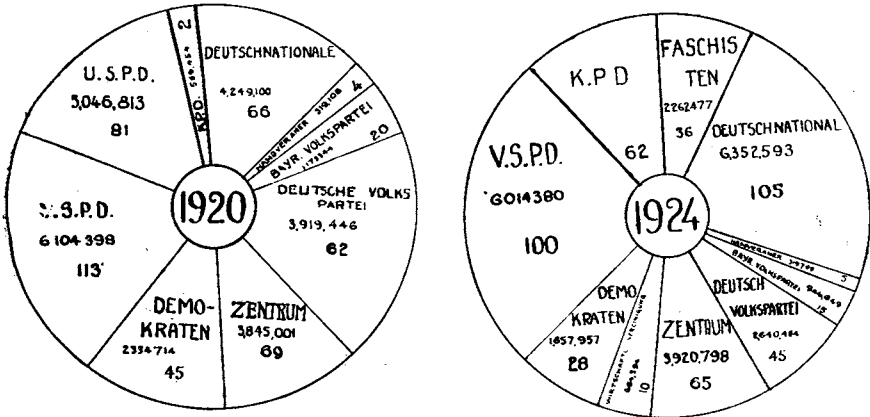
Elections in France.

Comrades, it is claimed that the situation is normal, capitalism is becoming stable, everything is running smoothly, and yet we see government crises after government crises. In the last few weeks a half dozen or so of governments were overthrown. It is not yet the fresh wind of the revolution which is blowing these governments away. But it is a symptom of insecurity. The whole political situation is evidence of that. In the most important European countries the problem of power has arisen; the bourgeoisie cannot rule as it has done hitherto. Naked, clean, (or rather, dirty), frankly class-bourgeois rule is now impossible. In a number of countries the bourgeoisie is forced to resort to trickery—hence the Labour Government in Great Britain and the left bloc with the socialists in France. The bourgeoisie cannot govern as it

has done hitherto. Formerly there was a two-party system in Great Britain. And what do we see now in this classic land of capitalism?

Social-Democracy a Third Party of the Bourgeoisie.

Social democracy has become the "Third Party." Even the British bourgeoisie can no longer rule by the old methods; it resorts to a Labour Government. The bourgeoisie now turns to a Labour Government, now to fascism, and then to social-democracy. The fascists are the right hand, and the social democrats the left hand of the bourgeoisie. That is the new phenomenon in the situation. The problem of power has now arisen, and this is the best symptom of the precariousness



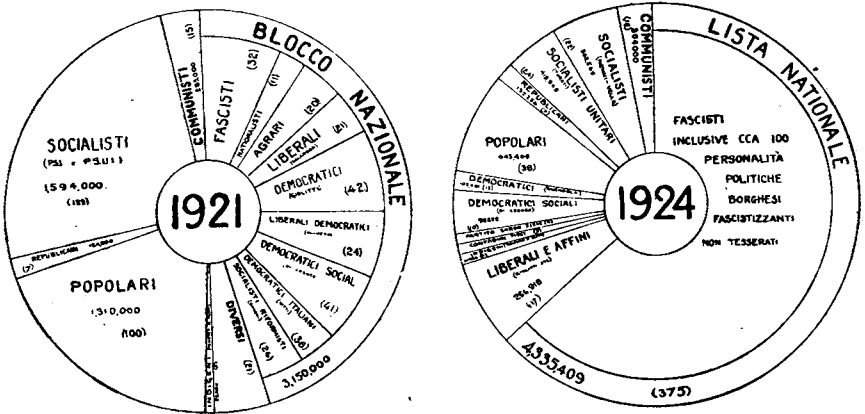
Elections in Germany.

of the whole situation. This is the best symptom of the instability of the position of the bourgeoisie.

We see how the Second International has come to power for the second time. The first time it came to power during the war; the motives which prompted the bourgeoisie in this are clear, but if we have "normalcy" now, why does the bourgeoisie need them? That's just it; the "normal" conditions are far from being normal, and they must be understood. There will come a time when social ministers will blossom out in all the principle countries of Europe. That time will come because the bourgeoisie cannot rule in any other

way. It is forced to transform the social democrats into a bourgeois third party. And social democracy agrees to play this part.

This is the distinguishing feature of the present period. The Second International is supplying ministers for Great Britain, and also for France. The social democrats are being used in Belgium and in a number of other countries, for instance, in Denmark, etc. What does this mean? The social democrats claim that they are enemies of the bourgeoisie. What would have been said had we appointed General Denikin as Minister in the Russian Government? It would have been

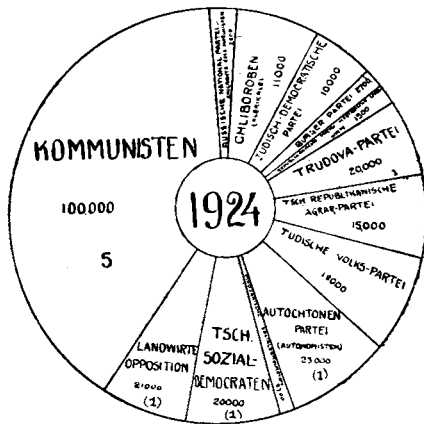


Elections in Italy.

said: "This is a proof that the Soviet Government can no longer govern; it is beginning to totter; the question of power has become a burning question." It is true that social democrats are not of the same significance for the bourgeoisie that Denikin was for us. Still the facts prove that the position of the bourgeoisie is sufficiently unstable to compel it, not only in such small countries as Esthonia and Denmark, but even in Great Britain, to put power, at least for the time being, into the hands of the so-called Labour Government. This is one of the best proofs of how unstable the situation is, and that the situation, objectively speaking, is a revolutionary one. And that again is the tactical key to our position.

The Radek-Brandler Theory is Erroneous.

Take for instance the controversy in the German Party on the notorious victory of Fascism over the November Republic. At present we can say that this question is settled from the German as well as from the international viewpoint. There is no doubt whatever that the social democratic party has become the third bourgeois party, a government party. This is the case



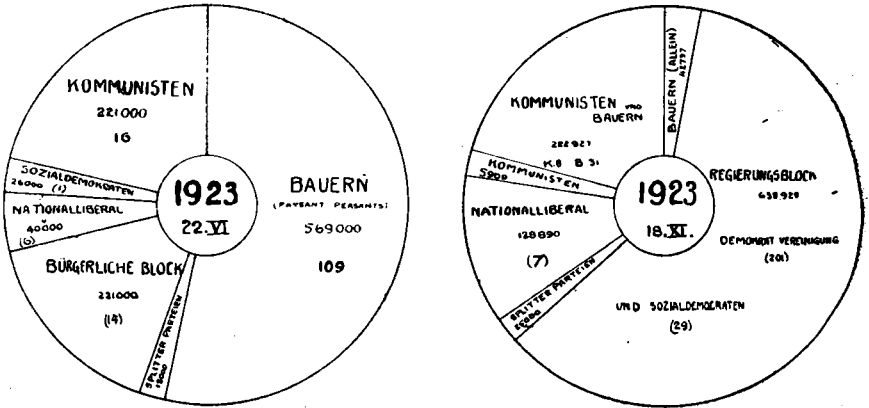
First Parliamentary Elections in Carpathian Russia.

almost in every country. The theory that fascism has conquered social democracy has therefore proved false, which means that Radek's and Brandler's theories have fallen to the ground. In a number of countries the social democratic party has become the third bourgeois party. This is a new fact in the international situation and a tactical key in the hands of the communists. The theory that fascism has conquered social democracy was a misleading key which led to opportunist deductions. If it was true that the social democrats fought against the fascists and were defeated by them, the logical conclusion would be the rapprochement with the social democrats and not the intensification of the struggle against them.

Social-Democracy a Wing of Fascism.

But as the social democrats did not fight the fascist and were not defeated by them, communists must follow tactics

different from those advocated by Radek. The most important factor in all this is—that the social democratic party has been converted into a wing of fascism. This is a great political fact. For what is the French socialist party if not the left wing of the bourgeoisie? The recent election has provided us, as it were, with the documentary proof of this. The bourgeois and social democratic parties had a joint list of candidates. The only difference between them was—that the names of the bourgeois parties occupied the right side of the list while the names of this socialist party were on the left. What other



Elections in Bulgaria.

proof do we need? The French socialist party is the left wing of the French bourgeoisie. It is still playing hide and seek, it has not yet openly joined the government, but it is one of its factors. This becomes more and more evident as the situation develops. The Second International is now the left wing of the bourgeoisie. This does not show only the opportunist and treacherous spirit of social democracy, but also the uncertainty of the position of the bourgeoisie, which compels it to adopt such means.

CHAPTER VII.

Questions of Tactics.

Opportunistic Deductions of Comrade Hula.

I am now coming to the questions of tactics. To begin with I wish to make a few general remarks on this question. Hitherto I thought that the question of winning over the majority to our side had been solved at the Third Congress. But it has now become evident that this question still requires elucidation.

This was shown by the statement made in the speeches of several of the Czech Party. Perhaps I have not followed events in Czecho-Slovakia with sufficient attention and much is still not clear to me. But I think that the material at my disposal will suffice for certain deductions to be made. I have read an article by Hula who seized upon a sentence in an article of mine in which I said that our task consisted in winning over to our side the majority of the most important and decisive sections of the working class as a pre-requisite of victorious revolution. He at once sounded the alarm and quoted Lenin against me. My contention was presumed to be the direct opposite to Lenin's precepts. Hula said: "No evidence is necessary to prove that the "gaining over of the majority of the more important elements of the working class", is a vague and indefinite expression and that the interpretation of it under certain circumstances, in the last resort is a contradiction, because to win over the "majority of the more important elements of the working class may also be taken to mean the winning of the majority of the proletariat; particularly as no definition is given of what may constitute the more important elements of the working class, and which are not important, and therefore as should logically follow, from Zinoviev's phrase, are not worth bothering about." Hula is a sincere supporter and adherent of the Third International. I know him personally as a good communist.

This makes the matter worse and shows only that there is "something rotten in the State of Denmark"; that despe-

rate attempts are being made in the Czech Party to draw opportunist conclusions out of this matter.

The Question of Winning the Majority.

I will not take up your time with quotations, although I have a whole collection of them here. All I want to say is—that the Third Congress, under Lenin's leadership, passed a resolution which says that we must strive to win over the working class by organising its socially decisive sections. I do not wish to assert that in my fleeting remarks I have formulated the postulate of "the winning of the vanguard of the most important elements" perfectly; but on the whole the idea was correctly expressed, as it was at the III Congress. I unreservedly accept the formula of the III Congress.

What does Hula's article imply? Nothing but the well-known opportunist theory that a statistical majority of 99%, must be won over and organised before there can be any thought of revolution. This is an opportunistic idea which is bound to lead us astray, if we accept it. I think that one of the most important tasks before the Congress is the careful study of this question of winning over the majority. There is nothing new to be said on the subject. All we shall have to do will be to oppose any attempt to revise the formula of the III Congress. There are comrades who are little concerned about winning over the majority and are generally careless in their handling of this cardinal question. We combat these "ultra-lefts", but they represent an insignificant minority. They are sentimental revolutionaries. They are not dangerous. The real danger lies in several serious comrades demanding a statistical majority of 99%, or thereabout before even contemplating a proper fight. It is worse still when Hula writes such an article; for it reveals more moods than are usually developed by Hula. As to the winning over of the majority, I think we must endorse the formula of the Third Congress. We must realise that the time will come when we shall be confronted with the question of winning over the majority not only in the abstract but in practice, for in a number of countries we are reaching the point of getting the

majority on our side. Tables have been elaborated on this question, which you see displayed in this hall. I am not going to take up your time with a string of figures, but will merely tell you that these figures show that the time is near when we shall be as strong as the Second International at the zenith of its power. Our numbers will grow as we approach this point. In some countries this has already been achieved. This being so, we run the same risks as the Second International, just because we have become mass parties. Of course, we do not run exactly the same risk, because side by side with us, we have the social democratic parties which absorb the worst elements. The greater the treachery of the social democrats, the stronger we will be. At this Congress we may raise the question of the majority quite definitely. We must continue our fight for the capture of the most important sections of the working class. This is one of Lenin's most important slogans. This does not mean, of course, that we shall allow ourselves to be driven back to the position of the social democrats. We have nothing to do with the Kautsky methods of first organising the working class into parties and trade unions, then taking the vote and only then—revolution! Such methods will not carry us into the revolutionary fight, and will never convert us into a revolutionary party.

All of you must be familiar with Comrade Lenin's brilliant work on the results of the election to the Constituent Assembly in Russia. We went through this election campaign when we had already assumed power. Nevertheless, our party polled 9½ million votes out of 36 million, while the socialist revolutionaries and the mēnsheviks polled 25 million votes. Comrade Lenin frankly commented on this as follows:

“At that time we did not have a numerical majority, but we had a majority in the most important centres and at the decisive moment, and it is this that mattered”.

If comrade Hula regards himself as a disciple of comrade Lenin, he should teach the precept of his great master to the Czech workers, viz. the decisive majority, at the decisive place, and at the decisive moment. Is the greatest danger in the Czech Party the probability of it coming into the fray too soon? This danger, comrades, does not

exist in Czecho-Slovakia. Why then this article? And what is its objective meaning after the recent conflict in the German Party and in the Comintern generally? In this situation, this article is nothing but support of the "right". This must be frankly stated. I hope that comrade Hula will not persist in his errors. All of us make mistakes, but having made mistakes, we should rectify them. If comrade Hula is of a different mind, if he wants to convert his mistakes into a theory, and will be supported in this way by the Czech comrades, the Communist International will have to fight the Czech Party: for these theories are bound to lead to a repetition of what the "right" did in the German Party. Moreover, the situation in the Czech Party in many ways is still more complicated.

Tasks of the German Communist Party.

A doubt has arisen about the strength of the German Party. With smug satisfaction the "Vorwarts" quotes Radek who said that the election victory of the German communists must not be over-estimated. But if on the parliamentary field in Germany we have a proportion of 62 communists to 100 social democrats everyone can see that the time is not far distant when we shall have the majority of the working class behind us. For on the parliamentary field the German social democrats are far ahead of us, as their vote consisted not only of working class votes. All this goes to prove that we are on the point of capturing one half of the German working class. I have carefully examined the nature of the vote in the elections to the factory councils in Germany. It is much more favourable than the vote in the parliamentary elections. These statistics have been compiled by comrade Varga and his collaborators. But this does not mean that we can rest on our laurels. We may lose the masses we have won if we make mistakes. We must go further; we must unite the majority of the workers in the struggles; and this we shall do.

Thus you see that in Germany, and perhaps also in other Parties matters have moved forward considerably. But for 90% of the Communist International the state of things is such that Parties should concern themselves less with "high

politics*, and more with carrying out the following simple measures: In the first place, they must be able to build up Communist Parties on a factory nuclei in the factories.

Secondly, we must use correct tactics in our trade-union work. We must learn to found Communist fractions in the trade unions and capture them from within.

Thirdly, we must adopt a correct policy on the national question. And fourthly to conduct a correct policy in regard to the peasant question.

It is Necessary to Win Over the Peasantry.

He who cannot work among the peasants, is not a Leninist. I have already referred to the agrarian poverty in all countries. This alone should be enough to induce us to conduct internecine definite work among the peasants, for large sections of the peasantry are on the point of despair. Hitherto, even in agrarian countries, Communist Parties have displayed remarkable inability in the matter of capturing the peasantry. Even our Balkan Parties and the Polish Party have not made genuine efforts to work among the peasantry to the very last moment. The same may be said of the German and other Communist Parties. You know the result of the election in Carpathian-Russia. Many Czech comrades, Tausig, Gati, and others, particularly local comrades worked heroically and exposed themselves to great danger in the campaign. I have the impression however, that the Czech Party on the whole does not appreciate the importance of the peasants' question in Czecho-Slovakia, and this proves the importance of being able to work among the peasants. Such a thing as, for instance, the inability of our Roumanian comrades to tell us the percentage of peasantry in the population of Roumania, and what agrarian relations prevail, etc, must not occur again. What was the principle mistake of the Bulgarian Party in June 1923? The lack of revolutionary contact with the peasantry and the absence of a clear view of the role of the peasantry. The Bulgarian Party has remedied this, and more progress is being made.

Instead of concerning themselves with "high

politics*, most of our communist parties must be intent on carrying on communist work among the masses, forming communist factory nuclei and adopting a correct attitude towards national and peasant questions. This done, 99% of our problems have been solved.

Partial Demands.

I should like to add a few more words on the question of partial demands. We bolsheviks differed from the mensheviks not because we were against partial demands, but because we managed to combine these partial demands with the fundamental questions of the revolution. For the mensheviks these meant substituting reformist evolution for revolution; while for us they were links in the chain of preparation for revolution. The campaign conducted by our German comrades for the eight - hour day and for political amnesty is a campaign for partial demands, which we must put forward if we desire to be a party of the masses. But are these demands an ultimate aim? Certainly not, they are merely partial demands. In principle, the demand for the 51% confiscation of capital put forward by the German Party, has not differed from other partial demands. One must be able to select the "partial demand" that will appeal to the masses at the given moment and to connect this demand with the preparation for the revolution. I think that the real "left" of the Communist International, which is truly Leninist, can on no account object to the tactics of partial demands on principle, but it must be able to construct these tactics as a policy of revolution and not of evolution.

English Labour Government Drifting Towards the Left.

To wind up this section,—just a few words on the trade union question. I believe that this question will be one of the most important questions before our congress. There have been new and very important developments, especially in the British trade union movement. The British Labour movement is a peculiar movement. Recently, I read a report by Max Beer. He is not a communist and was formerly

a social democrat, but he left the social democratic ranks. He is an excellent authority on the British Labour movement and a very conscientious man. His opinion is very valuable. What has he to say on the Labour movement in Great Britain? He says that he knows three revolutionary facts in England's history. Firstly, the Chartist movement, secondly the formation of the Labour Party and the beginning of the struggle against old fashioned trade-unionism, and thirdly, the epoch making fact of the beginning of the emancipation of the British Labour Movement from reformism. This process, he says, commenced in 1917 in connection with the Russian revolution. It developed gradually and has now reached the point when quantity is transformed into quality. It sounds plausible, comrades. He says further that evidences are observable of divergences between the best elements of the trade-unions and the Labour Party, and it must be remembered that the Labour Party rests upon the trade-unions.

Comrades, I believe this to be true on the whole. Just look at what is going on in that country. Suddenly a comrade so near to us as Cook wins the leadership of a great trade union. Of course, these are merely signs and symptoms, and they must not be over-estimated, nor must they be underestimated. The attitude of the English delegates at the Vienna Congress of the Amsterdam Unions was also symptomatic. To be sure, these people are inconsistent, but they are driven by the masses. What did these people mean by demanding from Sassenbach: "Where is Rosa Luxemburg; where is Karl Liebknecht?" The English trade unions have so far been the main support of Amsterdam. They were to Amsterdam what the Russian and German Parties are to the Communist International. What would happen if the Russian and the German Communist Parties were to deliver social-democratic speeches against the communists? At the Congress everyone would say that this is a real crisis and not the crisis which Radek carries daily in his waistcoat pocket, and in spite of which we see our Party growing stronger from month to month. This very real crisis however, has overtaken the Amsterdam people. What does it mean when the English delegates ask: "Where are Luxemburg and Liebknecht?" It means nothing

else than the endorsement of our assertion that the social democrats are the accomplices of the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Of course, these people are inconsistent, they have no programme, they were partly prompted by the desire to demonstrate that they are for a rapprochement with the Russian Trade Union at the moment when the Russian and British Governments are negotiating in London.

The main task of the Communist International in all spheres lies now in England. A communist mass party in England would mean half the victory in Europe. The circumstances are ripe for it. Therefore we should not underestimate what is going on in England. We know England so little; almost as little as America.

I believe, comrades, we shall have to study the question thoroughly, and to see what really can be done to achieve real unity of the trade-union movement on an international scale. The more astute social democrats of Germany, Belgium, and France will have none of this unity. Already at the Fourth Congress we declared that the social democrats will do anything to bring about a split in the trade unions, and that we must therefore do our utmost to bring about the unity of the trade unions on an international scale.

CHAPTER VIII.

Tactics of United Front.

Roots of United Front.

Now, comrades, I come to the question of the tactics of the united front, to the most debated question in our ranks. In this respect, too, I am fully in agreement with the instruction given by the German Communist Party to its delegation, in which the German Party declares that now is not the time to discuss the tactics of the united front as a question in itself. I am in complete agreement with this; the tactic of the united front remains correct. The question should

be put concretely, for every country separately, in accordance with the prevailing conditions.

Nevertheless, there are a few general things to be said on this subject.

Historically speaking, how did we fare with the tactics of the united front? Looking back on the road that has been traversed, we can see that to the Communist International as a whole in 1921—22, the tactics of the united front meant the realisation that we have not yet won a majority of the working class; secondly, that the social democracy is still very strong; thirdly, that we are on the defensive and that the enemy was attacking (by the way, it should be observed that last year's strikes, for instance in England, were mostly of a defensive nature, as was the case also in the other countries); fourthly, that the decisive fight is not yet on the order of the day. Hence we advanced the slogan: "To the masses!" and later to the tactics of the united front. I have already pointed out, comrades, that there was a time in the Communist International when we were virtually nothing more than a propagandist society, without being aware of the fact ourselves. After the first skirmishes, the actual correlation of forces had become clear, and along with it came the consciousness that we are still in the minority, that the social democracy is strong, that we are on the defensive, and this was, historically speaking, the origin of the tactics of the united front.

Distortion of Slogan of United Front.

But comrades, history plays pranks with this slogan as indeed it does with many slogans. We adopted the tactics of the united front as the tactics of revolution at a time in history when the struggle had become protracted. Some comrades in our own ranks interpreted it as something totally different, as the tactics of evolution, of opportunism as against the tactics of revolution. This became revealed gradually. At first it seemed as if it were a question of nuances or of statistics. We understood the tactics of the united front as preparatory work for the revolution. But in some places it was misinterpreted as the idea of substituting the tactics

of revolution by peaceful, evolutionary methods. We perceived these tactics as strategic manoeuvres. Some comrades endeavoured to interpret them as an alliance with the social democracy, as a coalition of all "labour parties."

Recently a communist party passed a resolution "not for publication" in which it declared that all this is excellent; let it be a strategic manoeuvre, but we must not speak of it so frequently and so openly otherwise our opponents will use it against us. The resolution literally says the following—"In this connection (united front) we must take care not unnecessarily to reveal to our opponents the sense of our revolutionary strategy." Comrades I regard this as naive childishness or reformism. I rather think it is the latter, for people who speak in this fashion are not children.

The greatest weakness revealed by our party is that when it is proposed to them to adopt some revolutionary strategy against our most cunning enemies the social democrats, they immediately endeavour to make this strategy profound, to explain it from the Marxist standpoint and to convert it into a complete theory which turns out to be uncommunitistic.

What Constitutes Revolutionary Strategy.

The Bolshevik Party has had to make many manoeuvres during the revolution. The genius of Lenin consisted to a large extent in his skill in the use of strategic art. It is the good fortune of our party that in the execution of every manoeuvre, we knew exactly what we were driving at. This enabled us to execute our manoeuvres. We wished to fight and we desired the victory; we wished politically to destroy the mensheviks and the social-revolutionists, and to this end we directed our political manoeuvres. The trouble with some of our sections in the Comintern, young or otherwise, is that firstly they consider every strategic manoeuvre inadmissible, and secondly, where they do apply they take it too seriously and endeavour to convert it into a "profound" system. This accounts for 90% of our troubles. We are surrounded by enemies; by far the shrewdest of whom are the social democrats.

It has transpired that some parties and some comrades do not understand and do not wish to understand that tactics of the united front are to the Comintern nothing but a method for agitation and the mobilisation of the masses. To this I must add that some of the blame rests also upon myself, for being somewhat too yielding in this respect.

Permit me to deal with this question in detail. On the 11th of June, 1922, I delivered a speech before the Enlarged Executive on the question of the United Front tactics, in which I said: "The united front does not in the least involve political concessions or diminish the dependence of our Party. It means that our independent Communist Parties must formulate their slogans with a view to expediency; the slogan of the "Workers Government" is a pseudonym for Soviet Republic." I was at once taken to task, and I must say that I could not at first see on what grounds I was assailed. For instance, comrade Ernest Meyer attacked me in a speech before the Fourth World Congress in connection with this question. Comrade Radek tried to act as mediator, although he did not entirely associate himself with my formula. My mistake consisted in that I did not see at once that it was a question of opportunist misinterpretation of a good slogan. I did not think of the fact that by formulating the slogan so sharply, I may have made it difficult for the comrades to agitate for this slogan; in a word, I could not see at once why this sentence had roused so much opposition.

Workers' and Peasants' Government.

One word on the Workers' and Peasants' Government. An attempt was made to misinterpret the slogan of the Workers' and Peasants' Government too, as a government by all the Labour Parties and by some peasant parties. What is the origin of this slogan? It is pretended now that this slogan was to serve for a whole period; that it implied the alliance of "all" labour and peasant parties in the framework of bourgeois democracy and other puppets of this kind. As a matter of fact the slogan is connected with the Russian revolution. What was the meaning of this slogan in the Russian

Revolution? It was a pseudonym for the proletarian dictatorship; no more and no less. When after the July days of 1917 we saw that things were moving, that the workers and soldiers were with us, and that we could win over some of the peasants, we were confronted with the question of formulating the goal of the struggle in the simplest and most attractive way. The slogan of the "Proletarian Dictatorship" would not be so intelligible to the masses. How was the illiterate Russian mujik or soldier to understand these Latin words: Proletarian Dictatorship? It was then that we translated these words into Russian. We said: you are a peasant, a workingman, a soldier. Do you see the clique which governs. We have the power, we have the weapons! Won't you set up a Workers' and Peasants' Government? We simply translated the Latin into the Russian for their benefit. The peasants, the worker, and the soldier, were not bound to understand the meaning of the term: Proletarian dictatorship; but they readily understood the meaning of: "Workers' and Peasants' Government."

Things went so far that some parties interpreted this slogan as a government by "all" labour parties in conjunction with some peasant parties, and thus convert it into its very opposite. This had to be combatted in the most determined manner.

Formula of United Front.

You know the many discussions that took place on the question: united front from top or from the bottom, and so on. I believe we can formulate the question in the following manner.

United Front from the bottom. Properly speaking, these tactics are always necessary, perhaps with the exception of quite rare moments of direct civil war, when it may be necessary to fight with arms against workers on the counter-revolutionary side; although I may say, from the experience of the Russian Revolution, that even at such extreme moments we succeeded in carrying out the united front from the bottom. At the moment when Kerensky was marching on Petrograd, we mobilised the masses from the ranks of the social-

revolutionary party, against the orders of their own government, and got them to fight shoulder to shoulder with us. The united front from the bottom is always appropriate because it gives the facility for the actual mobilisation of all the really revolutionary workers.

United front from the bottom as well as from the top. This is another matter, and it arises fairly frequently; not always, but fairly frequently, in those countries where we are in the minority. I believe that no one even of the "extreme left" will deny that in countries like England, Austria, Belgium, where we have a small minority, the tactics of the united front from the top and from the bottom should be applied, of course, with all the safeguards and guarantees against it being applied opportunistically, and to apply them as a method of agitation and mobilisation of the masses, and not as a method of political coalition with the social democracy.

The third case is that of the united front from the top only. Here, I believe, we must say: Never!

Unfortunately, this method was all too frequently applied in practice: it was so easy to write an open letter to the social democrats to conduct long and protracted negotiations with the leaders over the question of a programme. This was the line of least resistance.

Consequently, this question we may sum up as follows: United front from the bottom—nearly always; united front from the top—fairly frequently, and with all the necessary guarantees as to the tactics of mobilisation that would facilitate the revolutionising of the masses; united front from the top alone—never!

(Radek: Hear! Hear!)

Even Radek says: Hear, hear. Now what were the actual developments? At the Fourth Congress the resolution of the Workers' Government was adopted. Here again I must frankly admit—and revolutionary comrades should always admit mistakes—that some mistakes were made in the drafting of this resolution, too many concessions were made to the right, which were immediately taken advantage of by the „right“ as meaning a political concession. I allude to the

following sentence in the resolution of the Fourth Congress on the Workers' Government which I drew up:

"In opposition to both open or masked bourgeois-social democratic coalition, the Communists may put up the united front of all the toiling masses, and a coalition of all labour parties both in the economic and political field, for the fight against the power of the bourgeoisie, and for its final overthrow. As a result of the combined fight of all the workers against the bourgeoisie, the whole machinery of State must pass into the hands of the Workers' Government and by this the domination and power of the working class must be consolidated."

On "Compromises".

I remember how the commission worked. I will not say that all the good paragraphs come from me, and all the bad ones from others. But my mistake consisted in having made concessions in style. From the standpoint of political agitation and strategical manoeuvring which were subsequently interpreted, as political manoeuvring, this postulate cannot be regarded as incorrect, it is quite admissible.

In 1917, Lenin wrote an article "On Compromises," in which he dealt with the possibility of a pact with the mensheviks and social revolutionists, on the question of forming a government responsible to the Soviets. In that article he wrote:

"We have now reached such an abrupt and unique turn in the Russian revolution that we may, as a Party, offer a voluntary compromise, of course not to the bourgeoisie, to our direct and principal class enemy, but to our immediate opponents, to the "leading" petty-bourgeois — democratic parties, to the social revolutionists and mensheviks.

By way of an exception, and in view of peculiar circumstances which evidently will continue only for a very short period we can offer a compromise to these parties, and it seems to me that we must do so.

On our part, the compromise means a return to our pre-July demand: "all power to the Soviets," a government of social-revolutionists and mensheviks responsible to the Soviets.

Only at the present moment can such a government be created, perhaps in a few days or in one or two weeks, and become consolidated quite peacefully. It could ensure, with considerable probability, the peaceful progressive march of the whole Russian revolution, and very great chances for big steps forward by the world-wide movement for peace and the victory of socialism.

Only for the sake of this peaceful development of the revolution—an opportunity extremely rare in history and extremely valuable, an exceptionally rare opportunity—only for the sake of this opportunity the bolsheviks, the advocates of the world-wide revolution, the advocates of revolutionary methods, can and must, to my mind, agree to such a compromise.

Further on he says:

“The task of a truly revolutionary Party consists not in an impossible repudiation of any compromise, but while going in for all the compromises, inasmuch as they are unavoidable, to remain loyal to its principles, to its class, to its revolutionary task, to its cause of preparing for the revolution and of educating the masses of the people for a victorious revolution.” (Article “On Compromises,” September 3, 1917).

Strategical Manoeuvre, Not System.

That, Comrade Smeral, was just a strategical move. He spoke of an “honourable coalition.” Such a form of words is permissible in agitation. I had occasion to write in a similar strain in those days. Did Lenin intend to become reconciled to mensheviks and join a government of “all” workers and peasants parties? Not in the least. It was merely a strategical manoeuvre. If, however, one imparts more meaning to this phrase, if one makes it a method, if one means in all seriousness, that it is possible to form a coalition with workers’ parties which only call themselves workers’ parties and in reality represent bourgeois third parties, — that leads to opportunism. The strength of the communist and of the other alleged workers’ parties is certainly very great. If these workers’ parties were real workers’ parties, not according to their

composition, but politically, and we could form a coalition with them, we would become unconquerable in Europe. But these parties are workers' parties only in name. It is, therefore, nonsense, it is a sin, it is counter-revolutionary utopianism, it is opportunism to talk of coalition with all workers' parties — that is, workers' parties such as ourselves, and those which call themselves workers' parties and are actually bourgeois parties.

For a number of comrades the tactics of the united front was not only a question of the agitational methods of a party, which knew what it wanted. It did not foresee at first that a bible, an opportunistic bible would be made out of a strategic manoeuvre, although in my first theses I referred to the dangers of opportunistic interpretations. But that is what was done.

The lesson from Saxony.

The climax was Saxony. It is absolutely clear to us that what happened in Saxony was a banal social democratic comedy. That was declared by all Russian Bolsheviks, and I believe, also by all German revolutionary workers and real bolsheviks, out of their very hearts. From that moment it was necessary to call a halt. We cannot plead overestimating the revolutionary possibilities as a justification for what took place in Saxony. That would be a cheap argument. We can never be absolutely certain of success in revolution. I say, that if the revolutionary situation of Oct. 1923 occurs again we shall again shout from the housetops that the revolution is at hand. We have nothing to repent of. In October there gathered here the representatives of the largest Communist Parties. No one had a word against our presentation of the question. Everyone was agreed that we must stake on the revolution. The responsibility however, rests mainly on the E. C. and the Russian and German Parties. I repeat that if such a situation occurs again, we shall more carefully test the figures, more carefully review our strength; but again we will back revolution.

Over-estimation of the position is not the worst. What is worse, as Saxony showed, is that many survivals of social

democracy existed in our Party. Radek asks: "Did we read all the German newspapers as he did? Did we know all the details about Saxony?" The Leningrad, Moscow workers replied: "We cannot read German; but we have made three revolutions: one in 1905 and two in 1917, under Lenin's leadership. We have enough common sense to know that a banal comedy was played in Saxony. Saxony revealed the true state of affairs about the united front, workers' government and the right wing in the Comintern."

The resolution on the workers' government by the IV Congress on the whole was correct. A number of its passages are excellent. A number of its forecasts have come to pass.

The position is outlined as it should have been regarded as a thought-out plan for winning over the masses. But to construct a complete "theory" that we are entering a long period of workers' governments composed of Communist Parties, "all" workers' parties and peasant parties on the basis of democracy, is the beginning of opportunism. What are the later developments of the matter? After the Fourth World Congress, the right wing in the Communist International took the offensive.

Then came the Leipsic Party Convention, where a resolution was adopted stating that the adoption of the United Front in Germany was the linking up with the illusions and prejudices of the Social Democratic workers.

That is perhaps an unfortunate way of putting it. But what is the following description of the Workers' Government?

"It is neither the dictatorship of the proletariat nor a peaceful parliamentary transition thereto. It is an attempt by the working class to carry on a workers' policy, as a beginning, by means of labour democracy supported by proletarian organisations and proletarian mass movements..."

Mistakes of Czecho-Slovakian Communist Party.

After the Leipsic Party Convention, came the party conference in Prague. If you study the resolution of the Prague conference you will find therein this paragraph: "The Workers'

Government can also be a peaceful transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is an attempt by the working class to carry on a workers' policy by means of bourgeois democracy supported by proletarian organisations and proletarian mass movements."

This is a literal repetition. I do not know if this occurred quite by chance or if there is a plan in it, I feel convinced it is the latter. (Radek: Kleine). You know, of course, that Comrade Radek is in favour of a "plan" in other spheres (Brandler: Radek was quite innocent of this matter). No you are mistaken, Comrade Brandler, Radek is far more responsible for the whole matter than are you, as he is responsible generally for opportunist mistakes, recently.

We, Bukharin and I, opposed this clause of the Leipsic resolution, but I must confess we did not do so openly and formally, we were not dictatorial enough, we did not sufficiently use the power of the Executive. Well, Comrade Radek says: What do you expect of Brandler, Brandler is a bricklayer and when he expresses himself he hurls bricks about. Comrade Radek said that at our party conference. Very well, Brandler is a bricklayer, but Smeral is not, and when he quotes he does not throw bricks about (laughter). I must say that the end of the Prague resolution, drafted by Comrade Smeral, is much more fortunately expressed than is Brandler's. But he repeated most of the opportunist postulates.

Well comrades, whoever accepts these postulates is in conflict with Leninism and Communism, he conceives a special peaceful transitional period of workers' governments and workers and peasants' governments, in which it will be able to do everything without revolution and in a democratic manner. After Leipsic and Prague and particularly after Saxony, this easy going state of affairs comes to an end. It became clear that it was not a matter of words but of understanding two systems of policy. The German Left, who we thought exaggerated too much (and in many matters they have exaggerated a great deal) proved to be right in this case. They alone, at the Moscow Conference foretold the outcome of the Saxony experiment. This compelled us to ponder over the matter and change our opinions of the Left.

The Saxony experiment created a new situation, it threatened the beginning of the liquidation of the tactics of the Communist International. That being so, we must state the case clearly and make our choice.

United Front Tactics Remain Fully in Force.

What are the tactics of the United Front, what is the workers' government, and what is the workers' and peasants' government? It is no use attempting to scare us, as Comrade Radek sometimes did, when he said that this is a revision of almost all the previous decisions of the resolutions of the IV Congress of the Comintern. Why such terrible words?

We wish only to revise the clumsy, careless and wrong clauses which Radek smuggled into the resolution of the IV Congress. We wish to render them proof against misinterpretation. We want to formulate this in such a way so that the bricklayer as well as the professor may see clearly what is being dealt with. We are in favour of using the tactics of the United Front for winning over the majority of the working class. The tactics of the United Front remain in force as before; we stand by the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government. In its resolution the German Party says, rightly: in a land like Italy, for instance, a workers' and peasants' government is quite appropriate and for France and a number of other countries it is equally appropriate. I believe if we understand this watchword in the sense in which the Russian Party has understood it, none of the real "left" will have anything to say against it.

Whence comes this watchword? It has often been represented that Radek invented it. That is not true. The watchword was produced in the course of the Russian Revolution, and what Radek has done with it is merely to distort it. We want to use this watchword as the Russian Revolution used it. We have already described the application of the watchword of the workers' government (Radek: "We formed a coalition with the Social Revolutionaries"). We do not foreswear the possibility in Europe too of taking into

a Soviet Government a chunk of the Social Democracy which will break away from the Social Democratic Party and will be inclined for a time to support us. This is what happened with the left social revolutionists. It was a chunk which broke away from the Socialist Revolutionary Party and which was followed by part of the peasantry. We took them in tow. But as soon as they began to talk the social-revolutionist language, we got rid of them. This was the correct strategy. But the plan of a pact with the social-revolutionary and menshevik parties after October was a mistake. It was a different thing at the time of the October revolution, when a group of comrades thought it possible to form a pact with the social-revolutionists and the mensheviks. For one moment I belonged to this group myself. But it was a huge mistake. Soon we conceived our mistake and rectified it. And for this reason, a few days later, Lenin wrote an article in which he said that the dispute was over, and that we shall now continue to fight together. And now you want us to transplant this erroneous policy into other communist parties. This we shall never do.

The mistakes committed in the course of the Russian revolution will find some justification in the fact that they will not be repeated in other revolutions. This is how the case of the tactics of the United Front stands. It is not a question of revising the tactics of the United Front. There is no need for it. It is not a question of inventing "new" tactics of the United Front itself. I do not hesitate to say that in spite of many mistakes, these tactics stands on the credit side of our balance sheet. The whole thing is to protect the Communist International against opportunistic efforts.

Take any country, even England. In England, in this matter of the united front, great mistakes have been made.

Successes of United Front in England.

Comrade Ruth Fischer writes in "Die Internationale" upon her observations in England. I am completely in agreement with what she says about Ferguson's election campaign, for his not

entering the contest openly as a communist. If we have to conceal our real identity, of what use is the elections? Comrade Newbold, when he was a member of the British parliament, plagued me and Comrade Bukharin, quite seriously, with the question: Was it permissible, in parliament in exceptional circumstances to speak and vote against the Labour Party? We replied: That is what you are there for. In spite of all these mistakes in the English Party, however, the United Front has produced some positive results in England. In local trade-union branches, Communist workers, in many cases, have acted quite rightly and have won a great deal. This was also done in the Czechoslovakian Party locally (factories etc.) and made good also in Germany. The mistakes have been made in the sphere of parliament, of trade-union central bodies, municipal bodies, etc. These are the main sources of opportunism, but in the factories and localities, despite this opportunistic tendency, a fair amount of good work has been done.

Well comrades, what is now the position? I have already dealt with the world situation. Therefrom comes also modification in attitude, and in the carrying out of our United Front tactics. First of all we must establish that this is a method of our propaganda, of the mobilisation of the masses, as it was done in the Russian Revolution. For the social democrats and for the reformists the workers' government represents a whole epoch. D'Arragona, the Italian reformist, for instance, said during the Amsterdam Conference in Vienna, in June 1924, the best means of preventing new wars is to set up as many workers' governments as possible. Thus for D'Arragona, the professed reformist, Workers' governments are a panacea for all ills, and could prevent wars. For us it is by no means so. In spite of Radek's bad clauses, we have said much that is good in the resolution of the IV Congress. (Radek: The bad clause is yours; Comrade Zinoviev). The bad clause is by you, the resolution as a whole is mine. I will not shirk the responsibility; I should have done that at the IV Congress, not for the first time at the V. But no one at the IV Congress was so far sighted; that at least mitigates my failing a little.

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CHAPTER IX.

Problem of Workers' Government.

Types of "Workers' Governments."

The main point is that in the resolution is the following passage: There are various labour-party governments as the one in power in England now, but not all are proletarian governments. For D'Arragona, every workers' government is good. For Radek, for Brandler, for many comrades in Czechoslovakia, I feel it is the same. Although they realise that it is not the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We have now collected some experience and must say frankly that the essence of the slogan for us is: a method of agitation and of organising the masses. We must, of course, take advantage of the situation created by the existence of a labour government, like that of MacDonald's. The workers' government is for us the most powerful and popular formula for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The workers and peasants perform the deed and then understand it. We must adopt the popular formula as we did in the Russian Revolution. This is no small question, it is not a question of mere style, but a question whether we are a party which can touch the peasants and soldiers where they are most receptive, a party which is not a sect but a mass party as the Bolsheviks were.

Every bourgeois government is at the same time a capitalist government, but not every workers' government is a real proletarian government, i. e. a revolutionary weapon of proletarian power. The Communist International must take account of the following possibilities.

1) A liberal labour government. Such a government existed in Australia; such a government may soon arise in England in the near future.

2) A social democratic workers' government (Germany).

3) A workers' and peasants' government. Such a possibility exists in the Balkans, Czecho-slovakia, Etc.

- 4) A workers' government with communist participation.
- 5) A genuine proletarian workers' government, which can be realised in its pure form only by the Communist Party.

I know many comrades, nevertheless, have a great objection to the tactics of the united front as such. I can offer these comrades only one comfort. I say to them that the united front and the workers' government are only instruments for the mobilisation and organisation of the working masses. If that does not please them I propose a compromise. Win the support of the majority of the working classes in your country, and we will immediately absolve you from the use of these instruments. (laughter). If you have a majority of the most important strata of the proletariat, certainly you may allow yourself to be less strict in the use of these tactics. But, in the most important countries the fact is that we have not yet this majority. We must understand how to approach the masses as they are, to win them over, to lead them on the way to bolshevism, and then be able to modify these tactics.

We Must Conform to Concrete Situation.

It is not necessary to mould all the parties according to the same pattern. On the contrary, we must put the question quite concretely, in accordance with the conditions prevailing in the particular country. The Russian proverb says "Don't spoil a barrel of honey with a spoonful of tar." Radek and other theoreticians of the "right" insist on pouring a spoonful of opportunistic tar into the barrel of good united-front honey. We throw away the tar, and preserve the good honey of the united-front tactics and share it out in proper proportion to each country.

I have read that in Czecho-slovakia, Hula and other comrades are much disturbed because we now say everywhere there must be an united front from below, and that we will not modify this according to circumstances in each country. Neurath was quite right in his article against Hula, in which he said that the executive never proposed this. The E. C. never proposed this. We said that in Germany conditions were so ripe

that we must now call for unity from below. At the same moment, we said it was obviously quite otherwise in Poland, and also in Austria and other countries. The whole art of the International consists in making concrete use of tactics because the situation is extremely varied in each country. We have never said that all parties should be treated alike. Will Comrade Smeral inform Hula of this.

Finally, and once more: with regard to the workers' and peasants' government, it is nothing more than a method of agitation and propaganda and mobilisation of the masses. It is, as I said in 1922, a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Meyer opposed this, as did also Radek, partly. But not a single man of our Russian Party, because for us it was quite clear. Our mistake consisted only in that many did not perceive this. Radek and Company were angry with us not merely about the style but were developing reformist tendencies.

Attention to the Peasantry.

You will remember that I was the originator of the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government at the meeting of the Enlarged Executive. How did that come about? Because of the realisation that we were marching forward in a number of countries and were getting pretty near to the problem of the seizure of power. I will not boast that I felt even then that German conditions were becoming ripe. But we had the sub-conscious feeling that the question of power was progressing fairly rapidly in several countries. And that is why we always tried to tell the various parties: "Pay attention to your peasants!"

Of course, a Party which is nowhere near power does not need to do this. It remains merely a Party to a section of the toiling masses. But from the moment that the Party seriously thinks of power, becomes a mass party, it must consider how the peasants will act, and how the country will react to the government of the Party. Therefore our slogan of a workers' and peasants' government expresses the fact that in many countries we are approaching the problem

of power. It is the expression for the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution and the leadership of the Party of the proletariat. For us it was in a certain sense a transition from revolutionary propaganda to revolutionary deed.

There is a difference between agitation and propaganda. The best definition of this difference was made by Plekhanov when he was a Marxist: "Propaganda means conveying certain complexes of ideas to a small circle of people; agitation means spreading one main idea among a great mass of people." I think this definition is good enough for us. It is correct. Thus our slogan arose from the fact that we were obliged to turn from propaganda of communism to agitation among the masses of the people, and to prepare for the struggle for power. When we have to face the struggle for power we must make use of just this catchword for it is popular and attractive, and, when it has been well-explained to the workers, will serve as a magnet for all those strata which should either be neutralised or drawn into the movement.

Therefore this slogan of the workers' and peasants' government is for us the expression of the hegemony of the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution, of the will to power, of the determination to form a government of our own which will be able to handle the peasantry. And they have tried with partial success to kill this vital conception of Leninism, this living source of Leninistic activity and agitation among the masses, by opportunistic interpretations.

That is what I have to say about the tactics of the united front and of the workers' and peasants' government.

Left Deviations and Tactics of the United Front.

I advise our comrades, and especially our German comrades who now put cotton-wool in their ears whenever they hear the united front mentioned (and this is only too understandable after all the mistakes and experiments in Saxony), to think this matter over very earnestly.

Comrade Burean (Junior) in Czecho-slovakia, writes for instance that the tactics of the united front is the main source of revisionism. That is not true. Anybody who is a revisionist will soon

find a "source", in parliamentarism or something else (Laughter, and Hear, hear). We cannot defeat the Social Democracy if we are afraid of our own shadow and keep on saying that the tactics of the united front are a source of revisionism. There are always people for whom this slogan is a source of revisionism. We must take what is good; what is Leninistic in the united front, and what is popular in the workers' government; what will win the confidence of the masses, not only of the working class but of all the oppressed.

We, the true left wing of the Communist International, must take this work into our own hands. Only in this way shall we eliminate the errors of the real right wing, convincing those of the right who can be convinced and fighting those who cannot. The Fifth Congress must not think that its task is to declare the united front a mistake, but we must take measures of precaution against their distortion, we must adopt some form of inoculation against opportunism as against small-pox. In Germany the ulcer has burst; it had been forced to a head. Its logical outcome was seen in Saxony.

In my opinion, if in Czecho-Slovakia the ulcer has not likewise burst, if we have not had such a political catastrophe, it is because conditions were not ripe enough. The attitude of the Prague Congress and comrade Hula's article show this. In view of the apathy and confusion of mind raging in the Central Committee of the Slovakian Party, I am afraid that if the situation had been similar we should have witnessed another Saxon fiasco.

CHAPTER X.

Concrete Tasks of Principal Parties.

The English Party.

I now come to the final chapter: the concrete tasks of the most important parties. And here I agree with the German Party in its view that each separate Party must be given its own concrete directions. That will be the most important work of this Congress.

Politically, the most important section of the Communist International, at present, is not the German, nor the Russian, but the English Section. Here we are faced by remarkable situations: a Party of only three to four thousand members, wields far wider influence than would appear from these figures. For in England we are dealing with a different tradition. MacDonald's party is not much stronger than ours. Their weekly paper the "New Leader", has a circulation of 15,000; we have a circulation of 55,000. The tradition of a mass Party is not known in England. Max Beer is quite right when he says that old Keir Hardie looked upon the movement as a means of influencing individual leaders. To form a mass party in England is the chief task of the entire present period. The conditions are there. But the English Party shows signs of great weakness. For instance it does not dare to criticise MacDonald.

Now with regard to this, one must candidly admit that great masses of the English workers are still attached to MacDonald and speak of him with affection.

I have the feeling that it is the same situation as we had in Russia during the first month of Kerensky's government. Nobody could say a word against Kerensky. One had to criticise him indirectly; first for an hour to dilate on how Kerensky was a good fellow and almost a great man, and then delicately hinting that he too makes mistakes. In England we have the same state of affairs. The workers are still attached to MacDonald; they are still full of illusions and he has the advantage that he has not a majority in Parliament. This enables him to say to the workers: "I should like to do much more, but I have not a majority; the next elections, when we have a majority, we will soon show the stuff we are made of. We shall come forward and like lions we will make the forests ring."

The situation, therefore, is not so simple. The MacDonald Government is still on a rising wave of popularity. But if we wait passively until the tide turns, then we shall have no need of a Communist Party. The Social Democracy will go bankrupt anyhow. We are there to hasten the process. That

is the reason why our Party in England must already resolutely fight MacDonald now in order that the masses when they at length realise MacDonald's true character they will know that we, the communists, told them the truth long ago.

In the year 1921 Lenin fought against Wynkoop and other "lefts" of that time, over the question of communists joining the Labour Party. But in the year 1924 we are face to face with a new situation. A "Labour" Government exists, and MacDonald is in power. Therefore our little group of communists must follow its historic path, They must first become a mass party; and secondly begin to recruit workers into the Party and found a daily paper. When one talks to the English comrades about this they say that this is asking them to wear a hat that is far too big for their head, and they worry about how this hat will fit them. Thirdly, we must more thoroughly permeate the rank and file of the trade-unions in order to form a left-wing movement there. Fourthly, more attention must be paid to the youth. Until quite recently, there was no Young Communist movement at all in England, and it is even now only at its very beginning. Fifth, the colonial question must be attacked with audacity, such as befits Bolsheviks. Sixth, digressions to the right must be combatted wherever they are met with; election campaigns must be conducted differently, the lines proposed by Rosmer must not be followed; in their propaganda they must be prepared even for a break. That is the most important problem for the English Party.

The next most important Party in the Communist International is the French Party, precisely because of the new international situation ("democratic pacifist" too) which I have already referred.

Development of the French Section.

I think the French Party has made great progress. It is far stronger than it has been. It has a sound left wing which we are supporting. What was formerly the "centre" must join with the left wing in forming a common "left", in the true sense of the Communist International, and

without forming a fraction. The French Party must capture the large industrial centres in the country.

At present its only stronghold is Paris. This is important. In Brandler's old Central Committee it used to be said that they had everything else behind them except Berlin and Hamburg. But then it turned out that "everything else" was also not behind them.

The French Party now holds Paris but has too little support in the provinces.

In Sweden, comrade Hoeglund has "everything" except Stockholm. I don't want to draw any conclusions from this; Hoeglund should do it himself from various examples.

The chief task of the French Party at present is to get out into the industrial proletarian districts outside of Paris. In our activity we must take into account the illusions created by the victory of the left bloc. The French social democrats have tried to be very cunning! They have not openly formed the government, but they will vote for the Budget, the occupation of the Ruhr, etc. Actually it is part of the Government. We will be cunning too. We will say to the socialist workers: this is not your government, your people are not in it; why should you worry about it, it is only a bourgeois government; why should we not fight it together for amnesty, for the evacuation of the Ruhr, for higher wages, for the recognition of Soviet Russia, for the eight-hour day, etc.? We must conduct the tactics of the united front skilfully. At the moment when the social democracy is becoming officially the "third" party of the bourgeoisie, there will be no development from above. The moment when the social democratic leaders enter bourgeois governments, their combinations present favourable opportunities to win over the rank and file. While the social democratic leaders are engaged with their government combination, a favourable opportunity presents itself to get among the masses of the social democratic and non-Party workers and get them to combine with us.

Then the Social Democrats will be crushed between these two combinations. The masses will become more discontented, unemployment will continue, the economic situation will

grow worse, and the "Experts' Report" will not help the workers. This is an ideal situation for winning over the best section of the workers, particularly in France.

The most important task of the French Party is to win the individual centres outside of Paris and to extend and strengthen the Party apparatus. In Paris we have 8,000 members and yet we have 50,000 subscribers to "Humanité;" and we polled 300,000 votes at the elections. What does that mean? A decided backwardness in the Party organisation. What does this signify? The backwardness of the Party from the point of view of organisation. We must accustom the French workers to different methods of organisation. The Federation of the Seine must in the near future have 25,000 members. The most important task of the French Party is: To wipe out the last remnants of Frossardism. What was formerly the "Centre" must boldly and sincerely march together with the "Left". The French Party must utilise the excellent qualities of the Parisian workers to warn the workers in the provinces at the moment when the leaders of the Social Democracy are engaged with governmental combinations with the bourgeoisie. The factory-councils' movement in France is still in its infancy, People are too busy talking about "high politics". In the whole of France there are only about 120 factory councils; such progress cannot be taken very seriously. Party nuclei and factory councils are only the first requirements of the French Party. There is no country in the world to which the policy of the Workers' and Peasants' Government is better adapted than France. It must penetrate deeper into the country, into the peasant cottages; we must have a good Communist press; a strong party apparatus; better international connections. These are the tasks.

German Question Cleared up in the Main.

Now as to the German Party, we have a special item on our Agenda: the German Question. Personally I am of opinion that we could quite safely strike out this item for the question is already settled. Germany has been most

written and spoken about this year. I, at any rate, do not see a particular German problem before us at the present moment. The situation is difficult, the general political perspective remains unchanged. It is pregnant with revolution; already giant conflicts have broken out. The German Communist Party is now on the whole marching along the route of the Communist International. The crisis went very deep, the dangers were great. There was the danger of a split. Our Polish comrades asked why we were in such a hurry to shake off the old Central Committee. Surely it is obvious that if we had hesitated at all the split would have become inevitable. The crisis was so severe that we may consider it to have been solved fairly easily. (Severing: Quite true!)

Then as to the other controversy with the "Extreme Left." At a moment when we had no idea how things might turn out we had to act, and even to over-rate the dangers a bit. Even now we do not know its numerical strength but we do know that they are mensheviks turned inside out. At the moment, part of the problems have been solved. The new Central Committee will repulse this liquidation from the "left", and I hope it will successfully manage them.

There are still very great difficulties in connection with the question on the Trade Unions. The Central Committee must resolutely suppress any attempt at "revising" the Frankfurt resolutions, and to speak of leaving the trade unions. Nor is the parliamentary position simple. In both the French and German parliaments, we have a situation similar to that which Lenin used to call the "Pendulum" situation, where our group can at times have the decisive vote. This is bound to produce tactical difficulties for us both in France and in Germany. The Germans have also neglected the work among the peasants. This must be made good. I could quote a number of other minor tasks, but I shall not do so. The German Party has proved itself to have a robust constitution which has withstood the onslaught of serious diseases. If the body had not been so sound and proletarian, we would have had still greater difficulties. If the ultra-left again try to emerge, we will resist it. If the old "left" deviation on the trade-union question arises again, we will also resist them. The situation

between ourselves and the Central Committee of the German Party is amiable and satisfactory, but there are no reasons why we should not combat any errors if they arise. We combated the "lefts" and we will do so in the future. The German Party like every other Party has the right to criticise the Executive. It has made more than good use of this right. We have no use for blind followers. But the Germany Party also has no use for an Executive which does not openly say what is to be said. The Executive may and will criticise and rectify what it thinks necessary. I believe that the left elements, which are in the majority in the German Party, will admit that we acted correctly when the question of new tactics in the trade-union movement was raised. Some may have believed that the Executive intended simply to hand over the German Party to the ultra-lefts, but they will now realise that they were mistaken. The Executive did no such thing and will never do such a thing. We did always fight for Leninism even in the German Party. We are quite pleased that the new Central Committee agree with this.

The Czecho-Slovak Communist Party.

Now for the Czech Party. I have already touched on this question and have not much more to add. I have the impression that the Czech Party lacks constant energetic revolutionary leadership. They work spasmodically. When on elections or something of that sort—there is a revival; when it is finished—they go to sleep again. There is no constant revolutionary leadership. I think that the Czech Party has much to learn. The Central Committee should have fresh proletarian forces infused into it. The revisionist elements which are still in existence must be rooted out. While I have some hopes that Comrade Hula will rectify the errors, I have no such hopes for Vanek. There are elements in the Czech Party that are almost incorrigible centralists. We need have no doubts about the good intentions of Comrade Smeral. But we must demand the elimination of the errors exposed in the passage of the Polish resolution which I quote, an error which has been uprooted in Germany and in the whole Communist

International. And this error has also to be eliminated in the Czech Party. More attention than hitherto must be paid to the national and peasant questions,—this applies particularly to the Czecho-slovakian party.

The Polish Section.

And now for the other countries. I will begin with Poland. You know that for quite a long time, we regarded the Polish Section as one of the best bolshevist sections of the Communist International. This is true with regard to the working-class revolutionary traditions, and the splendid proletarian elements in Poland who are bearing all the burdens of illegal party-work. I must openly state that things are not so well with the leadership. The leadership of the Polish Party indulged in too much diplomacy on the most important questions—determining the tactics of the Comintern, the German and the Russian questions. This gives food for sad reflections. The Polish comrades are most familiar with the Russian conditions, and they also know the German conditions very well. Now, they say they completely accept the standpoint of the Central Committee on the Russian and on the German questions.

This statement has only one drawback—it comes a little too late. It is like bringing the mustard after the meal is cleared away. Perhaps mustard sometimes may be good after a meal, but we would rather enjoy it during the meal.

As regards the application of the tactics of the united front, the Polish comrades have admitted at their own conference that they made great mistakes. The work of comrade Krulikovski in the Diet was repeatedly criticised in the press. I must say that as far as I can follow his conduct, I consider it heroic, (Radek: "Quite right!") correct, and revolutionary. One must not chide a comrade for an isolated minor digression; one must not forget the difficult position of the Party in a White Guard parliament. In general, comrade Krulikovski is making use of parliament in the spirit of Karl Liebknecht. The rest are petty details.

I cannot refrain from saying a few words about the leader-

ship of the Polish Party. Where was our Party during the rising in Cracow? It was not there at all. I do not say that a Party must always be in the majority, but, comrades, when at a moment when regiments mutiny the Communist Party is completely absent, it gives us something to think about. Yes, it is true that the difficulties for work in Poland are immense; we know perfectly well what it means to do illegal work under such circumstances. We know the heroic work done by the members of the Central Committee in Poland. But the political head of the Central Committee indulges in diplomacy. The Central Committee is not homogeneous. I am convinced that as soon as the Polish Communist workers learn where the shoe pinches, and where the leadership has been at fault, when they grasp what the real controversy is, between their leaders and the Communist International, and particularly with the German Party, they will be on our side, on the side of the Communist International and of the Russian Party, and not on the side of diplomacy. Yes, diplomacy against our bourgeois enemies, the social democrats, is a fine thing; of course we do have to employ diplomacy sometimes against our enemies and there is nothing to be said against that. But within our own fighting community, within the Communist International, we need no diplomacy. I think, in order to restore the good name of the Polish Section as one of the best Bolshevist parties, it is necessary to correct some of the faults of the Polish Central Committee.

The Italian Section.

Now, comrades, we come to Italy. There we have two practical questions. First the relationship towards the so-called "Terz" International; secondly the relation to the Socialist Party. I think we must decide upon an immediate union between the Terzi with the followers of the Third International. The time is ripe for it. Whether the "Terzi Internationalists" should be represented on the Central Committee of the party after the fusion I regard as a secondary question. Of course, they must help to form the Central Committee. We are not going to insist too stubbornly upon

the 21 points where they are concerned. These comrades have been wanting to join the party for two years, and we said to them: Stay in the old party! Capture it from within! With regard to the Italian Socialist Party, we must stand by our old decisions, that is, to leave the door open in order that they may come in as a sympathising party. During the discussions it was proved that behind "Avanti", behind the Italian Socialist Party, there are still considerable sections of the workers. You will remember that at the Fourth Congress it was said by the "ultra lefts" that there were no workers supporting this party, but only clerks, petty bourgeoisie, etc. But the last elections have proved beyond dispute that behind the Italian Socialist Party stand hundreds of thousands of good proletarians. Lazzari, Clerici, etc. are not communists; they are sentimental revolutionaries. Not long ago I received a letter from old Lazzari in which he wrote that it was a question of conscience: on the one side there was his party, on the other the Executive of the International; he could not commit a breach of discipline but he remained loyal to the International. But I know that in the Italian Socialist Party there are hundreds of thousands of workers of whom many are with us; that Vella appears to be politically dead for the Italian Socialist Party. This is a proof that we must leave the door open and stick to our former decisions. It has been proved that the extreme "left" communists in Italy were wrong when they said that there were no workers behind the Socialist Party. The thousands of workers are behind it, and they still believe that the Socialist Party half belongs to the Third International, and that only a misunderstanding exists which which can be cleared up.

With regard to the Centrist elements in the Socialist Party, however, the fight against them must be continued.

With regard to the Italian Communist Party itself, the elections showed that it was, in spite of all, a very strong communist party with a sound political core. It deserves all our support. It is our hope; it is the only representative of the Comintern in Italy. But the weaknesses which we have criticised, are still there. Recently it has again been proved that the views of the Communist International Executive were

correct. You are aware of the fact that we have there three fractions. I don't know which of these fractions is actually in a majority. We must not be hasty in our judgment. But I do know that the extreme left fraction is politically wrong. Bordiga is asking us to confirm the Rome theses of 1922, dealing with the policy of the Italian Communist Party with regard to the "Ardititi del Popolo," i. e. the very theses we criticised twenty times together with comrade Lenin. For instance, one of Bordiga's friends, Rossi, writes:

"A tactic is not a communist tactic if it waits upon the situation for indications as to what its tactics are to be." I ask, to what should we adopt our tactics if not to the concrete situation? Some of the "lefts" are so doctrinaire to believe that we can get together and make decisions on principles alone which will serve as a sort of "elixir" that would serve for all occasions. But on the other hand, we must not change our tactics with every wind. We remain Communists; Communists in all situations. That we must suit communists tactics to facts is so obvious that there is no need to talk about it. And only those comrades who have no feeling for the mass movement, who are not Marxists, will hold the contrary.

The Italian question is a delicate question. Bordiga and his close friends are good revolutionaries, loyal supporters of the International, but they have not yet got rid of those shortcomings which Lenin criticised. In this case, it is not the International but comrade Bordiga and his followers who must give way. When they abandon their dogmatism they will become an asset to the Italian revolution.

Just one more word on this question. Bordiga said recently that if the International did not improve and did not accept his standpoint, he would be compelled only to use Party discipline as a matter of form and that he would endeavour to form a left fraction on an international scale. I do not think that the International will allow this. We like Bordiga, but we like the International better still. It is not for the International to adapt itself to Bordiga, but for Bordiga to adapt himself to the International. There cannot be a question

of discipline as a "matter of form" in our Communist International. We are a communist world-party, we want to progress and not to retrogress. The more we progress the more we become a Communist world-party.

Permit me to pass over the other Parties. It is late, and what I said about some Parties, you will be able to apply with some modifications also to other parties.

Our Pride — the Y. C. I.

Just a few remarks on our Auxiliary-International and on the question of organisation. The Young Communist International is our pride and hope. It is an organisation which will give us a new generation of real communists and real communist leaders. In this we have already left the social democrats behind. In Russia the Young Communist League has increased its membership from 400,000 to 700,000; in Germany from 28,000 to 70,000. The German League has done excellent work in the Ruhr. The fight our youth is putting up is worthy of all praise. We are justified in saying that the Young Communist International is the right hand of the Communist International. Here too we have important work before us.

A few more remarks on other auxiliary Internationals. The Red Aid has done satisfactory work, and the same applies to the International Workers' Aid. You are aware that the social democrats commenced a crusade against it and have decided to leave it. The Sports International has also some successes to record. We must strengthen our women's movement; we have done little in this connection.

Organisation questions:

As to the question of organisation, I think that the time has come to begin in all seriousness to reorganise our Parties on a factory-nuclei basis. We are told that we shall lose members by it. But the workers must be told that the Party must have an industrial basis. The present territorial system of organisation is a relic of social democracy. The latter

built up its organisations as an electoral machine for election purposes only, and wherever our Communist Parties still adhere to this system, we must say that they are not yet free from social democratic ideology. We must reorganise each Party on a factory-nuclei basis, in order to do away with the necessity of bringing up this question again at the Sixth World Congress.

Question of Leadership Without Lenin.

In conclusion just a few words on the future leadership of the International. Here again I must quote Comrade Bordiga because he showed commendable courage in raising the following question. He says literally the following:

"Where is the guarantee that the International will become a world Communist Party? The fact that the best comrades of the Russian Party take part in the Executive will not suffice because we have to deal with the historical situation. Deeds upon which we dared hitherto because we enjoyed the leadership of the genius of Lenin, we must now give up as dangerous to the communist movement of the proletariat."

Comrades, we need no ceremonies. We must say frankly that Bordiga is partly right on this question. We have no grudge against him if, now that we no longer have Lenin beside us, the universal confidence can not be so boundless as it was, for we ourselves do not feel so confident as we did when our decisions were, so to speak, ultimately ratified by Comrade Lenin; when we knew that his decision would be so right, so objective, so wise, and so Marxian. It is our misfortune that we have lost the best head, the best man, and the most farsighted leader. This is bound to have tremendous effect in all respects. We have also become more circumspect.

But what are the conclusions to be drawn from this? We no longer have our Lenin with us, nor anyone to take his place, but the struggle of the world proletariat must be led. The conclusion to be drawn is this: The international leadership must be more collective. All the parties must give to the Executive the best disciples of Marx and Lenin, the best heads and the best organisers. What other means than

these can we apply? Yes, we miss Lenin. To fill his place, we must draw the best forces from all of our Parties to organise the leadership of the International. But after having brought about this organisation, after having put the Executive on a more international footing than hitherto, we should enforce not merely "formal" discipline, but truly proletarian, communist discipline. We have no grudge against Bordiga; we are not so foolish as to imagine that although Lenin is dead, everything will go on as usual. We ourselves appeal to you, comrades of all fraternal parties: Lenin is no longer with us, we must make collective efforts to replace him at least to some extent. We need the International for the emancipation of the working class; we must achieve a collective leadership, a steel leadership, which will really lead and which will embody the collective wisdom of the whole working class.

Cases of Violation of Discipline.

During the period, we had cases of lack of discipline, some of which were left unpunished. For instance, from the Right, Comrade Hoeglund, who was backed by Tranmael, and from the Left from Bordiga, who refused to stand for parliament, although the Party and the Executive insisted on his doing so.

We tried to liquidate these cases quietly, because of the high esteem in which we held these comrades personally. Hoeglund, during the war, and Bordiga after the war and now, have shown themselves to be good revolutionaries. I say frankly that if no guarantees will be furnished by the Congress, against a repetition of such breaches of discipline, we cannot take all the responsibility. The discipline must be even more stringent than it was when Comrade Lenin was alive. We must not look backwards, we must look forwards and try to grow into a World party and to have an International Executive with an International leadership. Henceforth no one should dare talk of "formal" discipline. For this would put us on a level with the Two and a Half International. We would not be the heirs to Marx and Lenin; we would not be much better than Crispian. We must fight for a unified Communist Party, without fractions and groupings.

It is quite clear that in the period between the Vth and VIth World Congresses we shall have to face decisive fights in many parts of the world. We must be ready to do everything, in order to become, not in words but in deeds, a real world-wide invincible Communist Party. (Loud, prolonged applause, developing into an ovation. Delegates rise from their seats, signing the "Internationale").